

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 10 JUNE 1879**

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2. The rent received from same to 31st March last.

3. How, and to what fund, has the rent been applied.

By Mr. NORTON—

That the following papers, viz. :—

1. Dated Q. N. Railway Survey Office, 1st May, 1877.—Extract from Mr. W. Hannam's report to Mr. R. Ballard: Central Island towards Gladstone, Casuarina Creek.

2. Dated Railway Branch, Rockhampton, 30th October, 1878.—Memo. from the Chief Engineer, Northern Railway, to the Commissioner for Railways, Brisbane: Trial surveys, Central Island towards Gladstone, and Gracemere to Gladstone.

3. Dated Railway Survey Office, N. Railway, 19th September, 1878.—Letter to R. Ballard, Esq., Chief Engineer, Q.N.D., from Willoughby Hannam,—

which were included in Return to an Order made by this House, dated 15th May, relative to "Railway Survey from Gladstone," and laid upon the table of the House on the 21st ultimo—be printed.

#### COLLECTION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN moved the adjournment of the House, in order to refer to a misinterpretation out of doors of some remarks reported in *Hansard* on the 4th instant. He replied to the hon. member for the Logan, and in the course of his remarks asked him what he thought of a man who was appointed year after year as collector of an electoral roll, and who after collecting sat on the revision bench. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) was contradicted by the hon. member for Bundamba on this point;—the hon. member was understood to say that—

"He remembered the collector to whom he presumed the hon. member for Stanley referred being objected to taking a seat on the revising bench; if the hon. member had ever seen him sit on the bench he (Mr. Hendren) had not."

It appeared that this matter had been somewhat talked about outside, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had been in communication with the gentleman referred to, who had written to him in consequence of the statement made in one of the newspapers. He found, however, that he was correctly reported in *Hansard*, and he therefore repeated what he really did say, and which was what he had intended to say—namely, that a man, a magistrate in Ipswich, had been year after year appointed by the bench to collect the lists of the police district of Ipswich, and that that gentleman had sat several times on the bench as a magistrate for revising the rolls. Of course, he could not mean the rolls he had collected, because he could not sit on the bench at that time, when he would be required as a witness. In order that justice might be done, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) should call for certain

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 10 June, 1879.

Formal Motions.—Collection of Electoral Rolls.—Questions.—Navigation of Port Pioneer.—Execution of a Criminal.—Electoral Rolls Bill.—committee.—Financial Statement—adjourned debate.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

#### FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. WALSH—

That there be laid on the table of this House a Return showing—

1. The cost of construction of the three Jetties at Cooktown.

1879—x

returns from the Colonial Secretary which would clear up the affair; but his object when he first alluded to the subject was not to mention names, but to cure a great evil. It was very unbecoming for a magistrate to collect rolls at all, and still more unbecoming to sit on the revising bench after he had collected them. Any magistrate who took all that work to himself was too greedy, and anyone who gave it all to his neighbour was too liberal. Since the publication of his remarks he had received the following letter:—

"Ipswich, June 5, 1879.

"P. O'Sullivan, Esq., J.P., M.L.A.

"DEAR SIR,—In the *Ipswich Observer* of yesterday's date you are reported to have said, in the Legislative Assembly, 'that you knew a case at Ipswich in which a J.P. collected a roll and then sat on the bench to revise it.' This statement is untrue, as far as I am concerned. I was a sub-collector for the Bundamba electorate. Captain Townley and Mr. C. Gorry were the only J.P.'s who sat on the bench to revise the roll. I have sent this explanation in case anything more is said about it.

"Yours respectfully,

"W.M. WARLAND."

In reply to this he (Mr. O'Sullivan) wrote the following:—

"Ipswich, June 6, 1879.

"William Warland, Esq., J.P., Ipswich.

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of yesterday's date just received, I can only say that I have not seen the report to which you refer, and that I refuse to hold myself responsible for the versions the newspapers may choose to give of my utterances in Parliament. If what I stated on the occasion to which you allude is not correctly reported in *Hansard*, I will correct it on Tuesday next, in my place in the House, from the records of the Ipswich revision court.

"I remain, &c.,

"P. O'SULLIVAN."

In order to give Mr. Warland every opportunity of fair play, and show that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had no object but the cure of what he considered an evil, he should ask the Colonial Secretary to lay on the table of the House a return showing, first, how often and on what days had William Warland been appointed collector of the electoral lists for the district of Bundamba, and how often and on what days had he sat on the bench to revise the electoral lists for that district. That was all the satisfaction he could give either Mr. Warland or the hon. member who had contradicted him, and the public could then judge between them.

Mr. HENDREN said that the impression left on the minds of most hon. members, when the hon. member for Stanley made the statement referred to, was that the magistrate had collected the rolls and afterwards sat at the revision court. He might have taken the matter wrongly himself, but, whether he had done so or not,

other hon. members had done so too. Mr. Warland had never sat at a revision of his own roll, but he might have sat at the revision of other rolls in none of which he was interested. He was satisfied with the proposed notice of motion. If what the hon. member for Stanley implied were true, the magistrate was unfit for his position as a justice of the peace.

Mr. MESTON had also received a communication from Mr. Warland on the subject, in which he stated:—

"I was a sub-collector for the electorate of Bundamba; Captain Townley and Mr. Gorry were the only magistrates who sat on the bench to revise the roll."

And again—

"On the revision day not one local J.P. attended the court; the P.M. could not do the work himself—one J.P. had to read out the names, and another J.P. was wanted to tick them off;—this being the case, I helped to revise some of the rolls, but not as a political partisan."

This, then, showed that Mr. Warland sat on the bench while some of the rolls were being revised, but not during the revision of the roll he had collected.

#### QUESTIONS.

Mr. HENDREN asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. If the additional salary of £10 per annum, voted last year to each of the two senior warders at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, has been paid to them?—and, if not, why not?

2. Also, if same additional salary has been paid to two junior warders?—and if so, why was it so paid?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said £10 was paid to the senior warders—i.e., to the warders whom the surgeon-superintendent has promoted to that position.

Mr. HENDREN said that the answer of the hon. member was so unsatisfactory that he would move the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER said the hon. member would not be able to put himself right by moving the adjournment.

#### NAVIGATION OF PORT PIONEER.

On the motion of Mr. AMHURST, leave was given to introduce a Bill for the improvement of the Navigation of Port Pioneer, situated in the Mackay Electorate.

#### EXECUTION OF A CRIMINAL.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH said he rose to call the attention of the House to a matter of some importance, and would conclude his remarks with a motion. As hon. members were no doubt aware, an execution had taken place within the walls of the Brisbane Gaol under somewhat extraordinary

and distressing circumstances. He presumed that some inquiries would be made as to the mode in which the sentence was carried out, and the accident which occurred, and therefore it was not for that reason that he now rose to move the adjournment of the House. He rose to call attention to the fact that no notice had been given to the public or to the Press that the Executive had decided upon carrying out the sentence of the Court. It was a most extraordinary thing that nothing should have been heard of the man after being sentenced to death until a paragraph appeared in the paper stating that he had been executed. This was not the first but the second time such a thing had taken place since the present Government came into office, the first being in January or February last, when a prisoner was sentenced to death; but whether the sentence was carried out or not had remained a secret to all the world. With respect to the man executed yesterday, he had been sentenced to death only two or three weeks previously at the Northern Assizes. It had always been the practice that when the Government dealt with such an important matter as the death or reprieve of a criminal the fullest publicity should be given to it. The agitation which was now going on in New South Wales showed the grave impropriety of capital sentences being carried out in this secret manner, without anything respecting the prisoner being made known to the world after his leaving the dock. He sincerely hoped that this case would not be established as a precedent, as a case might be or might not be one in which the public took great interest, and might wish to move His Excellency to grant a reprieve. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, nothing was previously known to the public beyond his being sentenced to death; it was not even known whether he had an opportunity of being attended by a minister of religion: all they knew was this—that after the sentence was carried out there was a paragraph in the papers saying that they had received no intimation that the execution was to take place.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he should have expected, from the hon. gentleman's legal knowledge, some better interpretation of the meaning of the law with reference to executions. He would draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the 59th section of the Criminal Act, which said—

"The sheriff under-sheriff or deputy as aforesaid shall be present at such execution together with the gaoler and proper officers of the gaol including the physician or surgeon together with all magistrates who shall think fit and such constables military guard and adult spectators as the sheriff under-sheriff or deputy as aforesaid may think fit."

After that he thought the House might have been spared the speech of the hon. gentleman opposite—

MR. GRIFFITH: You do not understand it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member spoke as if he (Mr. Palmer) was the chief hangman of the colony. At any rate, when he saw the paragraph in the papers, he inquired into the whole matter, and he had been told by the Sheriff that he had carried out everything previously done on the occasion of any execution. He had the Sheriff at his office, this morning, to ask him about this unfortunate affair, and he had been assured that everything necessary and usual had been done; and what on earth the hon. gentleman opposite wanted more he could not understand.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said he could not understand what the hon. gentleman who had just sat down meant. It was quite true that the hon. member had read the letter, the dead-letter of the law, but the hon. member seemed to think that because he had complied with the strict letter of the law he had done his duty. He (Mr. Douglas) thought different, as he considered that an hon. gentleman in his high position should take care that the public were satisfied that the course of the law had been properly carried out. But in the present case no one knew anything about it—in fact, so far as the public were concerned, the man might be now in gaol. It was very undesirable, indeed, that the functions of the Executive Government should be confined to the strict letter of the law in the matter. It was the bounden duty of anyone in the high and responsible position of the hon. Colonial Secretary to see that the public knew that the sentence of death passed on a criminal was to be carried out—even the date and hour at which the execution was to take place. It was true that this legislature, and legislatures in other parts of the world, had authorised secret executions in order to put an end to the undesirable notoriety that was attached to the execution of criminals, but it was still desirable for the proper administration of the law that the public should be satisfied that everything was done that should be done on such occasions. Surely, the hon. gentleman did not mean to say that his officers took no steps to notify to the public through the Press that the execution in question would take place? There was nothing more important on which the Executive had to deliberate than the carrying out of the extreme sentence of the law, and he considered that the Government had been guilty of a grave departure from the usual practice in such cases in not having had the decision of the Executive communicated to the Press.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said that if the hon. gentleman who moved the motion had confined his remarks to the fact that some notification should have been given to the Press of the execution taking place he should have agreed with him, but to say that the Government had departed from the usual practice in such cases was what he must deny. He should like to know in what respect any departure had taken place? As soon as they heard of the unfortunate occurrence at the gaol they sent for the Sheriff, who assured them that he had not departed from the usual course in any particular. Knowledge of the intended execution had reached the public in the same way as before, no official intimation being given of any executions. Surely, the hon. gentleman did not consider it part of the Sheriff's duty to go to the *Courier* or *Telegraph* offices and inform them?—and he certainly could not think that Ministers, whenever they put their signatures to an Executive minute, should go and inform the Press. If the hon. gentleman did so he wandered a long way from the bounds of common sense, and was imposing duties on them that did not attach to their positions at all. He was aware of one thing—that it was perfectly well known in town that the execution was to take place.

Mr. GARRICK was of opinion that there could not be a more important matter than that brought forward by the hon. leader of the Opposition. The question of dealing with the life of a criminal was one of the highest importance, and surely they were not going to follow the practice in Turkey, where, by the simple word of the Sultan, a man might be thrown into the Bosphorous and nothing more said about him. He had been informed that it had always been the practice in the Colonial Secretary's Office, when the Executive had decided that a capital sentence should be carried into effect, that the Colonial Secretary or Under Secretary caused it to be publicly notified that the sentence would be carried out. The reason of that was quite clear—namely, that the public should, if necessary, have an opportunity of moving in the matter, and petitioning, as had been the case in New South Wales lately, that the sentence should not be carried out. They knew that it had been the practice hitherto, after sentence had been passed on a prisoner, that the Judge's notes should be before the Executive Council, and that the Executive should deliberate as to whether the sentence should be carried out or not; and their determination should be made public. But the present was not a singular departure from the practice, as the same secrecy had been observed on one other occasion, as stated by the leader of the Opposition. At any rate, it had been shown pretty conclusively

that no execution should take place until notice has been given by the Executive, so that the public might have an opportunity of moving in the matter.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had been surprised at the hon. member for Moreton talking such rot as they had just heard. That hon. member had referred to a case now pending in New South Wales, but there was no parallel whatever between the two. The hon. member called attention to the fact of this man having been done to death without any publicity having been given to the execution; but it was known to the public weeks ago that the man was sentenced to death, and they had taken no action in the matter as the people were doing in New South Wales. The hon. member had tried to make capital about the Press being absent from the execution; but he took opposite views from the hon. member on that subject, for if he had his way the Press should be excluded from all executions; his experience, and that of others, being that the Press on such occasions glorified the criminal and indulged in highly-sensational descriptions for the edification of a morbid class of the public. The hon. Colonial Secretary had proved clearly and fully that everything that had been done heretofore had been done on the present occasion.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. leader of the Opposition had not proved that anything had not been done, and he had been waiting to hear in what respect there had been any omission. The hon. Colonial Secretary said that when he saw the notice in the papers he sent for the Sheriff, who told him that everything had been done in the usual way. If there had not been an unfortunate accident there would not have been a single word said.

Mr. REA said the hon. member had characterised the speech of the hon. member for Moreton as "rot," but what they had heard from the hon. member himself might very aptly be termed dry-rot, as they had heard from him that the Press should be excluded from all executions;—and the remark was applauded by the Colonial Secretary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Why, I was not even in the House at the time.

Mr. REA said that the hon. gentleman was getting such a preponderating influence on his side of the House that naturally other hon. members were echoing his voice, and that caused him (Mr. Rea) to make the mistake. He had been told that such a thing had never before occurred in this colony as the Press being kept in ignorance of an execution, and no doubt some new influence was being brought to bear to intimidate the Press. He hoped that some other hon. members would express an

opinion whether the Press was to cease to be recognised by the Government of this colony or not.

Mr. WALSH thought that if blame attached to anyone for the unfortunate affair which had taken place it was the Sheriff, who had not the appliances in proper working order, and certainly not to the Government. Everyone must regret the occurrence which had taken place; but it appeared to him that the course usually adopted had not been departed from, and it had not been shown that the Government wished to conceal the execution from the Press. It seemed to him that the Press had failed to get information for itself which was known to others. In reference to what had occurred in New South Wales, there was no analogy whatever to the case before them. This was a case of most brutal murder; it was known to the public, and the man had been sentenced to death, and very properly executed. There were no extenuating circumstances to lead the public to petition for a reprieve. He regretted the circumstance as much as anyone, but it had not been shown that there had been any omission to do what was usually done in such cases. He was sorry that the time of the House had been wasted on such a matter, instead of being devoted to the more important questions before it.

Mr. AMHURST did not suppose for one moment that the Ministry had neglected their duty, but he looked upon the matter from a different point of view. In recent English papers they had heard of a frightful murderer, Peace, who suffered the extreme penalty of death;—that punishment was sufficient grief to his family and friends; but the way the Press made use of the affair, and enlarged in a sensational manner on the incidents, made it much greater. When a man had to suffer the awful penalty of death the Press should not make capital and money out of the crime, and thereby injure the innocent.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he was very glad to observe that the hon. the leader of the Opposition excluded all reference to the unfortunate accident which had taken place, and made not the slightest allusion to the character of the execution. He simply alluded to the fact that an execution had taken place; yet hon. members had objected to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition on the ground that he wished to get up something sensational, because the man's head had been torn off. In that, a great injustice had been done to the hon. gentleman. He (Mr. Rutledge) was sorry the Colonial Secretary should be so exceedingly anxious to abide by the strict letter of the law in a matter of this kind, when he himself had proclaimed over and over again in the House that laws counted for nothing under certain circumstances. He had proclaimed

a principle which was very nearly allied to that, for he had told them that there was no law in the country they could not make a way through if they were so minded. It did not follow that because the letter of the law laid down who were the officials and other persons who should witness an execution that, therefore, witnesses of the execution should be confined to the persons named. A most serious principle was involved in the matter, and it was not an affair for the taste of the Colonial Secretary or the hon. members of the Government to decide. It was a subject which affected the interests of this colony in the highest degree. A man was condemned to die, but in the hurry-scurry of every-day life it was impossible for persons to bear the fact in mind from the time sentence was pronounced until the date of execution. The public, therefore, required to be informed of the fact through the usual channel, the Press. Although it might be a very fortunate circumstance for the community that the man who suffered yesterday was deserving of the extreme penalty, there might come a time, if the principle were admitted that because a man had been condemned by the Judge and the Executive had confirmed the sentence, therefore he was to be smuggled out of the world in that way—there might come a time when some man not guilty, whom it might be exceedingly undesirable to have smuggled out of the world, might be required to suffer the extreme penalty in the same way. If the principle were admitted, the fate of a condemned man might be disposed of by Executive minute, and the affair kept quiet until he had passed out of the world. If the principle of secret proceedings on the part of the Ministry was not to be tolerated, now was the time to stop it, before anyone suffered by reason of such acts. While the evil was brought home to them by the recent catastrophe, they should act with a view to preventing a repetition of it. The Colonial Secretary would not deny that there were a great many points on which he was not required to communicate decisions to the Press, and yet those communications were made. When any information was likely to be palatable to any electorate that was to be propitiated, they knew how readily the Press was set in motion. Although the Government might not be called upon by the letter of the law to announce their decisions, yet according to usage, the unwritten law, they were expected to do so. Might there not have been a desire on the part of the unfortunate man for some religious instruction? What opportunity was given to those who would take an interest in communicating spiritual consolation to this unfortunate man, to ascertain his impending doom? This was a case which could not be sneered or laughed down. An im-

portant principle was involved in this matter. Supposing the principle had been acted upon in the recent instance in New South Wales, of leaving all the world in ignorance of the decision until sentence had been carried out, there would have been no opportunity for the agitation, which had very properly taken place, on behalf of the two unfortunate young men lately condemned to die. If right in one instance, it was right in another. If it was right in the case of a man who was thoroughly guilty and deserving of suffering the extreme penalty, it was right in the case of a man who did not deserve that penalty. He submitted that the Sheriff was not to blame in the matter, but that the Colonial Secretary, knowing the public felt interested in the fate even of criminals, should have instructed the Under Colonial Secretary to communicate the decision of the Executive to the Press. The Press had a right to know, and to keep the information back was not only an insult to the Press, as one of the safeguards of our liberty, but was also an injury to the community at large. The introduction of such a practice tended to endanger the fundamental principles of the Constitution itself.

Mr. SCOTT said he thought that the time of an execution should be well known, and he was glad to hear the Premier give a similar opinion; and if it was necessary that the time should be known, it should be the duty of someone to make the announcement. In future, the Sheriff might be instructed to give information to the local Press. He did not, in the existing circumstances, see that blame attached to anyone. The Sheriff carried out his arrangements as heretofore, and if through ignorance or some want of management on the part of the Press the matter had not been published, it was at least pretty well known all over the town.

The PREMIER said, as a matter of fact, the Clerk of the Executive Council was instructed to intimate to the German Consul the decision that the appeal he had made on behalf of the condemned man could not be entertained;—so that the people who were most interested had the information.

Mr. PATERSON said the hon. member for Cook was the first man he had met who knew anything about the execution.

Mr. McLEAN said the time of the House would not have been wasted if more publicity were given in future as to the time when executions were to take place. Some hon. members had laid blame to the door of the Press, but from a careful reading of the reports he came to the conclusion that the Press knew nothing whatever about the affair. They seemed to have gathered their information from some official who was present, and stated that they had not received the

slightest information as to when the execution would take place. In this colony it was very necessary that publicity should be given in such cases. In the old country the prisoner was executed twenty-one days, he thought, after the sentence, and the very hour of the execution was known. But, here, no one knew when the extreme penalty of the law would be carried into effect;—in some instances the prisoner did not know until a very short time before. As to there being no analogy between this case and the recent one in New South Wales, it was just possible that a case might arise, here, of men condemned to death for offences similar to those of the young men in New South Wales, and no opportunity might be given to the public to take action if they desired to do so. He was glad of the manner in which the hon. leader of the Government had expressed himself, and he felt sure such a case would not take place again.

Mr. STEVENSON said that to his knowledge many hon. members had heard that the execution was about to take place, and a friend of his had heard of it at Too-woomba. He did not see how the Government could be blamed at all; and the leader of the Opposition could only have brought the matter forward to satisfy a maudlin sentimentality. It was a very good thing that such matters were not made public. It was only the grosser part of the people who gloated over such matters when reported in the Press, and who were in hopes that the poor man might be incited to make a speech. The hon. junior member for Enoggera, who seemed to have taken the Colonial Secretary under his special care, should have known better than to say that the man was condemned to death by a Judge. As a matter of fact, the man was condemned by a jury of British subjects, and the case was very well reported in the Press. That hon. member, or any other spiritual adviser, might have known that he was lying there under sentence of death and have given him spiritual consolation. Had there been anything hanging to it they would soon have found it out. The whole affair was a storm in a tea-cup. It was the duty of the Press to make inquiries about such things. Such reports were generally got in that way, and not by the Government or their representatives taking information to the Press. It was not necessary that so much time should be wasted over the matter.

Mr. BAILEY thought it was a remarkable thing that the knowledge of this execution was confined entirely to one side of the House. Nearly every member on the Government side of the House seemed to know everything about it, whereas there was not a single hon. member on the Opposition benches who heard anything of it. It was evident that the newspapers,

for once, had not been in the confidence of the Government. In some respects he agreed with the hon. member for Mitchell;—he was not sure whether it was a good thing for the Press to be admitted on such occasions, for this reason, that “what is shameful to be done is shameful to be written or spoken of.” If a man had been barbarously, cruelly, and disgustingly done to death, it was not a matter for the Press to gloat over or for its readers to be delighted with. A notice, however, should be dispersed through the length and breadth of the land, because the poor man might have relations, friends, or witnesses of whom he knew nothing. This man had come thousands of miles from his own nation to the place where he was hanged secretly, quietly, and unknown. He (Mr. Bailey) hoped the day was fast approaching when such barbarous exhibitions would be done away with. If such scenes could be adequately depicted by the Press there would be hardly a jurymen in the country who would condemn a murderer to such a fate. Such things were very much to be deplored, and their effect would be that jurymen would hardly convict at all unless they had seen the deed done before their eyes, or unless they were very stupid indeed. Only lately they had heard of a case in England, where two poor boys, by mere chance, escaped the very fate of this poor man, not by their own cunning or defence, but by some circumstances which appeared to the judge, and to him alone. But for that fact they might have remained in prison from that day to this instead of being now free. A similar thing might take place any day, and juries would become very reluctant to condemn any human creature to the fate of the man who suffered yesterday.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he was another who had not heard a single word of the execution until he had entered the House, this day. The Government members, it appeared, must have been in the confidence of the Government in this matter. It had been stated by the hon. members for Cook, Normanby, and others, that the time of the House might be taken up with matters of far more importance; but he (Mr. Macfarlane) thought that this was one of the most important matters that could be brought before the House, as there was something in it which should be cleared up. It was known that the Colonial Secretary was a very strongminded man, who did not like to consult anybody or give much information; but he had taken rather too much upon himself in despatching this poor unfortunate man without giving any information to the Press. The life of a man appeared to be of little more value than the life of a sheep in some persons' eyes. They talked about life and death as if they had

the power of giving life. No one who had not the power to give life should take it away. And he agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that, when public opinion was a little more enlightened, such exhibitions would in a very short time cease to be. It was a pity that the affair had taken place, and he sincerely hoped it would not occur again.

Mr. Low pointed out that it was a jury who were responsible, and not the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he must acknowledge that he knew nothing about the execution until he saw the report in the Press. It was evident that there had been some mismanagement—a bad tradesman at work, and the consequence was the horrible and disgusting picture which had been drawn. The Colonial Secretary should pay some attention to this matter, and see that when people were hung the head did not remain up and the body go to the ground. Something of the same kind was nearly taking place in the case of the man Collins. If the Press were invited to be present, they would put before the public a correct view of such scenes. In reality the Press represented the public in the matter, and the very least thing that could be done would be to invite them to be present. The only deficiency he saw in the whole matter was the disgusting way in which the execution had taken place, and he thought in future the rope should be carefully examined, and the hangman ought to manage his business better. With the hon. member for Wide Bay, he hoped that the day was not far distant when such things would be done away with.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said after the allusions of hon. members, he might perhaps be allowed to say a word or two. If he had thought, in accepting the position of Colonial Secretary, that he should be considered hangman, he would never have taken that office. He did not suppose it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to have anything to do with hanging, notwithstanding the statement of the hon. and learned member for Ipswich that the Colonial Secretary had condemned this man to death. The hon. member himself knew better. What had he (the Colonial Secretary) to do with it more than his one vote in seeing the law carried out, and a most cold-blooded murderer punished with death? It might be supposed that he was going into details, but he would rather not. He had examined the Sheriff with regard to this most unhappy accident. The man's head came off; but that did not add to his punishment—it was rather a happy despatch. The Sheriff assured him (the Colonial Secretary) that every regulation had been carried out as on former occasions. The Opposition must be very hard up indeed for something



to hang on to the Government, if they had to take up such a case. It was a brutal murder, and the man had been justly punished. He was very sorry that such an accident had happened, but if it were supposed that the Colonial Secretary had anything to do with such things he would leave his office in two minutes.

Mr. STUBLEY said he was another member who had not heard anything about the execution. The Colonial Secretary had not done credit to his high character by the remarks he had just made. Of course, they knew that he was not the hangman; still he had spoken so as to give the impression that he would not have been unwilling to act as executioner in this case. It was not for the hon. gentleman to say that the man who had been hanged was a cold-blooded murderer—there was no justification for such an assertion, and there should have been the fullest publicity about the execution.

The PREMIER: I would not rise again were it not for the remark that the execution was secret to one side of the House and not to the other. I am justified in stating that the reporter of the *Courier* had the information, but declined to report it because the proprietor did not think it right that it should appear in his paper.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the matter had not been brought forward by the Opposition, but by himself as an independent member of the House who deemed it necessary to call attention to a grave departure from an important public principle—a departure which had never taken place in any other Australian colony, not even in the old convict days. Who ever heard of a man being executed in England without notification to the public Press—if not to the metropolitan Press, certainly to the Press of the place where the execution was to take place? It had been urged that he had not proved that it was usual to give notice; but could anyone anticipate that in the Parliament of a British community a single man would have been found to justify secret execution? He had not attempted to prove that it was customary to give notice simply because he took it for granted that it would be conceded it had always been the rule. It was one of the safeguards attached by the laws of the land to all proceedings in courts of justice that they should be public. The sentence of death was incomplete when passed. The Judge sentenced a man to be hanged on a day to be fixed by the Governor, and when that time was fixed it ought to be made public. This man was condemned in Townsville, he believed. Who knew that he had been removed to Brisbane? When did the matter come before the Executive Council? It must have been hurried, for it could be only a week or two since

the man was brought down. His motion had been met by the purely technical answer that all who were appointed by the law were present; but the law said that all magistrates in the colony could attend if they liked. How were they to know unless the matter was notified through the Press? The Colonial Secretary condemned himself out of his own mouth. Who knew of the execution, except some hon. members opposite? He believed that in every part of the world the practice always prevailed of giving notice to the Press when capital punishment was carried out. Had it ever been departed from in a British community, and could an instance be given, occurring previously to this, where the Under Colonial Secretary had not given information to the Press? Then the House had been told that some reporter of the *Courier* knew of the execution. Was that an excuse at all?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We don't want an excuse.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman said the Government did not require an excuse. He believed the hon. gentleman was rather proud of being the author of secret execution. Well, he might be proud of it, as he was of many other things that he did. He (Mr. Griffith) was shocked at it, and considered it a lamentable occurrence, which should not be treated with levity. What had become, he would ask, of the unfortunate man who had been sentenced to death in January? Had he been executed, or was he still lying in prison awaiting his sentence? Surely, the public had a right to know what had become of the man. It was shocking to contemplate that such a thing could occur in a British colony—that a man could lie in gaol under sentence of death for an indefinite time, and that the public might know nothing about him until he was dead. The matter was of very serious importance. He was glad to hear the Premier admit that it would be a good thing that publicity should be given when the extreme penalty of the law was to be carried out, but he (Mr. Griffith) went further, and said that it was part of their unwritten law that notice should be given; every magistrate had a right to be present, and the law clearly contemplated that publicity should be provided. He was glad to think that, after the discussion, it was improbable such a thing would occur again, and he would now ask for leave to withdraw his motion for adjournment.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

#### ELECTORAL ROLLS BILL—COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee to further consider this Bill; but, on the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman left the chair and reported no progress.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—ADJOURNED  
DEBATE.

On the PREMIER moving that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. J. R. DICKSON said: It is my intention to open the discussion upon the Financial Statement delivered on Wednesday last; and therefore, before the House goes into Committee of Ways and Means, I purpose commenting upon the financial policy of the Government as disclosed by the Colonial Treasurer. I mean to confine myself strictly to the financial aspect of the Statement, leaving the general policy of the Government to be traversed by subsequent speakers. I do not think a period in our history can be found when a Financial Statement was looked forward to with greater expectation. Several circumstances have combined to cause this: the country has been suffering from severe depression, and there has been a large and unparalleled shrinkage in our revenue; consequently all persons interested in the colony naturally desired to see the Government proposals, and to learn our exact financial position. In addition to this, we have been invariably told since the session opened, whenever information has been sought from the Government either upon questions of departmental management, of Ministerial change, or of their general policy, that we must wait for the Financial Statement, as it would clearly embody the policy of the Government. We have also been told that we had no right to endeavour to extract information from the Government until the Statement was presented; and it must also be borne in mind that the Opening Speech of the session gave but a meagre delineation of policy—it was a complete enigma of a policy, meaning everything or nothing. Placing confidence in these utterances of the Ministry, hon. members may have felt reassured for a time; but I am convinced that, if they will candidly express their convictions, they will admit that their expectations of a vigorous comprehensive policy emanating from the Government have outmarched the feeble performance shown in the Financial Statement, and if they had any hopes that the Statement would indicate a financial reform suitable to the times they have also been dispelled. The Financial Statement has the merit of being terse and concise; it is also accompanied by tables which are issued periodically, and which, to gentlemen interested in obtaining reliable information, afford means of securing it not to be found elsewhere. On this occasion they present several new features well worthy of consideration, and they are periodically collated on a platform removed entirely from the political feelings of the Treasurer. I have no contention whatever with these figures and tables; but, on the con-

trary, I shall endeavour to elucidate my arguments with their assistance. This is the most that I can say in commendation of the Financial Speech, which is replete with inconsistencies of statement and policy as expressed by many prominent members of the Government. To these, however, I will more particularly allude as I proceed with my remarks; but one of my greatest objections to the speech is that it has been made to abdicate the true functions of a Financial Statement, which are to lay before the country an impartial review of the state of the Treasury, and to give the expectations of the Treasurer concerning the future. I hold that the present Statement has exceeded its legitimate functions. It has been issued more as a "Ministerial manifesto" with the view of stating the great benefits which will accrue from the policy of the present occupants of the Treasury benches, and, inferentially, the jeopardy into which the country has been placed by the alleged misdoings of the late Government. I have also to urge as an indictment against it that it leaves untouched many important matters which should have been dealt with, and descants upon smaller matters which might have been omitted. Foremost among its sins of omission is the extraordinary absence of all reference to the question of the banking account. No reference has been introduced in it as to the reasons which justified the Government in accepting the tender of one of the banks, although there is a very interesting table inserted showing the comparative charges which would have accrued under the respective tenders of the two banks which sent in offers for the public account; but there is no information given as to the reasons which guided the Treasurer and the Ministry in accepting the tender of one of these banks. In addition to this there is also a very extraordinary omission in the entire absence of any allusion to the causes which led to the disturbance of the special deposits with the banks—a disturbance which was made not for the purpose of replenishing the public account, but with a view to placing additional deposits in a bank of which the Treasurer is an ex-director, and the Colonial Secretary a director. Table H reveals to us a very remarkable fact in connection with the disposal of the public balances. Under the existing agreement with the Government bankers, the minimum sum of £200,000 ought to be retained in their custody before deposits are made elsewhere. This agreement is still in existence, and will not expire until the 10th of September; but from the table that I have mentioned we find that while the amount with the present bankers of the colony has been reduced to £165,000, the fortunate tenderer for the public account, but whose tender has not

yet come into force, has been favoured with a deposit of a quarter of a million—being nearly £100,000 in excess of the amount said to be in the account with the Union Bank on the 30th of April. On this matter the Colonial Treasurer has maintained silence. It is not my intention to mix up the financial condition of the country with the subject of the banking account. I wish to confine myself strictly to the Treasurer's Speech, and intend to reserve for a future opportunity a general discussion upon the whole question of the public banking business. The Treasurer commences his review of the Consolidated Revenue by pointing to a considerable divergence between my estimate in last May and the probable receipts for the year ending June 30th, and he points to the facts in table W, showing an extraordinary decline in value of our exports during the year 1878, indicating that in this matter my estimate was entirely wide of the mark. This table is my justification; and, while I freely admit that there is a very great divergence from the actual Treasury receipts and the amount estimated by me—a depression, I confess, that I could not in my judgment forecast—still I would invite hon. members to look attentively at the figures set forth in this table. It will there be found that during the years 1875, 1876, and 1877, our average exports per head of population amounted to about £19; while, in 1878, a very marked reduction occurred, the amount being only £13 10s. per head. The hon. the Treasurer must know, and hon. members must also be aware of the fact, that my last budget was framed in the beginning of 1878, and I could only have the statistics of preceding years for my guidance. The depression that has occurred has taken place in 1878; and I trust the Treasurer himself has taken fully into his consideration, in framing his estimate for the approaching year, the depression which is herein shown, the effects of which the colony is now feeling, and will feel during the ensuing year. As I have already stated, I freely admit that there has been a remarkable divergence from the estimate I made in May, 1878; but there are many causes which might reasonably produce that divergence. Not only has there been very great and unparalleled depression in our own colony, but this state of things has been largely brought about by the wretched state of trade at home—by the crises which have visited some of the larger provincial banks in England, leading immediately to the paralysing of trade and manufacture, and restricting to a considerable extent trade relations with the Australian colonies. We here have suffered doubly; we have suffered from the decrease in our own production, and also from the disturbance of trade relations with the mother country, brought about

by the financial and commercial panics to which I have referred. The general features of the Treasurer's Statement, according to his own views in connection with the Consolidated Revenue at the present time, are, to cover the deficit in the revenue, to some extent, by transferring from the Railway Reserves Fund the sum of £121,759—for the future he proposes to abolish the railway reserves altogether; to decrease the general expenditure of the Government; and to transfer certain votes for roads and bridges from the general Estimates, so as to be constructed under local rates. His views with regard to the tariff have no bearing, I take it, upon the revenue he expects to receive during the ensuing year, inasmuch as in one portion of his remarks he says their object is—

"To amend the tariff with a view to lightening the burdens on a portion of the population on whom that tariff has pressed too heavily, and to placing them on others who have hitherto escaped their equitable share of taxation."

He also says—

"At the present time our tariff presents anomalies and inequalities which have long called for redress, which, in fact, has been repeatedly promised by previous Governments. To these anomalies I hope to find time during the session to draw the attention of the House. A revised tariff will be submitted, not with the object of increasing the amount of revenue raised through the Customs, but with the hope of lessening the anomalies and rectifying the incidence of taxation."

Therefore, so far as the hon. gentleman's views connected with the Customs are concerned, we are not led to expect that there will be any augmentation of revenue from that source. The chief feature, therefore, of his revenue proposals is, first, to transfer the sum of £121,000 from the Railway Reserves Fund and place it to the credit of the general revenue. The hon. gentleman might just as well have submitted to us at once the total amount of deficiency, and the amount necessary on loan estimate to have wiped out that deficiency, because we see from table Z 3 that he requires, to complete the railways already authorised within the reserves, a sum of £547,000, which, of course, would have been reduced, and less required from the public creditor, had the sum of £121,000 not been transferred to general revenue account. I am aware the hon. gentleman has persistently expressed himself opposed to the operation and the administration of the Railway Reserves Act, and therefore he is quite consistent at the present time in taking the earliest opportunity of advocating their repeal. But while he holds the opinion that territorial revenues should go into the Consolidated Revenue, I would refer him to the opinion of the present Postmaster-General,

which will be found in a debate on the Railway Reserves Bill, in May, 1877, when Mr. Buzacott, then the representative of Rockhampton, moved as an amendment several propositions, the fourth of which embodied the principle—

“That the public interests imperatively demand the immediate introduction of a measure embodying as its essential principle the setting apart of the entire proceeds of rents and sales of Crown lands to a separate account, to be called the Territorial Revenue Fund, against which expenditure under the following heads alone shall be chargeable—namely,

- (a) Interest accruing on the public debt already incurred.
- (b) Interest on further loans authorised by Parliament for public works and immigration.
- (c) Votes for roads, bridges, and buildings.
- (d) Sinking fund for ultimate liquidation of public debt.

Although the hon. member at that time referred to the circumstance that this motion, if carried, would give increased security to the public creditor—a view, however, in which few members of the House participated—his chief object in dedicating these moneys to territorial revenue was to provide that the whole of the Crown lands of each district should be kept apart, so as to create a fund to be available for the carrying out of railways and other public works in such districts. The late member for Rockhampton was a very strong advocate of a territorial fund. I am free to admit that he did not support the principle of the Railway Reserves Bill, because, as he said, it was unfair to make a partial allocation of territorial revenue to one or two districts; but he was distinctly in favour of the whole territorial revenue, including auction sales, pre-emptive purchases, homestead and conditional purchases, and pastoral rents, being placed to a separate fund for the purposes I have indicated. Therefore, there must be a conflict of opinion between the Postmaster-General and the Premier concerning the absorption into revenue of the moneys accruing from a portion of the territorial estate and dedicated to railway construction. I will not go so far as the late member for Rockhampton did; but I will say that the railway reserves have produced this benefit—they have, at any rate, shown us the value of our territorial estate; they have also shown us that our territorial estate can be made to produce considerably to the exigencies of the revenue; and I think, I will show, further on in my remarks, that the hon. Treasurer himself is not above taking a leaf out of their book by proposing to obtain for further railway construction proceeds from land sales within special districts. I have always contended that our territorial sources produce too little to the exigencies

of the State; and indeed, if we look at one of the tables furnished by the Treasurer—table M—we will see that our land revenue has declined from £2 5s. 3d. per head of the population in 1877-8 to £1 15s. 4d. in the present year; and on referring to table N we see that the total land revenue received this year is actually less by about £100,000 than the amount we received last year and previous years. This is an intelligible explanation, combined with reduced receipts through the Custom-house, of our present position, and of the causes of the divergence from my previous estimate. But my contention is this—that if we are to proceed with the construction of large public works through sparsely-populated districts, we must, at any rate, obtain from such districts revenue of some kind which will be sufficient to defray the cost of railways through those districts, so that the charge for interest upon the cost of their construction shall not be saddled upon the general taxpayer. And I will point out to the Treasurer that, while there is great divergence, unfortunately, between my estimate and the actual receipts, he allowed an opportunity to pass by him which would have helped very considerably to place the Treasury in a better position. I refer to recent sales of pastoral leases in settled districts. The way those sales were conducted, by being placed in the market in such a manner that all competition was shut out, would lead us to suppose that the hon. gentleman's regard for the interests of the Crown tenants was greater than his due regard for the exigencies of the Treasury. When we consider that over 12,000 square miles of land were re-offered during the year, I contend that sources of immediate revenue were presented to the Treasurer that he ought to have availed himself of, instead of endeavouring to show us what he stated to be the disastrous nature of the measure which gave him the power to offer those runs to public sale. If he had shown due regard to the requirements of the Treasury, I believe the deficit he has represented as likely to exist on the 30th of June would be very considerably diminished. With regard to the Treasurer's ways and means for the year, I shall heartily congratulate him if he succeeds in obtaining the revenue which he has estimated. But we can only judge of the possibility of obtaining such revenue by contrasting the operations of preceding years, and I think I will clearly point out to the House that the Treasurer has at the present time discounted the future much more largely than even I did. In 1875-6 we received in revenue £1,263,268. The estimate framed that year for the succeeding year represented £1,390,000, showing an estimated increase of £136,732. The actual increase was £173,313. In 1876-7 we received £1,436,581,

and the estimate for 1877-8 was £1,557,000, an increase of £120,000 upon the previous year. The actual increase was £122,530. In 1877-8 we received £1,559,111, and my estimate at that time represented £1,694,000, which was an estimate based upon the actual receipts in the Treasury at that time, and showing an increase of £134,889. Now we come down to the position of the Treasury at the present time. The Treasurer himself estimates that we will receive £1,460,000 by the 30th of June next, and upon that assumption he has estimated for the ensuing year that we will receive £1,658,000—an increase of £198,000—considerably more than has been received in the most prosperous year of the colony's existence. I cannot see that he has any reasonable probability of enjoying this amount of revenue, which would indicate a condition of unparalleled prosperity. His own tables show that there was a larger falling off of exports last year than during any previous years; and yet in the face of those tables, which are for our future guidance—because if our exports diminish the effect must necessarily react upon the condition of the colony generally—we are told he estimates a larger increase than has been obtained by any Treasurer during the last five years. The hon. gentleman may say that his enlarged estimate is justified because, by the abolition of the Railway Reserves Act, he will have an increased revenue from lands, and there is a good deal of force, apparently, in the argument; but, again, I say we can only judge of the future by the operations of the past; and, if table "N" be again referred to, it will be seen that during the present year we have only received £51,000 from the railway reserves. Now, supposing that amount be deducted from the £198,000 increase the Treasurer expects this year, he would still have to find £147,000 for next year, which of itself is a much larger estimate than has been made by any Treasurer for the last four years. I do not care to challenge the whole of the estimate. Under ordinary circumstances I should feel disposed to accept it without hesitation; but at the present time, for reasons I shall give, I feel inclined to demur to the hon. gentleman's expectations of land revenue. He expects to receive from land revenue alone an increase upon the present year's receipts of £96,000. I would ask hon. members, is there any probability of such an alteration in the circumstances of the people of this colony as would justify us in assuming that operations in the purchase of land—in the payments for pre-emptives or taking up land under homestead or conditional selection—are likely to be so extensive as is here represented?

say there is not; and I shall show, further on, that the policy of the Government is of that character that it

will tend to discourage at the present time, and possibly for the next year, any purchasers from locking up money in landed property. I would also point out that while the hon. gentleman's auction revenue is estimated at £700,000—in which I presume he includes the public sales within the railway reserves—he will suffer a diminished revenue under a head which is not here at all adverted to. The item of "other receipts" in miscellaneous services is set down at £99,000. Now, the chief ingredients of which that item is composed are, interest accruing on the public balances in the banks, together with interest accruing upon moneys which have been at the present time absorbed by the construction of railways within the railway reserves. Hon. members will see from table "Z 3," that there has been provision made on account of railways within the railway reserves, the actual amount being £1,940,000. Now, the interest upon this amount is credited to the general revenue under the head of "miscellaneous receipts," either as accruing upon unexpended moneys in the banks, or as interest charged upon the money which is absorbed by the construction of railways; and, should the hon. gentleman succeed in repealing the Railway Reserves Act, he would place himself in this position—that he will not get from the railway reserves, periodically, an interest at the rate of 5 per cent. under the provisions already made for the construction of these lines. Of course, the hon. gentleman might say that he will have, during the year, large sums at fixed deposits in the banks, the interest of which will recoup this special service to the extent of his expectations; but he cannot deny that, under the agreement entered into with the bank whose tender has been accepted, this bank is not bound to hold at interest any sum exceeding £400,000. Therefore, he would have to look elsewhere for some other banks to be custodians of the money, so as to make it productive.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. DICKSON: Well, I can tell him that, under the increased limit fixed with the fortunate tenderer, he will experience great difficulty in getting local banks to accept moneys on deposit unless under very special and guarded conditions—conditions as to the time money may lie, and conditions particularly as to the manner in which money may be withdrawn. Under these circumstances, the hon. gentleman will find his miscellaneous receipts will be considerably interfered with, and, as I said before, he will have to provide not only for future interest for loan, but he will lose to the Consolidated Revenue the interest he would periodically obtain from the operations of the Railway Reserves Act. The Estimates of expenditure are said to have been framed so as to decrease the general

expenditure of the Government; but when we analyse them what do we find? We find the Estimates-in-Chief under expenditure represent, apart from interest on the public debt, £1,214,484. The Estimates now before the House represent an expenditure of £1,129,696, showing an apparent saving of £84,788. Let us now see how this saving has been effected. In doing so I will place before the House the amounts voted on the Estimates of 1878-9, and those on the Estimates-in-Chief for 1879-80, for roads and bridges in the different districts of the colony. In East and West Moreton the amount on the Estimates for 1878-9 was £52,760; for 1879-80, £20,000, showing a decrease of £32,760. Darling Downs, 1878-9, £22,850; 1879-80, £13,500; decrease, £9,350. Western District, 1878-9, £6,300; 1879-80, £3,500; decrease, £2,800. Wide Bay and Burnett District, 1878-9, £17,085; 1879-80, £9,700; decrease, £7,385. Central District, 1878-9, £16,050; 1879-80, £8,609; decrease, £7,450. Northern District, 1878-9, £25,400; 1879-80, £12,500; decrease, £12,900. The total decrease on these items alone is £72,645. If we deduct from this £72,000 the amount of Supplementary Votes last year, so as to compare the two Estimates-in-Chief, we shall see that those for 1879-80 show an actual decrease of £48,395. The Estimates for 1879-80 show a decrease in the expenditure on buildings of £25,625; Public Institutions, Schools of Art, etc., £4,500; Agricultural and Horticultural Societies, £2,750; and Trustees of Cemeteries, £1,200—making a total decrease under these headings as compared with the Estimates-in-Chief of the preceding year of £32,470, being within a fraction of the reduction shown on the Estimates-in-Chief. Hon. members will see, therefore, that this reduction has not been effected by retrenchment, as we have been told so often, but by transferring from taxation to rates this very large amount of service, and which I contend that the public at present are not in a position to bear. I quite agree with the principle of local self-government, but it was incumbent upon the Government to introduce that measure gradually, and in such districts where it could be best borne. After the droughts of the three last years, and the general depression of the agricultural interest of the colony, this is certainly not the time to exact from the people a sum of £84,000 for providing their own roads and bridges; and the Government have themselves endeavoured to discountenance any attempt at local self-government by the introduction of the most unjust and partial scheme of assessment provided in the Divisional Boards Bill now on the table, and which at a future time will excite strong comment, I trust, from both sides of the House. We should naturally infer, from the ex-

pressions made use of by the present Government and their supporters, that they had set themselves resolutely to introduce a scheme for the retrenchment of salaries. Let us see what those retrenchments consist of. The Estimates-in-Chief show a decrease of persons (and I include the Police in this) numbering 238, with a corresponding reduction of salaries amounting to £24,509; and yet on another page of the Estimates we find that a sum nearly equal to this is to go to the increased maintenance of our railway lines and stores—thus at once sweeping away the whole of this apparent saving. I do not object to the increased amount being spent on the maintenance of our railway lines, but I maintain that the increase now proposed is made in the worst possible form. Under the existing system this expenditure is open to the scrutiny of hon. members, but the one proposed affords opportunity for Ministerial prodigality and patronage over which Parliament can possibly have no check. The retrenchment of which we have heard so much is simply a re-distribution of expenditure, and its tendency up to the present time has been to drive out of the colony a large number of the labouring classes who could least afford to bear the loss of employment. Then, again, I must point out that in some of the subdivisions the amounts put down are so small that the necessary work cannot be performed within the specified sums. This can only lead to one result—namely, heavy Supplementary Estimates. The Treasurer has not said a word about Supplementary Estimates;—possibly he labours under the delusion which besets all new occupants of his office, that he will be able to dispense with them entirely. If the hon. gentleman has that idea he is labouring under a great mistake, for it is impossible that the services can be accurately forecast or performed on the amounts set down against them. It will not be out of place to point out to hon. members that since 1859, when Queensland first became an independent colony, up to the end of 1878, our Supplementary Estimates have amounted to £1,821,414, or within a fraction of £100,000 per annum; while within the last five years, from 1873 to 1878, our Supplementary Estimates averaged annually £129,610. These are figures taken from the tables which the hon. gentleman has himself supplied to the House, and they indicate unmistakably that he is labouring under a delusion if he consoles himself with the idea that he will have no Supplementary Estimates to produce. And what, after all, is the saving which the hon. gentleman endeavours to show, between the two sides of his ways and means and expenditure? It is only £51,453—a sum which will be entirely extinguished if any deficiency arises under the heads of land revenue and miscellaneous receipts,

to which I have previously referred. Let us see what the actual position of the Treasury will be on the 30th June, 1880; and this is information which every Treasurer ought to give to the Committee. I accept the Treasurer's own figures with the exception of the Supplementary Estimates of which he has taken no notice, but which I think I am justified in introducing for the very substantial reasons I have given.

The PREMIER: Have you examined table I? That gives you the state of the Treasury at the end of the year.

Mr. DICKSON: Accepting the Colonial Treasurer's own Estimates both of revenue and expenditure, let us see how he stands at the end of the financial year. His estimate of receipts is £1,658,000, and his estimated expenditure £1,606,547, showing an excess of revenue over expenditure of £51,453. If hon. members will turn to table I, they will see that on the 30th June, 1880, in addition to the very heavy balance due to the Consolidated Revenue, to be reduced by a subsequent transfer of railway reserves money, there is outstanding for unexpended votes of previous years a sum of £259,387. This is an abnormally large amount, and considerably in excess of the amounts which have been outstanding at corresponding periods of previous years. Of this amount the Colonial Treasurer estimates that £50,000 must lapse, bringing down the net liability to £209,387. Accepting that position, how do we find the hon. gentleman standing? He admits that he commences on the 30th June, 1879, with a debtor balance of £170,928, and the estimated expenditure for 1879-80 is put down at £1,606,547, while the estimated revenue for that year is £1,658,000; consequently, his position on 30th June, 1880, will be as follows:—

	Dr.	
	£	£
Balance at debit of Consolidated Revenue on 30th June, 1879 ...	...	170,928
Table I. — Unexpended votes of previous years — on that date abnormally large ...	259,387	
Estimated to lapse ...	50,000	
		209,387
Estimated expenditure, 1879-80 — (these are Treasurer's own figures) ...	...	1,606,547
Supplementary Estimates (which must be heavy, for reasons already stated ...)	...	100,000
		<u>£2,086,862</u>

	Cr.	£
By Transfer from Railway Reserves ...	...	121,759
„ Estimated Revenue for 1879-80 ...	...	1,658,000
„ Probable amount of unexpended votes outstanding on 30th June, 1880 ...	...	200,000
		<u>£1,979,759</u>

Thus showing a probable cash deficiency on 30th June, 1880, of £170,103. When the Colonial Treasurer has the opportunity of examining these figures carefully, I do not think he will admit that I have drawn them with any desire to exaggerate the unfortunate position which he will very likely occupy at the end of the financial year we are now entering upon;—my reason for introducing them is to show that the Colonial Treasurer should at once face the real difficulties of the day. I maintain that his policy, which merely consists, so far as revenue is concerned, in transferring £121,000 from railway reserves, is utterly inadequate to the exigencies of the present situation. Several avenues were legitimately open to him for increasing his resources, without being compelled to look to the Custom-house for that purpose. He might very fairly look for them to other sources which are to be found, and for which those who should be assessed would be well able to pay. By that means he might have submitted some real scheme of financial reform for which the colony at no previous period of its existence stood in greater need. I think it will be obvious to all hon. members that these perennial exhibitions of a deficient revenue do not tend to increase confidence in the public creditor. We are now applying continuously to the English capitalists for assistance, and surely our object should be to show that we have those resources within ourselves which will at any rate enable us to meet our current expenses before asking them to hand over to us the control of large sums of money which they will see is actually to fill a deficit in the general revenue. Table N, giving incidence of taxation, shows that such incidence was, during 1877-8, at the rate of £3 8s. 4d. per head of the population, and that during the present year it is estimated only at £3 0s. 10d. per head of the population. This reduction is no doubt caused by diminished consumption; but the Colonial Treasurer would have been quite justified in casting about him and restoring the tariff to its normal condition as shown in preceding years, which would have afforded him relief to extent of £80,000, and Queenslanders would have had no reason to complain had there been increased taxa-

tion in that direction, inasmuch as such taxation would have been no heavier than that borne by our fellow colonists in New Zealand. What I chiefly contend for is, that seeing the necessitous circumstances of the revenue, the Colonial Treasurer was bound to have adopted such means as would have guaranteed the colony from these annual deficiencies, with a view to extinguishing them altogether. In table Z 4, the Colonial Treasurer has furnished us with comparative estimates, showing what our consumption would produce, assuming that we had the tariffs of New South Wales, South Australia, or New Zealand. This is a very ingenious table, but at present we do not want so much to know whether those tariffs would suit us, as how we can devise such ways and means—not necessarily through the Custom-house—as will enable us to meet an inexorable and ever-augmenting expenditure. I am of opinion that it is desirable even to make the industrial classes of the colony pay a little more for the commodities they consume, giving them at the same time perpetual employment, rather than supply them with cheaper commodities and deprive them of the opportunity of employment. The two things ought to go hand in hand. The Government, while insisting on retrenchment, do not keep in view the straitened circumstances of a large number of our fellow-colonists, whom we have introduced here at considerable expense, and whom it is our duty to assist, by a judicious expenditure on roads and public works, in times of depression like the present, when money is scarce and labour hardly to be obtained. Therefore, the propositions of the Colonial Treasurer, so far as revenue is concerned, are altogether inadequate to the requirements of the colony, and are such as will most probably result in a very large deficiency on the 30th June, 1880. The Colonial Treasurer then proceeds to deal with the loan account; and before entering on that matter, I should have liked to learn the causes which led him to place our last loan on the London market at such a remarkably low figure—how it came about that we could only receive £89 per cent. for our loan, while New South Wales, within five weeks thereafter, received within a fraction of £99, and that in the face of our previous loans having been floated at considerably higher figures. If there had been any actual necessity for obtaining the money earlier than the end of the financial year the Colonial Treasurer might have maintained his position, but he cannot show us that the Treasury was so depleted in actual cash balances, either here or in England, that there was an absolute necessity to go into the market at that time and float a loan at such an unprecedentedly low quotation. I trust

this will be a warning to the hon. gentleman, and it is a matter of great importance to consider whether he should be entrusted with his proposed new loan of three millions without some assurance that the money is to be placed at a higher quotation than £89. The chief feature of the new loan is £1,500,000 to extend trunk lines of railway, and also the amount required to be provided to complete the railways already authorised by Parliament; and there are required, in addition to this, £100,000 for immigration—a subject with which I shall leave other hon. members to deal—and a sum of £300,000 is alluringly displayed to provide for branch railways in one part of the colony. One-half of the proposed loan of three millions is to be expended on the extension of main lines of railway. The Colonial Treasurer said he intended to try the experiment on branch lines on the Darling Downs, and, without commenting on the locality chosen, I will simply express a decided opinion that this sum for branch railways is an utterly inadequate provision, if there is any sincerity in the professions of the Government to attempt the construction of branch lines of railway where most needed. The other items are—electric telegraphs, £40,000; loans to local bodies, £200,000; harbours and rivers improvement, £200,000; and public buildings, £60,000;—making altogether a sum of about £2,980,000. Before proceeding to review the constituent parts of this estimate, I shall comment on the manner in which the hon. gentleman intends to provide interest upon this large amount of borrowed money. The Treasurer wishes to commit the House to a proposal to borrow some three millions of money by loan, and, while I myself do not dissent from a loan of this magnitude at the present time, I think I am quite justified in criticising the distribution of these loaned moneys, and also in referring to the extraordinary expectations by which the Treasurer proposes to defray the interest. He says that interest will amount to £133,000, and to this amount he will have to add a further sum of £87,000 odd to provide for the interest of those loan moneys already borrowed and in course of expenditure within the railway reserves for the construction of lines already authorised by Parliament. This will constitute a permanent annual charge upon Revenue for this loan and those previously obtained of £220,000. Let us see how the Treasurer intends to obtain this amount. In the Financial Statement he proceeds to say—

“To provide interest for this amount about £133,000 per annum will be required, and the Government, in selecting the works on which the loan should be expended, have proceeded with a view to provide interest from the land, and so avert the necessity of additional taxation. Every mile of railway by which the



interior of the colony is penetrated makes available for pastoral occupation and for conditional and homestead selection, as well as for sale by other means, an additional area of Crown lands previously almost valueless for any practical purpose. To the augmented land revenue thus procurable, and the revenue obtained from the increased railway traffic resulting from the extension of profitable settlement, the Government confidently look for ample means to defray the interest on the contemplated loan."

The Treasurer further says that—

"We believe the prospective land revenue will be adequate to pay the additional interest charge involved by the policy here foreshadowed."

As I have already stated, taking his own figures, £220,000 will be required annually to provide for the charge upon this new loan and previous loan moneys. That is to be provided without at all interfering with the Treasurer's estimated revenue from lands accruing to the Consolidated Revenue of the colony. We can only judge of future possibilities by looking at what we have achieved in the past; and on referring to table N it will be seen that during the whole of the time the Railway Reserves policy has been in operation—now nearly four years—£430,135 has accrued from alienation of land within the reserved districts. If we add to this the amounts received from auction sales during the same period, and which went to the general revenue of the colony, we find £123,318 accrued from auction sales, which, added to the previous amount, averages, during the time of the existence of the railway reserves the annual sum of £139,500. Yet, in the face of this, the Treasurer tells us he expects to obtain a land revenue to the extent of £220,000 by abolishing the railway reserves system, and by looking to land solely for the means to provide the interest on his new loan. This is a very great exaggeration of the policy which was pursued by the preceding Administration, and must necessarily result in mischievous consequences, because I maintain that during the next year or two the purchasing powers of the colony in freehold property will be considerably restricted. The Treasurer, therefore, is relying upon expectations which are likely, to use his own words, to be falsified. The Treasurer may say, in reply, that it is not the intention to sell lands by auction to the extent which I have intimated. He may say that with increased pre-emptives and settlement along lines of railway, resulting from conditional and homestead selections, he will be prepared to make good his expectations; but if he will reflect upon what he has received from railway reserves during the past four years for these special services, he will see that he cannot so congratulate himself. We have

received during the past four years in railway reserves, from pre-emptives alone, £66,000, while from homestead and conditional selections only £42,000—in all £108,000, which is equivalent to receipts of about £27,000 per annum. I contend the Treasurer is bound to satisfy us more fully than he has condescended to do regarding his expectations of a territorial revenue sufficient to provide the interest of this large sum of money. It is very well for the Treasurer to state that these amounts will be received; but I contend that at the present time, in addition to the amounts he expects to receive from the territorial estate on account of the Consolidated Revenue, the expectation of £222,000 per annum additional from land will be entirely falsified, and if he cannot obtain this increased revenue from land what is the consequence? It must be that the taxpayer of this colony will be saddled permanently with the augmented taxation necessary to provide interest. There is no getting away from this position: and the hon. gentleman must satisfy the House as to the possibility of his obtaining this increased amount of interest in the manner indicated, without its becoming a permanent charge upon the taxpayer, who ought not at the present time to be called upon to contribute the interest of this loan, especially when we regard the features of its distribution. I contend that this million and a-half, which the hon. Colonial Treasurer proposes to borrow for extending railways into the interior, will not by any means produce the results anticipated by him—namely, the accommodation of settlement by conditional and homestead selection. The railways into the interior may be looked upon as merely conferring additional value on pastoral properties held for speculative purposes; so that I contend, if the hon. Treasurer wishes railways to be constructed for the benefit of one class only, he should show what prospect he has of obtaining from that class the revenue to pay the interest on the construction of such railways, either from territory or from occupation, or how he will assure the country against the interest on these railways becoming a permanent charge on the general taxpayers of the colony. If the hon. gentleman is relying on his present proposals to effect this, he is labouring under a hallucination which he will very soon discover. Again, the hon. gentleman has not told us in what direction these railways are to go. He has merely stated that they are to penetrate the western country, but has given us no idea as to particulars. I will ask hon. members to refer to the railway receipts, and say if the figures therein given justify us in committing ourselves to the construction of 500 miles of railways into the interior when the receipts from our railways already made are daily becoming

less in proportion to the extensions opened up. The Treasurer proceeds to say—

“For the immediate extensions of our lines into the interior, I believe it is essential to make provision, as I propose, by loan; for future extensions, I think a strong effort should be made to have them carried out on another principle. Five hundred miles added to our then main lines will carry each of them into the richest of our country, of value sufficient to tempt capitalists to undertake our future railway-making on the basis of land grants.”

Now, it will be observed that the hon. gentleman, whilst entirely condemning the system of railway reserves, on the grounds of its allowing capitalists to lock up large tracts of land at less than their value, in advance of settlement, actually advocates further railway making on the basis of land grants. I would ask hon. members to note the inconsistency of the hon. gentleman in the statement he has previously made in this House and in that which I have just quoted. Again, I must add that in addition to there being no information laid before the House as to the exact destination of these lines, we are assured, on the assumption of estimates never yet realised in this colony, that such railways can be constructed within £3,000 per mile. I think, sir, that we should have some proofs that they can be constructed for some economical sum before we allow ourselves to be committed to their construction. Now, sir, to point out the divergence of views between the members of the present Government, the hon. Treasurer says—

“I do not think that it would be just to burden each district with the entire cost of its public works, or that the expenditure upon them should be provided solely from local taxation. The land revenue is general, and a large portion of it should therefore be applied to the improvement of the colony.”

When I heard these remarks I could hardly understand how the hon. gentleman could have assented to the introduction into this Chamber of a Financial Districts Bill. Certainly, the hon. Minister for Works must consider this a very questionable support of the measure on which he has set his heart largely, and which he hopes to see carried into law during the present session. With regard to branch lines of railway, I do not intend to go into any details—my remarks are general; but I consider that the provision made for these lines—namely, £300,000, will be found inadequate if the Government really have them in contemplation, and that when a sum of £1,500,000 is proposed for the extension of main lines into the interior, more consideration should be shown towards the settlers on the coast lands who have, under the present policy of the Government, not only no reasonable hope of getting railways, but have actually to lose

1879—z

the amount formerly put down for making their roads. I think I have sufficiently referred to the financial policy of the Government, and I must say that I was disappointed at such meagre results being placed before the House, the mode proposed by the hon. Colonial Treasurer of meeting the difficulties of the colony being only a book-keeping transfer and altogether inadequate to our present serious position. I do not see that in causing public works to be provided for out of local rates, instead of out of general taxation, the hon. gentleman is doing anything to contribute to prosperity. He proposes to borrow £3,000,000, half of which is to be applied to enhancing the value of pastoral occupation, and I think it is incumbent on this House, however much we may wish to see such lines constructed for public purposes, to scrutinise most closely the mode in which it is proposed to pay the interest on the cost of such lines, and see that it does not become a permanent charge on the taxpayers of the colony. The hon. gentleman has condemned the system of railway reserves, and would apply the balance of that fund, as it has accrued up to the present time, to assist a needy revenue. Yet, having condemned the reserve system, because it has locked up such large areas of land, he now consistently proposes to carry on future railway making on the basis of land grants. He proposes to expend half the loan on lines for pastoral lessees into the interior, whilst the settlers below the Range are to have the privilege of paying the interest on such lines whilst they are not to have anything done for them in the shape of roads, unless each district is specially taxed for the purpose. The Divisional Boards Bill, which is to come into operation as soon as it has passed both Houses, is not attended in their Financial Statement with any provision for working it. There is no provision for giving effect to the endowment clauses, there being no votes on the Estimates for such expenditure; whilst the £51,000 surplus shown in the Estimates will never exist, not only because estimated revenue is in excess of probabilities, but also because no provision has been made for Supplementary Estimates. If it be stated that the districts can be carried on from the £200,000 on loan, to be borrowed and advanced to them at interest, then the residents are in this position—they contribute the same as ever to the revenue, and are to get nothing from the revenue for roads, &c.; while even for the endowment to which they become entitled under their local rates they have to provide an annual interest. The small amounts which have been periodically voted for the benefit of residents in towns and suburban districts, whether for horticultural societies, schools of art, maintenance of cemeteries or reserves, are to be withdrawn,

and the whole brunt of the reductions, or retrenchment as the Government chooses to call it, will press most heavily on the labouring classes of the colony. The policy of the Government, as disclosed in the Financial Statement, indicates rather an intention to decry the credit of the colony than to make that provision which is absolutely required if we wish to recover for the colony its temporary loss of prosperity. In illustration of this I would point to a table newly introduced among the Treasurer's tables—namely, Z 2, a return of the number of sheep in each of the pastoral districts of Queensland for the ten years from 1869 to 1878 inclusive. In it the Government set forth that there has been a diminution in the number of sheep to the extent of 3,200,000. This table was only introduced, to my mind, to assist the Treasurer in asking this House to build railways to follow up the removal of sheep further westward. I think he ought, for the credit of the colony, to have accompanied this table with another showing to those outside the colony who are interested in Queensland statistics that, while we have suffered a diminution of the number of sheep, it has been made up by the increase in cattle;—for, by the statistics of the colony, while in 1869 the number of cattle was 994,000, in 1878 they had increased to 2,300,000. I instance this to justify my remarks that I consider the Government, during the period of their administration, have rather decry'd the credit of the colony than maintained it in that position which the country has a right to assume. When the Colonial Treasurer, on Wednesday, elected to make his Financial Statement in Committee of Ways and Means, I fully expected he would have disclosed not only the necessity for providing additional revenue, but that his selection in making his Financial Statement in that Committee was an evidence of his intention to do so. Under present circumstances, I fail to perceive the necessity of the Statement being delivered in that Committee. The hon. gentleman has not alluded to a single feature whereby revenue can be legitimately increased;—even the Stamp Duties Bill was passed over in complete silence. At the present time we are in ignorance as to how far we are justified in providing legislation in that direction, or the assistance it will be to the Treasury. I contend the hon. gentleman should have shown how he intended to meet the necessities of the revenue. He must face during the next year a cash deficiency of over £100,000, and he should set himself seriously to consider in what manner the revenue can be provided, so as to prevent the recurring spectacle of an annual deficiency. I was rather surprised at a statement made by the Treasurer concerning Customs tariff.

While he alluded to his intention to deal hereafter with the Customs tariff to alleviate irregularities, and not with a view to obtaining increased revenue, he did not follow up such a declaration by immediately submitting to the Committee proposals for such alterations, and instruct the Custom-house officers to collect under the amended list. I know no precedent of such an authoritative intimation being made, with a view of revising the tariff within a few weeks, and I am convinced that such an action has been highly injurious to the commercial interests. Holders of stocks, both bonded and free, are perplexed as to their future operations. Buyers only purchase from hand to mouth, in expectation that the amended tariff may disclose quotations more favourable to them. Therefore, I feel justified in saying that the Colonial Treasurer committed a grave error of judgment when he himself admitted that there are irregularities in the tariff demanding attention, and did not follow up the statement immediately by moving the amendments he proposed, and acting at once upon them. The Treasurer himself admits that, with regard to the fiscal condition of the colony, it is apparent that for many years the ever-increasing expenditure has been met by an elastic revenue. Those were the years during which the country was presided over by a Liberal Administration; but what evidence do we see that that state of things is likely to be continued? The whole policy of the present Government is of the character to deprive people within the colony of the employment they might reasonably look forward to. I cannot see any proposal of the Treasurer which will stimulate, next year, the elasticity of the revenue through the action of his own Administration. There is no doubt, as he has stated, the colony must recover; but I contend that the natural recovery, and the prosperity, attended by elasticity of revenue, ought not to be credited to any Government. The colony might just as well be without a Government as have one which only maintains itself in office not by any merits of its own, and does not contribute to promote the prosperity of the colony, but accepts as owing to their own action the improvement which must naturally attend the recovery of the colony from severe depression. The Colonial Treasurer will have to look deeper and further ahead, and it will not do for him merely to congratulate himself and the country upon the immediate increase of prosperity. If we proceed with the construction of the Western lines—and that is the whole burden of the speech—we must not expect the immediate appearance of a financial millenium. I cannot see that the mere construction of those lines—the cost of which must be borne by the taxpayer—will conduce to that desired result.

I contend that the Government have not gone the right way in their financial policy to promote the prosperity of the colony, or disclose such schemes as would increase the revenue and assist its recovery. It may be held by some that, when times are dull, it is desirable not to disturb trade by introducing further taxation; but, to quote the words of a writer in a late article on finance—"Those are the very times when a Treasurer should look over the weak points in his armour and strengthen them." Taxation is at all times an unwelcome subject, but an increase not necessarily through the Custom-house, but through some other avenue, would have taught the taxpayer the necessity of economy on his part if he desired to see the colony pull through the existing depression. The Government have not addressed themselves to meet the financial exigencies of the times; they have not promised nor attempted to remove or modify a single tax for the benefit of trade or to assist revenue. The whole scheme is weak and unsuited to the very difficult position of financial matters in the colony—it is even worse in its mischievous tendency. It tends to cast a glamour over the eyes of the people of this colony by the proposal to borrow a large amount of public money, a proposition at all times palatable to a large proportion of this community, and purposes to expend a moiety of that large sum in the construction of public works for the benefit of one class solely. This must add enormously to the already heavy responsibilities of the country, and must be felt permanently by the taxpayers. All these proposals which have been made by the Colonial Treasurer will be weighed and valued at their true worth by the majority of hon. members in this Chamber when—and I trust it will be before long—of the merits of the policy of the present Government they shall have become disillusioned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan):—I think, sir, the hon. gentleman who has just sat down will not be offended by my telling him that I have frequently heard him deliver better speeches. Every hon. member who had a seat in the last Parliament must admit that, in comparison with the hon. gentleman's previous speeches, his address was very poor indeed. And it is not from want of ability on his part, for I will do him the credit of saying that I believe he has great ability—greater than he has displayed to-night; but simply because he was unable to make any argument sufficiently strong to injure the statement made by the Treasurer. I shall, however, leave the Colonial Treasurer to deal with the hon. gentleman's speech so far as it relates to financial matters, and also his criticism of the tables. I shall simply deal with one or two matters that

fell from him with regard to the department I represent at the present time. But before making any special remarks upon any particular point in his speech, I will remark that it seemed to be a laboured argument against the extension or applicability of the principle of local government. Coming from the Treasurer of the late Ministry whose principal card for years and years was local government, the statement was very ungraceful indeed. He charges us with attempting to bring forward local government at the wrong time, and says people will be called upon to tax themselves when they are not able to do so. Holders of property to be benefited by the improvements will not be able, he says, to raise any more taxes; and yet he asks us to do what he says people themselves are unable to do. I ask, in the name of common sense, if people themselves are unable to be taxed any more, how are we to tax them any more? I maintain, so far from our action in regard to a few men being discharged from employment being injurious to the great body of the working classes, our action has been beneficial; and I do not agree with the statement made by the hon. gentleman that we are obliged to find work for the people—that we are obliged to borrow money for the purpose of giving employment to people. If people are in distress we are certainly obliged to assist them, but the hon. gentleman must prove that they are in distress; it is not because some men are idle that we should find employment for them, but we have found work for three men to every one dismissed; and the hon. gentleman seems to forget the great body of working men who have been obliged to furnish the taxes for employing the few who were discharged. He commiserates the small handful, the 200 or 250 persons, who have been discharged from work which was not profitable to the country, and whose services could be easily dispensed with, but he seems to forget the great body of taxpayers who were taxed unfairly to keep these men in employment;—that argument comes badly from a gentleman professing liberal principles, and if it be liberalism I care for none of it. If we find employment for people it must be on profitable reproductive works, and we have done this for three times the number dismissed. The hon. gentleman is not the advocate of the working man as he pretends to be; he has repeatedly taken the part of the working man in this House, and said that we are injuring the credit of the colony by dismissing men; but this Local Government Bill, to the application of which he now objects, is in favour of the working man, and is expressly intended to benefit him by relieving him from paying taxes for enhancing the value of property, as he has done ever since the colony be-

came independent. This Local Government Bill will be the means of taxing property, and relieving the working man of the taxes which he has been hitherto paying, and which have been spent by Liberal Governments and those who preceded them for the enhancement of property. I say we are the real advocates of the working man, and shall benefit him by taking from him the taxes hitherto paid by him and putting them on the holders of the property which has been enhanced in value by the expenditure of the ten millions that the colony has borrowed. It is time we arrived at this stage: although employment is scarce it is time we had this state of things altered, and the burdens placed upon the shoulders of those best able to bear them, and who ought to bear them. The hon. gentleman says that we are proposing to take railways into the interior for the profit and benefit of holders of pastoral country, there. I do not mean to go into the debate over the three-million loan afresh, for that is the sum and substance of the argument; but if we are going to extend railways into the interior it will not be for the benefit of the pastoral lessees, but it will be for the purpose of enhancing the value of the property of the people. The Crown lands of the colony are the property of the people, and by every farthing that we increase their value we increase the value of the people's property;—no amount of argument can displace this fact that Crown lands are the property of the people of this colony, and that if they are allowed to go to waste as they are at present in the interior, that property will be of no benefit to the great body of the people; but if we spend money upon it, the same as any person having land which requires improvement, and enhance its value, we enhance the value of the people's property, and will derive more revenue from it by means of the increased rental that it will bring, and in other ways. It is all very well for the late Colonial Treasurer to try to mystify this Assembly as regards the policy of the Government;—our policy is exactly as was stated last year—a vigorous works policy combined with strict retrenchment in departmental expenditure. Nothing is more certain than that we have tried as far as we could, and intend as far as our ability will permit, to carry out the policy advocated by us last session—a policy which was adopted by the majority of the electors of this colony—which placed us in power, and which we should be traitors to the people, to ourselves, and our principles, not to attempt to carry out. It is all very well to say that we have only reduced the expenditure on roads and bridges; but let hon. members look at the Estimates, and they will see it extends further; several other

departments having been cut down, but not so much as roads and bridges. I maintain, however, that by touching roads and bridges, and placing the expenditure upon property, we shall be relieving the working man who has paid for their making in the past. If the late Colonial Treasurer will look at the Estimates, he will find several other departments which have been reduced. There is, for example, a decrease of £3,000 in the Colonial Treasurer's Department; of £11,000 in that of Public Lands; and of between £4,000 and £5,000 in that of Mines; but I maintain that if we had only stood still without increasing the cost of working the departments, that even that would have been economy. When we look at the Estimates, year by year, as brought forward by the late Colonial Treasurer and his predecessors, and see increases of £50,000, £100,000, or £150,000 over the preceding year, and also see that our population is increasing, and the cost of government is increasing—if we had only stood still at the exact amount of the last Estimate, even that would be economy and retrenchment. We have gone further, though. We have dispensed with a great number of useless hands, employed by the late Government; we have cut down, as far as we could, the different departments, and by cutting down the Statement to a proper pitch, so as to meet the increased cost of the construction of railways, which will enhance the value of the people's property, we shall be able to meet all the demands which will be made upon us in the interests of good Government and of the public revenue also. The late Colonial Treasurer also said something about the severe financial position of the colony now existing. I think he said that under the Liberal Government the revenue was elastic, and that we had now arrived at a severe financial position: if we have done so it certainly is not due to the action of the present Government;—whatever position the country is in it must have been brought about chiefly by the late Government, because, when we took office, we found the country in the severe position to which the hon. gentleman alludes, and it does not come with a good grace for him to allude to what was caused by himself and his colleagues. If, however, the revenue has been elastic during the years in which the Liberal Government held office it was not because of the Government. An elastic revenue may come from other sources besides Government, and I say it came to the country in spite of the Government. The elastic revenue was caused by circumstances over which no Government had any control: it came chiefly from the large quantities of land taken up by the people, from agricultural settlement, the extension of occupation in the interior, and the great extension of our

Northern goldfields. These were the sources of elastic revenue, and no Government can lay claim to them. Since we came into office we have let contracts for railway construction by which we shall, at the very lowest calculation of the contractors themselves, be able to afford employment to from 700 to 900 men additional; and the number of men who have been dismissed from the different Government departments of all classes, from staff officers down to the labouring man, will not amount to half that number; so that the argument which the hon. gentleman adduces—that we have depressed the labouring class through diminishing employment—falls to the ground, when taken into account with the increased employment we have afforded by means of contracts for railway construction. I take no credit for this, any further than that it is an answer to the accusation that the Government decreased the employment of the people by dispensing with men who were employed on work which they should not have been, and who are now more profitably employed, or can be so on the making of railways. The hon. gentleman also deprecated appealing to English capitalists; but this is a strange accusation from one who himself appealed every year to them.

Mr. DICKSON: I did not use the word in that sense: I merely deprecated a loan without information as to its distribution.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. gentleman will only wait until the proper time comes, he will be told of the distribution of the loan. He cannot expect to be told, now, upon a discussion of this kind, of the distribution of a loan of three millions. Information will come in its own good time, and then the hon. gentleman will have full and ample opportunity to criticise the matter. I certainly took his remark to mean that he deprecated continual appeals to the English capitalists, and thought it came very ill from a Colonial Treasurer who, year after year, appealed to the English capitalists, and was a member of a Government who doubled the public debt during the time they were in office. I may have been mistaken in my application of the words as they were used, but I could put no other meaning upon them. I said, in starting, that I had no intention of going into a deliberate criticism of the speech of the ex-Colonial Treasurer—that I simply intended to remark upon the portions referring to public works; and I think I have shown him that, whatever dismissals may have taken place in the Works Department, have been fully compensated for by the additional employment given in other directions by the same department. And so far from being in any way deleterious to the interests of the working man,

I maintain that our policy, carried out so far as it has been yet, is for the immediate benefit of the working man, and will be for his benefit still more in the future. The working man of this colony is an independent man. He does not require to be employed by any Government or any corporation or any people merely for the purpose of finding him employment. I know the feelings of the great body of the working men of the country, both north and south, and I know this—that they will sooner be employed at reproductive works than at work which degrades them to, in a certain sense, the condition of paupers. I maintain that in abolishing, to a certain extent, conditions of employment which should never have existed, we have tended to raise the working man, not only in his own estimation, but also in the estimation of the people of the colony. And so far from *bond fide* working men appreciating the sympathetic remarks made use of from time to time by hon. gentlemen opposite, I believe it is quite the other way, or else I am very much mistaken in my estimate of the working men of Queensland. I have always found, during my time in the colony, that the working man is the most independent man in the country; that he will accept no charity of any kind, and that he is a man always willing to work, and work hard and honestly for what he earns. I maintain that the working men of the colony placed the present Government in the position they now occupy, upon the enunciation of the policy we are now attempting to carry out, and which I have not the slightest doubt a majority of the House will assist us in carrying as much as a majority of the country put us in our present places to carry it out.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I do not think the working men of this colony, to whom the hon. member alludes so much in his speech, are likely to accept him as their exponent. Whatever claims the hon. gentleman may have had to be regarded as one of the working men of the colony, I think he has entirely forfeited that claim. He sits now in this House as a member of a Government that represents, more fully than any other Government we ever had in this colony before, one class of the community; and I say the hon. gentleman's claims to be regarded as a representative of the people are completely gone. I shall say no more with regard to that part of his speech. Now, sir, this debate, in consequence of the action of the Government during the present session, partakes to a great extent of the character of a debate upon the Opening Speech. The Opening Speech was so very vague, and conveyed so little information, that it was practically impossible to fasten upon it, or discover in it, any policy of the Government at all. We

were informed that the policy of the Government would be fully disclosed at a later date when the Treasurer came to make his Financial Statement;—and now we have, what? We have a statement which contains some information, and connected with it are a number of tables supposed to give more. From these, I presume, we are to gather the policy of the Government; but really we are in the position of knowing very little about their policy. However, little as we know, I propose to address myself to the general aspects of it so far as we can discover it from the Treasurer's Statement, and I propose also to refer to some observations he made in addressing the House in Committee of Ways and Means, on Wednesday last—in commenting on the conduct of his predecessors. This, I believe, is a feature seldom to be found in a Treasurer's speech. This speech is supposed generally to give the country information as to its present financial position and the financial policy of the Government for the future. Whatever information the statement contains as to the present position of the colony has been dealt with very clearly by my hon. friend, the member for Enoggera, and I propose to refer to the Statement from a somewhat different point of view. The hon. the Treasurer, in the first place, explained why the colony was in its present depressed condition—why the revenue had not exhibited its customary buoyancy—and, after referring to the decline of pastoral pursuits followed by disastrous seasons and low prices in the European markets, he referred to the depression in our goldfields, and expressed a hope that new alluvial fields would be discovered shortly. He then went on to refer to what he called the disastrous effects of the railway reserves legislation. That is a matter of principle to which this Parliament has been committed for some years. In 1875 the Parliament adopted the policy of railway reserves, and from that time to the present it has been continued. The hon. gentleman affects to attribute the depressed condition of the Treasury at the present time, in a very large degree, to the Railway Reserves Act. I will refer to two or three of his statements to show the nature of his arguments. He says—

"The action of these laws on the Treasury has had the effect of a reduction of taxation. Such a reduction never takes place in ordinary practice unless a clear case has been first made out that the revenue is not required; but that was never attempted to be shown here. Since these railway reserve laws have been enacted, £430,000 has been withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund on their account. A portion of this amount accrued from what may be termed abnormal land sales—that is, from land which would not have been sold otherwise than for the purposes of railway construction. These abnormal sales I estimate to have

produced £300,000. Deducting this from the gross amount, a sum of £130,000 remains, and this would have gone a considerable length towards covering the deficit now looming before us."

Further on, he says—

"We have never really yet been able to spare from our land revenue any sum for railway construction, because the entire amount has been wanted and used for payment of interest on our loans. To appropriate any portion of that revenue solely to payment of interest on any specific railway is merely to divert the Consolidated Revenue into a separate account and make it perform the same work as before, but under certain obvious disadvantages."

Now, how on earth does that show that the deficiency in the revenue is owing to the Railway Reserves Act? The hon. gentleman says a sum of £300,000 has been raised by abnormal land sales, which otherwise would not have been raised at all, and the remainder would have gone to the Consolidated Revenue. But what does he propose to do?—to put it into the Consolidated Revenue, so that things will be exactly as if that Act had not been passed. The £130,000 will reduce the supposed deficit by that amount; but how are our finances any better off by the transaction? They are exactly as they were. I do not see how we have lost by the transaction any way. The £130,000 would have been transferred, as the hon. member for Enoggera has shown, from time to time, under the head of "miscellaneous services," to the General Revenue; and it remains exactly as it is. As to the £300,000 received from abnormal land sales, it has gone to the construction of railways; and as the hon. gentleman says we should not have raised money by these abnormal sales of land, I suppose we should have borrowed the money and paid interest on it—a thing we have not now to do. So far as that is concerned, I cannot follow the hon. gentleman's argument that the railway reserves legislation had the effect of increasing the deficit. He says—

"To the railway reserves legislation, then, is due much of our present financial embarrassment."

We all know that the hon. gentleman objects to the Railway Reserves Act, but in attributing to that Act the present financial embarrassment he is referring to two things as cause and effect which have no such connection whatever. If he had said that the £300,000 raised by abnormal sales of land was the cause of the depression in our producing interests, or of the financial condition of the colony—at least his premises might have been right, and there would be something to lead to a conclusion; but so far as he has gone, his premises have no connection whatever with his conclusion. The condition of the Treasury is now the same, except

as to the £300,000, as it would have been if the Railway Reserves Act had not been passed. Then the hon. gentleman went on to refer to the decreased revenue from the Southern and Western Railway, and what reasons did he give for the decrease? He said—

“One cause of unprogressiveness stands out prominently. Railway extension, to be successful, should stimulate settlement. Has, then, the settlement which we had a reason to expect been induced by the extension of the Southern and Western Railway? The answer is. No. Effectual means to discourage settlement on the richest lands which the railway is approaching have been taken by the sale at auction of large areas a long way in advance of the legitimate demand.”

Does the hon. member mean to stand up in this House and tell us that if the land at Roma had not been sold the receipts on the Southern and Western Railway would not have diminished?—does he mean that?

The PREMIER: I mean exactly what I say there.

Mr. GRIFFITH: He tells us that that is one cause of unprogressiveness that stands out prominently; but what has the sale of £300,000 worth of country in the Western Railway Reserve got to do with the diminished returns from the Southern and Western Railway? The hon. member might have said that ten years hence there would be less traffic; but did he mean to say that there was, now?

The PREMIER: I do; I know it to be true, too.

Mr. GRIFFITH: If this £300,000 worth of land had not been sold it would be in exactly the same hands it is now—that of pastoral tenants; it would carry exactly the same number of sheep, and the traffic to the railway from that would have been exactly the same as it is now. It was all very well to say it would not —

The PREMIER: It would have been in farms.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Some day it might be in farms. Does the hon. member mean to say that the £300,000 worth of land would have been in farms already?

The PREMIER: I do.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I do not think the hon. gentleman would venture to say that in Committee, where we could give him a little cross-questioning and get the reasons for his statement. The hon. gentleman tells us that since 1876—since the Railway Reserves Act came into operation—£300,000 worth of land have been sold, and that if that land had not been sold it would now be under farms and the traffic from those farms would have kept up the revenue of the S. and W. Railway. The proposition only requires to be stated to answer itself. He then goes on to say—

“The Government, therefore, through past legislation have lost an increased traffic that

should have followed settlement, and capitalists have been cramped in their operations by the bleeding process they have undergone.”

I think the hon. gentleman must go a little further, and find some better reason for the diminution of the traffic on the S. and W. Railway. He goes on further to say—

“The diminution of traffic on our existing lines results, to a considerable extent, from the reduced area of country at present under sheep. The causes of this reduction are the general failure of the coast country as the habitat of the sheep, the marsupial plague, and the bad seasons we have until lately encountered.”

Now, how much of that applies to the S. and W. Railway? The number of sheep in East and West Moreton was 68,000 in 1876, 32,000 in 1877, and 30,000 in 1878. I do not think that has had much to do with it. Turning to the Darling Downs, I find that the total diminution, there, has been 300,000; that, also, cannot have had much influence in that direction. Then there is the marsupial plague. I do not think that has affected that part of the country very much, and we may dismiss it from our calculations. I come now to a much more important matter. The hon. gentleman says—

“Our present financial position, however, urges on us the necessity of economical reform, which we propose to initiate by saddling upon property the expenditure incurred for its improvement. Our disbursements from the Works Department go directly to the improvement of property, and a property tax to provide the means for such disbursements becomes the natural and inevitable consequence.”

When the hon. gentleman got as far as that I thought I saw light—I thought he was coming to his senses; but it seemed so utterly inconsistent with the views of hon. gentlemen sitting behind him that I concluded I was mistaken. In his next sentence he says—

“While the working man is free to carry his labour to the best market, taxation solely for the improvement of property should not be allowed to encroach upon his means.”

I am glad to be able to agree with the hon. gentleman's sentiments, though I differ from his conclusions. He goes on—

“The application of Customs revenue to public works would, therefore, be unjust to a large body of the taxpayers. How, then, is a property-tax to be raised? Can the Central Government either impose such a tax as equitably or profitably, or spend the proceeds of it as judiciously or economically, as it could be raised or spent by local bodies?”

And then he refers us to the Divisional Boards Bill. This is an extremely important part of the hon. gentleman's scheme. He says the disbursements from the Works Department go directly to the improvement of property. What is the proportion of these disbursements for trunk railways and for roads and



bridges? He proposes to spend a sum of £70,000 on roads and bridges throughout the whole colony. That is what he calls the expenditure of the Works Department for the improvement of property which ought to be borne by local taxation. As against that, he is going to spend, in addition to the immense sums already authorised, £1,775,000 to complete and extend trunk lines. For the improvement of property, which these trunk lines will produce, he does not think it fair that the means for those disbursements should fall on property; and that is his miserable application of an excellent idea. When the hon. gentleman comes to deal with millions, the cost is to come out of taxation; but when it is a paltry sum of £60,000 or £70,000 the greater portion is to be paid by those persons whose property it improves. That is where I most distinctly differ from the policy of the hon. gentleman, as to the proportion of the cost of those public works which is to fall upon the persons most benefited. Then he went on to say—

"It is not, however, only by shifting the responsibility of local works from the Central Government to the localities directly interested that I look for an amelioration of our financial condition."

If the principle is good why not apply it? He adds—

"Most of the Government departments are over-manned,"

and goes on to state that he is reducing them; but I will refer to that question when I come to the Estimates. Then, after a little criticism of his predecessors in office, which I think is somewhat out of place, he says—

"A small reduction appears in the Department of Public Instruction, but the object is not to limit the operations of that service, but to provide only so much as is likely to be expended, the department having been unable to spend the amounts provided in the Estimates for previous years. Sufficient provision should be made for every service; but I contend that when an excessive amount is granted, the officers of a department are supplied with an inducement to extravagance which it is the clear duty of the Government to hold in check."

One would suppose that in previous years the department had been allowed to indulge in great extravagance; but the fact was that the surplus was only £2,000 or £3,000, which showed a tolerably close approximation upon an annual expenditure of over £100,000. Then we are told—

"The Government have been actuated by a resolute determination to take your sanction to no appropriation which does not promise to augment revenue, either directly by utilising Crown lands at present inaccessible and comparatively valueless, or indirectly by removing obstacles from the path of promising industries or expanding commerce."

Again I agree with the hon. gentleman's principles, but in the application of them

he has entirely departed from the rules he has laid down. Then he says—

"By providing for the various services on a reduced scale, yet still sufficiently ample to secure efficiency; by carrying out the departmental reforms contemplated by the several Ministers—"

We might have been informed what they are. The sentence continues—

"By removing a large portion of the functions of the Works Department from the responsibility of the Central Government; and by crediting the Consolidated Revenue with the total amount realised from the lands, I am enabled to bring the probable expenditure of the forthcoming year, including interest on the public debt, slightly within the estimated revenue."

But this is a mere matter of book-keeping. Such are the modes by which the Government say they are going to equalise the expenditure with the income. What are the reforms indicated by the Government, so far as we can discover them? We were told they were to be something great. But the hon. gentleman's speech, like that put into the mouth of His Excellency, the other day, reminds me of the prospectus of a company floated in the days of the South Sea bubble, which stated that it was an undertaking of immense advantage, but no one was to know what it was. On that basis subscriptions were sought and received; and of course none of the subscribers ever did know what the unknown object was. The policy of the hon. gentleman seems one of that kind. What are the departmental reductions? In the Colonial Secretary's Departments there is a reduction of £3,500 in the cost of the Immigration Department, but I will say more about that when I come to the loan vote. Then there is a saving of £15,000 for police. As to that, we ought to have had some explanation from the Colonial Treasurer. Does the hon. gentleman contemplate a reduction in the population of the colony? In his speech he speaks of increased revenue, but there is no provision made for increased population. But increased revenue and increased population are to my mind synonymous, and you cannot have the one without the other. I do not think the Police Department is over-manned, although it may perhaps be over-officered, and a reduction of 25 per cent. in its ranks is a very serious item. I do not know where this reduction is to take place—an hon. member suggests Ipswich, but I fancy, from what we have seen and heard, that a reduction there would not meet the ideas of the Minister for Works. We may pay too dear for a saving of this nature, for although we pay a high price for our police it is an insurance on the property of the country. How are new towns to be opened up in the interior,

or fresh areas taken up in selections, if police protection is to be withdrawn? I doubt very much whether the large reduction contemplated is one that can safely be made. Another departmental reduction is a saving of £4,500 on the vote for the Volunteers; and they commence very well by giving £750 a-year to a colonel.

The PREMIER: Why, that is your own estimate.

MR. GRIFFITH: Oh, no! The hon. gentleman perhaps does not know it is there although the Estimate is signed by his name. About this reduction I shall say nothing; the force being in a transition state. The reduced amount of cost for elections is not a reduction for which the Government can claim credit, an extra sum being required, last year, on account of the general election. Then there is a saving of £8,000 on schools of art, cemeteries, and agricultural and horticultural societies—institutions which have always hitherto been recognised as having a legitimate title to State aid. Such were the great departmental reforms in the Colonial Secretary's Department. In the Administration of Justice there was no change; in the Department of Public Instruction there is no change, except a small amount of cheeseparing, amounting to £200 or £300, which is knocked off in a case where the work done was worth ten times the amount. In the Colonial Treasurer's Department itself there is a saving of £3,000, consisting chiefly of contingencies; in the Lands Department the saving is £10,000, of which £5,000—an item under the head "miscellaneous," and consisting of a sum for costs—appeared on the last Supplementary Estimates, while the rest is entirely taken off the survey of land. If there is to be the increased revenue from land which the Treasurer anticipated during the next twelve months, how is the extent of the surveys to be diminished, for, if the transactions in land are to be extended, surely more money must be spent on surveys? It cannot, therefore, be any real diminution of the expenditure of the department, for the surveys must go on and their expense must be placed on the Supplementary Estimates. Then, take the Department of Public Works and Mines—what great departmental reform is there there? The diminution of expenditure in the department itself amounts to £3,500, made up almost entirely by the dismissal of officers employed on the roads, including that most useful class of officer, the Road Rangers. If there were two or three more of them instead of their being done away with it would be more to the purpose, for every hundred pounds spent in that way would save the country thousands of pounds afterwards in the resumption of land for roads. In the roads and bridges in the southern part of the colony there

is a diminution of £52,000;—in the central division it is £8,000 and in the northern division £14,000, and in buildings £34,000—buildings, of course, being the very first thing a Government would look to if they desired to do anything in the way of retrenchment. Then, in the Mines Department, there is a diminution of £4,000, consisting principally in the reduction of the number of wardens on the northern goldfields, so that altogether the great diminution in the Works Department consists in carrying out what the Colonial Treasurer refers to as throwing the burden of the improvement of property on the property itself. Does anybody suppose this £70,000 taken off the roads and bridges is to be really saved? Does not everybody know that all the money will have to be spent, only it is to come from another source? That is the idea, I presume. Instead of coming from the General Revenue, it is to come out of the pockets of the people in the municipalities that are to be affected by what the Government call their Divisional Boards Bill. The General Revenue is to be relieved of £70,000 at the expense of the people in the different parts of the colony, who are to contribute by direct taxation for these works of construction. For what are these taxpayers to contribute this money, unless it be to pay interest for this loan of £2,000,000 to construct railways into the interior? And how much of this £70,000 is to come out of the pockets of the pastoral tenants, for whose special benefit these railways are to be made? I shall not discuss the Divisional Boards Bill now, but I will simply say that it is a digest of the Local Government Bill of last session, with two objectionable exceptions, and I cannot say that it is a very clever digest either. One of the two exceptions to which I refer is that the voting is to be done by post, and the other is the mode of rating the pastoral tenants. The pastoral tenants, under the Local Government Bill of 1878, were to be rated according to the annual value of their property—no more and no less; but under this Bill, just such a Bill as we might expect from a Government supported by a number of pastoral tenants, they are to pay rates upon the annual rental—that is to say, upon the 10s. a mile they pay to the Government, and they are to be rated on that alone. This is to be taken as the full annual value of their property, and in this way they are to pay rates upon their rents. I find by the table showing the amount of pastoral rents received that the total revenue from that source is £168,000. And supposing every pastoral lessee in the country is taxed—and they will not be under the Divisional Boards Bill, for that will not affect the interior—and supposing every pastoral run in the country is rated at its

full amount, we will see how much will be contributed by them to this £72,000, of which the General Revenue is to be relieved for the purpose of paying interest on this loan. The maximum amount of taxation is 8 per cent., and the interest will therefore be £13,000. It comes, therefore, to this: They relieve the General Revenue of £70,000 towards paying the interest, but that amount has to be made up by direct taxation, because the work is necessary and has to be done, and of that a great deal less than one-fifth is to be contributed by those parts of the colony which are to be directly developed by the railways in question. That is the way in which this Government, of which the Minister for Works is a member, proposes to benefit populous districts of the colony. That is the way in which property is to pay for the benefit upon it. I venture to go further, and say the proportion which will be paid under the Divisional Boards Bill will not be more than four or five thousand pounds on the property so enormously increased in value by these trunk railways; and I say, again, this is the way the hon. gentleman carries out his principles. We are not told whether there are any more great departmental reductions here; but I notice one of the officers in the Mines Department—one of the oldest and most deserving in the colony—is to be sent about his business.

The PREMIER: Who is that?

Mr. GRIFFITH: It is Mr. Gregory, and I do not observe that he appears amongst the pensioners, although other officers are there. Then we come to the railways;—that is another department where there are to be great departmental reforms, but what are they? We were told, the other day, that the Government found it necessary to reduce the Ipswich workshops by 103 men, and we were told so much about these men, and so often, that scarcely anything was stated by the Government that cannot be contradicted by reference to their own statements; but the result of it all was—first, they were dismissed because they were not wanted; then they were dismissed on the recommendation of the officers of the department; and then many other things. I will not, however, repeat all the statements made, but the general result was that the men were not dismissed on the recommendation of the officers. The Minister for Works thought himself justified in getting information from any and every source, putting it together and dismissing the men upon it, but for other reasons than retrenchment. If there were no other reasons, it may safely be said the selection of the men was conducted on different principles. We were told that the pruning-knife was to go still deeper—that many more men would have to go. We were told at one time they were sent away because they were in-

competent; then that the Government made arrangement for their employment by private contract, because they were of such value to the colony. Then, to-night, the Minister for Works, still harping on the same subject, could not help trying to give still another excuse. But what does this reduction in the railway workshops amount to on the Estimates? 103 men, we know, were dismissed at once, with a promise of many more to follow; but the total reductions, as they appear upon the Estimates, are 47. What is to be done with the other 56? I suppose 56 new men are to be put on in their places. Only four weeks ago we were told that 103 men were useless at Ipswich, and that the pruning-knife must go in deeper. The Estimates show only 47. Now, how are we to take this? Does the hon. the Premier dissent?

The PREMIER: Yes. You don't mean to say that you are not aware that all the men are not on that page?

Mr. GRIFFITH: I am looking at Estimates which speak for themselves, and I can see no more in addition to the forty-seven I have mentioned. There are, certainly, four guards; but that is the only other reduction in the whole Estimates of men who can be said in any way to be employed on the Southern and Western Railway.

The PREMIER: One-half the men dismissed were not on the Estimates, and you know it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I not only do not know it, but I do not believe it;—from my knowledge of the Works Department I think it highly improbable. Here we have another piece of information. The hon. gentleman should not be too rash in giving his information, for already he has given so much that he has had to apologise. Now we are told that there are fifty-six men employed in the railway workshops not on the Estimates. Perhaps we shall see if this is so when the Government are good enough to lay the returns which have been ordered upon the table? On the Central Railway, where we were told the retrenchment was to go on in the same way, there appears only a reduction of twenty out of the thirty who had really been discharged. These are the only great departmental reforms to be found there, or of which there are any particulars upon the Estimates. Where are the evidences, then, of the removal of the functions of the Works Department from the Central Government? The retrenchments in the Civil Service amount to nothing at all, and so far as the saving on the Revenue account is concerned we have little more than words. Then we come to the Loan account. When the late Government was in power, whenever they brought forward a proposition for a loan they were always asked for details—always accused

of dangling something or other before the eyes of the constituencies and of endeavouring to divert them and lead them astray. What details are there here? We have one of the most transparent attempts to influence a constituency ever heard of, when we are told there are going to be branch lines. When the late Government, two or three years ago, proposed a system of branch lines on the Loan Estimates, the hon. gentlemen scouted the idea of talking of such a thing unless there were full details of the lines. Have we details now? £300,000 are to be spent over branch lines. But, sir, when he spoke, an election for Darling Downs was contemplated, and we were told that a very useful place to begin would be the Darling Downs. Let me tell the hon. gentleman that dangling things before the electors, so far as he has gone at present, has not been by any means a success. The attempt made to influence the election at Fortitude Valley by promises was not a success; and let me tell him that if he had not resorted to such transparent dodges there, the majority against his colleague might have been less. I may tell him, also, that those transparent dodges are unworthy of a Treasurer when making his Financial Statement. Now, with regard to these branch railways, let me tell the House the condition of the surveys of them. Many of them have been going on for some years, and some would have been very nearly completed if the Government had not summarily dismissed all the surveyors. The Government come here and say, "We intend to make branch lines," and in the meantime they have stopped all surveys of them. If they make this branch line on the Darling Downs, they will have to make a new survey, which cannot be ready for a long time, so that the people will not get their line for years. I should like to know from the hon. gentleman what branch lines are to be made? We are going to have a loan of £3,000,000, of which £1,500,000 is to be expended on the extension of trunk lines, and an additional sum, nearly £276,000, is required for the completion of trunk lines so far as they are already authorised;—so that out of a loan of £3,000,000, £1,750,000 is to be set apart for trunk lines, against which is £300,000 for branch lines. Is that a fair proportion? I believe that trunk lines should be extended as fast as the resources of the colony will allow, and I have always said so, but I do not believe in their being extended faster than the resources of the country will allow, or being extended at the expense of all the colony. When the late Government brought in their scheme for carrying on a system of public works, they said plainly enough what their intention was, and did not speak in the ambiguous language adopted in this speech of the hon. Treas-

urer, which may mean one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow. We said—

"In order to give effect to the public works policy which is contemplated, it will also be necessary to obtain your authority for the raising of an increased revenue. As the expenditure to be incurred will tend materially to enhance the value of the public estate and other forms of property, the additional revenue required should be derived chiefly from those sources."

We faced the difficulty manfully, but the hon. gentleman proposes to borrow £3,000,000; and how is he going to pay the interest? He says he will not increase his revenue by taxation, and how, then, is it to be met? He says out of land; yet the hon. member deprecated the policy of the late Government in selling so much land, and termed it a ruinous policy. He says he will be able to provide means to meet the additional interest out of the territorial revenue. But is it to be supposed that all this will come at once? He says that every mile by which the interior of the colony is penetrated increases the area of Crown lands available for pastoral purposes and homestead selection; and then, again, that the western country is the only part of the country fit for close settlement, or words to that effect. But I will use the hon. gentleman's own words, which are so very much better for any purpose of mine than I should be sorry to paraphrase them—

"It must be well known to the Committee that the richest lands in the colony, as well as those most available for close settlement, lie far to the westward, and have not as yet been touched by any of our railways."

Where are they? Where are these lands that we are going to have for close settlement? What does the hon. gentleman mean by close settlement? Does he mean land so hedged in by squatters' runs as to be impossible to get at? Certainly, I have never travelled in the far West, but from what I have heard and read there is no more land available there for close settlement than there is on the Darling Downs. But, supposing there is—supposing that there are such lands on the Diamantina—what good will they be? I do not suppose 500 miles away from a market would be a very profitable place for growing maize. Or is it that those gentlemen who have these large pastoral properties in the far West are all of a sudden possessed with a wish to see their large plains converted into homesteads for selectors? Where are these lands so fitted for close settlement which our railways have not touched? Surely, the hon. gentleman does not mean near Roma, for the railway is already nearly completed there? When we get beyond that, and nearer the Mitchell, it will be many years before we can

get to any land fit for close settlement. On the Central line we shall have to pass through a desert before we can come to any country fit for settlement at all, and on the Northern line, beyond Charters Towers, it will be some time before we can come to such lands. How many years will it be before we can get to these lands? It is nonsense. We must look the thing in the face. We know that if these railways are made the interest must be paid, and we know that unless some splendid provision is made it will ultimately have to be paid out of the Customs. When, last year, we proposed to pay a small amount of additional interest out of taxation, the hon. gentleman ridiculed such a proposition, and yet now he tells us—with a decreasing revenue, mind—that we are to pay the interest out of territorial revenue. Why, sir, everyone in the country knew that whatever Government was in power, this year, they must be prepared to face the question of additional taxation. But how are we to get this increased revenue without increased population, and how are we to get the population? I see that there is only £100,000 put down for immigration. This must be for four years, for the loan cannot be spent in less time, and the amount is not more than we have spent in one year for many years. This year we have spent up to the present time £135,000. Last year we spent £116,534; in 1876-7, £123,189; in 1875-6, £102,363. Since 1872 we have never spent less than £100,000 a year; and yet the hon. gentleman proposes to reduce immigration by three-fourths, and at the same time expects to increase our territorial revenue to the enormous extent he has mentioned. With regard to branch railways—and I have said that I agree with the extension of main trunk lines as the resources of the colony will permit—the hon. gentleman throws down a sop of £300,000, and tells us in a general way that railways can be made for £3,000 a mile. I think so, too; but when I expressed that opinion before, the hon. member ridiculed it, and said I did not understand the matter. But, about these branch railways: I should like to know which railway the hon. member is going in for. He could not make more than 100 miles with £300,000; and I would ask, is he going to make a line from Cometville to Clermont?—if so, that would absorb more than half; or is he going to make a line in West Moreton; or, as he has said, is he going to make railways on the Darling Downs? for, if so, we could not put down a less distance than 50 miles, and that would be one-half of the entire distance at once. Does the hon. gentleman really believe that these propositions will be satisfactory to the country? They may simply be summed up as a proposition to borrow a

large sum of money for the benefit of the squatters in the western interior. That is the policy of the Government—we have always expected it, and now we know it. The hon. gentleman said this was the policy on which an appeal was made to the constituencies during the last general election, and that this Parliament had been returned to carry it out. I say that this Parliament was returned to carry out no such policy. If the hon. gentleman succeeds it will be by the votes of hon. members returned to oppose that policy and to carry out the opposite one. If he succeeds let him not say that it was the policy which Parliament was pledged to carry out. We know that hon. members are sitting on the Government side of the House who were returned expressly to oppose that policy; and when the time comes I trust they will vote according to the principle upon which their constituents returned them. The hon. gentleman's policy means the stagnation of the populous parts of the colony—railways into the interior for the benefit of the squatter, and the stoppage of immigration to prevent the increase of population. To say that Parliament was returned to support such a policy is really too much. It will be a long time before the hon. gentleman is able to carry out such a policy: perhaps by-and-bye we shall find the hon. gentleman has no policy whatever. He has the advantage of being so ambiguous, that what he says may mean something to-day and something else in a few days or next week. From reading the speech and comparing it with the Estimates, the only conclusion I can come to is that what I have stated is the policy of the Government; and I say it is a policy entirely unsatisfactory. I regret we did not have an opportunity of discussing this subject on the opening of Parliament; but it is satisfactory that we have now the opportunity of expressing freely our opinions on the policy of the Government.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Leichhardt) said he could not allow a grievous error which had been made to pass uncorrected. If any matter was brought forward there was sure to be some fault attributed to the squatters;—in fact, they were the heretics of the political world, and whatever they did was wrong. The hon. leader of the Opposition, who referred to the Divisional Boards Bill, must have read that Bill in a different way from what he (Mr. Macfarlane) did, because he evidently considered that the squatters would only pay on the 10s. per square mile of the country for which he paid rent. As he (Mr. Macfarlane) read it, the squatter paid, not only on his rent, but he also paid an assessment on the value of his improvements. If the hon. gentleman would look at the 57th clause, he would find it provided that any person occupying Crown lands for pastoral purposes only should be rated an

amount not exceeding 8 per cent. of the annual rent thereof, with the proviso that it should not extend to buildings or other improvements on such lands. He knew a great many stations out west that would, under that law, have a very heavy assessment to pay. The hon. gentleman also talked as though the railway was going to be carried to every pastoral tenant's door; but what were the facts? Take the Central line, which at present went 170 miles into the interior. If the programme of the Government was carried out the line would extend to Barcaldine Downs, where the good country would be reached. But if this District Bill was carried the pastoral tenants would be taxed to pay a vast amount for roads into that terminus. Hon. members talked as though the pastoral tenant got the railway for nothing, whereas he had to pay carriage at a very high rate for everything he sent. Instead of the railways being a dead burden to the country, as was represented, the returns showed that the line through pastoral country paid not only working expenses, but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on the cost of construction. It was also a well-known fact that the longer the line the less percentage the working expenses. Granting that for the next generation those lands were only occupied by sheep and cattle, there was no doubt that long before the railway reached good country, not only the working expenses, but the whole of the interest would be paid by receipts. They were told that the Provisional Boards Bill would be an unbearable burden on the agriculturalist;—if it were so he would be very sorry to support it. Such, however, would not be found to be the case. Everyone who had travelled in the country knew the great waste that went on under the present system of making roads and bridges. In the Central district the general inspector had a district 600 miles in length by 300 in width to look after, and it was impossible he could attend properly to such an enormous district. Consequently, money did not go the length it ought to go. Under a proper system of local government £3 would be made to go as far as £5 went now. Another advantage would be that not only would the works be supervised by men who, knowing they had to pay part of the cost, would see them properly carried out, but the work would be done by men residing in the district. He did not believe that any hon. member on the Government side expected to see close agricultural settlement in the West—such an expectation would be perfectly futile. But there could be a close settlement with sheep, and that would certainly be not only of advantage to the district, but highly in the interests of the towns and districts around them. Every person conversant with the country knew

that it was not available until a vast expenditure had been made upon it. Not one station in twenty paid, but the occupiers expected to be reimbursed by future profits for their expenditure. The money invested was laid out in labour, carriage, and in the purchase of stores, wire, and other fencing materials. That expenditure was therefore a benefit to the people living in the towns and those who found a market in the towns. This Ministry were met in the face with an enormous deficit of £220,000, and how were they to meet it? The Opposition said—more taxation; but that would do no good now that improvements in the colony were cut down to the lowest possible dimensions. Five per cent. added to the Customs duties would not tend to help matters. The course pursued of departmental retrenchment was a wise one; and the Minister for Lands had very clearly shown that, if the Estimates for the coming year had been like those of the last year, the fact would have been tantamount to a very large reduction. It was known how expenditure had been growing year by year by leaps and bounds, and great thanks were due to the Government if they could keep the Estimates down to what they were last year. He heartily approved of the policy about the workshops, and hoped the reforms would be carried out, and the workshops kept entirely for repairs, all other work being carried out by contract. There were quite enough men in the employment of the Government without adding to them; and the present enormous number was likely to be a very great danger to the country. If the service were allowed to go on increasing for the next two, three, or four years, no Ministry would be able to touch it. Now the commencement had been made, he hoped the example would be followed, and he should be very glad to give his assistance to it. In speaking of reduction of railway receipts, the hon. the leader of the Government was evidently at a loss how to account for the falling off. The explanation of the Colonial Treasurer was very clear on that point. On the trunk lines, which were chiefly occupied with carrying pastoral produce, a reduction had taken place in the number of the sheep in the coast and intermediate district which was very great indeed. The table showed very clearly where the reduction had been. In the Burnett district—which if not a coast district was nearly so—the number of sheep in 1874 was 364,000, against 208,000 this year; in the Darling Downs, in 1874, 2,544,000, against 1,407,000 this year. That meant the withdrawal from the railway of the carriage of the wool of 1,100,000 sheep and of the necessary stores to the stations. In the Leichhardt district, which he had the honour to represent, there was a very large decrease indeed. In

1875 the number of sheep was 1,696,000; this year, he was sorry to say, there were only 810,000; but he did not despair of the districts of Darling Downs and Leichhardt, believing that under proper conditions they might recover, not only their old prosperity, but a great deal more. In the Leichhardt district the cause of the great reduction was very apparent;—both the Springsure and Peak Downs districts were a large oasis, surrounded by scrubs, and intersected by scrubs, and from these came a very great increase of marsupials which devastated the country. Under a proper system this pest could be exterminated, and far more sheep than there were ever depastured on these districts could be kept on them; but to do that a better tenure—which was a very unpopular thing to advocate in that House—should be given. The runholders merely asked, and the many liberal-minded settlers in the district agreed that the request was fair, that a better tenure should be given over part of the runs, so that the lessees might safely put up proper fences and take proper means for the extermination of marsupials, and the rest of the runs could be thrown open to free selection. The leader of the Opposition sneered at the idea of making the trunk railways lead to a large revenue, but he believed it would have that effect: anything which added to the prosperity of their towns would certainly increase the radius of selected and purchased land outside. He was astonished that the hon. member for North Brisbane, who was always talking as if he were the champion of the freeselector, had not noticed a clause in his Local Government Act, last year, which was anything but fair to the freeselector. If he (Mr. Macfarlane) read it aright, a selector who had paid five or ten shillings per acre for his land might be assessed at any value; the value of his land might be put up to five or ten pounds per acre, but under the District Roads Bill the amount was limited to the value at the time of selection. As he had merely risen to correct an error into which the hon. gentleman had fallen, and not to criticise the Financial Statement, he would now conclude his speech.

Mr. MACKAY (whose opening remarks were inaudible) said that while he could compliment the Colonial Treasurer upon the plain, straightforward manner in which he had indicated his ideas in his Financial Speech, he could not refrain from observing that the speech itself was quite illogical, one part contradicting another in almost every other column. The hon. gentleman in writing out the speech evidently did not weigh the effect of his sentences, or compare the figures of the speech with the Estimates placed in the hands of hon. members. The designs and policy of the Government and the Premier were, however, plain, if one would take the trouble to look a little

underneath the crust. The speech plainly meant that the whole policy of the Government was to get up a gigantic system of railways into the western interior, and everything else proposed by them was to converge to that point. There was an enlarged sop or blind, after the kind offered to the electors of Fortitude Valley;—but the dredge contract was generally admitted to be desirable; in this case he could not say that the sop held out was desirable, for it simply amounted to this—that the programme laid down by the Government would complete the destructive process commenced some years ago, when the country was tied by the neck by being committed to the construction of an enormous extent of railways, which could not and would not prove reproductive during the lifetime of the present generation, and were the cause of the present depression. By the policy now enunciated, it was proposed to tie the country by the heels, by raising another three-million loan to extend an error which had already proved injurious all over the colony; and the effect would be that the colony would be sunk beyond recovery. The sop of £300,000 for branch railways was altogether too thin not to be seen through, and he did not think any man had a doubt as to what it meant, especially when it was known how many surveys had been effected and how many districts were looking forward to branch lines. It was stated in the speech that the Darling Downs was a likely district to attempt the experiment; but the sop was too transparent, and the country would see as clearly through it as the electors of Fortitude Valley did through the promises held out to them. The House had been told by the hon. Colonial Treasurer that one reason why our railways did not pay was because the tariff was too low; but if hon. members were to ask any man who had used them, the reply they would get would be that the rates were too high. He expected that the Colonial Treasurer would have brought in a system which would have reduced the cost of railroad making one-third, and had he done that he (Mr. Mackay) would have been found sitting at his back; but during the time the Government had been in office they had utterly failed to introduce any improvement whatever in our railway system, either as regards the construction of railways or the cost of working them; and in the whole policy laid down by the Government since taking office not a tittle of statesmanship had been shown. What had their policy meant but to take and scatter to the four winds the efforts already made by the colony to progress? Any ass could scatter, but it took a good statesman to gather; and it was expected of the Premier that he would step out, like a good Cameron

man, he might say, and bring the colony out of the difficulty into which it had got. The Premier had a powerful majority at his back, as he (Mr. Mackay) had an illustration the other evening, and thought it would carry him through everything. The action of the Government had paralysed the country;—when men did not know which way to turn; when working men did not know when they would be discharged; when Civil Servants did not know when they would be ousted, and business men did not know what to do, it was not the time to bring in further reductions; but it could be safely asserted that, although the Government had a majority at their back at the present time, if they were to appeal to the country on the policy now propounded they would not come back with the majority. He would now run through the Premier's Financial Speech and comment upon it. He agreed with the first sentence that it was their duty to carefully investigate the causes of their straitened circumstances, to distinguish those for which they were responsible from those over which they had no control. In the next sentence the hon. gentlemen said that the lesson adversity had so roughly taught them during the last two years should make them more cautious for the future—and especially cautious he (Mr. Mackay) would add, before committing themselves to a loan of three millions which could not bring in any return to the present generation. Then the Premier said the late Treasurer estimated the revenue at £1,694,500, and added that in eight of the items there would be a decrease, one of which was the Southern and Western Railway, the receipts from which would be £40,000 short. The next was a telling sentence—

"Few persons acquainted with the condition of the colony endorsed the sanguine anticipations of the late Treasurer when he made his last estimate;—it was, in fact, generally conceded to be an over-estimate; and the effect of the great falling off then apparent in our exports has shown itself in the diminished amount of import duties since collected."

He was sure the Premier was in earnest when he wrote that, and believed that to represent the state of the colony. In the depressed state of the colony the country expected a bold, manly action from the Government; but what had happened from the time of the scattering of the Ipswich men to the present? One shot followed another, until the country was more demoralised than ever it was;—the proposed three-million loan would not bring it back to the condition it was six months ago—would not remedy the mischief caused by the Government, and would not restore the sound pluck of the people. He was glad to see the sugar industry

mentioned. This was the first time he had ever seen it in a Treasurer's Statement, and he believed it was very unlikely there would be any falling off this year; on the contrary, if the frost kept off there would be a decided increase. The next item the hon. gentleman referred to was gold-fields—

"Our principal quartz goldfields have kept up their character. The general decrease in the yield is due to the exodus of Chinese and the exhaustion of our richer alluvial deposits."

He must own that this sentence puzzled him a great deal, and unless the Treasurer was indulging in a lamentation because the Chinese were leaving the colony he did not know what to make of it. As for the Chinese, from his knowledge of them, he did not think they were of any special benefit to the colony to induce them to lament over their absence, and he would be glad to get rid of them. The next paragraph was about as complete a piece of political bunkum as ever he heard in his life—

"The decline in our land revenue is attributable to other potent influences. The purchasing power of the colony has been much limited by unpropitious seasons, the effects of which we should naturally expect to see manifested in the land revenue, especially in regard to lands sold at auction. I am justified in assuming that, in making his last year's estimate, my predecessor gave every consideration to this influence on revenue. We must therefore look deeper for the reasons which have so falsified that estimate, and so materially lessened the returns realised from land on Consolidated Revenue account."

Why did not the Treasurer state frankly, without all this rignarole and clap-trap, that the selectors had paid up a great deal better than was expected?—he believed that was the plain translation of it. With regard to their having to come down to the House begging, he was sorry to see another class of the community, for whom he had high esteem previously, doing something of the same kind. Of all the miserable, beggarly arguments ever he heard in his life it was during the course of the debate on the Travelling Sheep Bill, the other night. He had heard hon. gentlemen standing up in that House, asking for small votes for roads, sneered at and treated as roughly as they very well could be without using unparliamentary language; but of all the beggarly, hungry, miserable arguments ever he heard it was on that Sheep Bill, and amongst the gentlemen most interested in it. As a matter of curiosity, he had kept a record of the debate for his own edification, and for reference as occasion might require. If anything could shake his confidence in the squatting interest in this colony and lead him to the belief that it was a huge failure, it was the miserable pleading of those



gentlemen. They were not satisfied with getting the grass at a half-penny an acre; but they could not afford to pay twopence per hundred on sheep travelling for grass. One proposed that a penny was enough; and that was thought very good, until another suggested that the roads should be a mile wide—and the whole party agreed that that was the best idea yet. The thought that occurred to his mind was, that they should throw the whole of that country open for these poor gentlemen, and make roads twenty miles, so that they should have plenty of grass. Perhaps then they would ask the Government to fence them in, stump and clear them, and plant them with good grasses, after refusing to give the Board of Inquiry a paltry sum to show which really were good grasses. His estimate of the farming classes had gone up tremendously since he had been in the House. He thought, not only were they a thoroughly manly body, but they were also better off than others who some were inclined to look upon as the magnates and lords of the soil—the aristocracy of Queensland. He was beginning to think that the dukes and marquises of the colony were not such great dignitaries as they were supposed to be, and that if the farming classes only continued to go on in the direction they were going they would soon take the lead in the colony. One hon. member who made himself pretty lively at times—he (Mr. Mackay) did not know what sheep station he represented, or how many “muttons” he had got, but this much he did know—that there was no mistake about the quantity of mutton he had got in his head. This hon. gentleman stated that as long as he got enough grass for his cattle he did not care a button for the sheep men. That was about the meaning of it. The next sentence in the statement—and it was a truthful sentence—read—

“We have never really yet been able to spare from our land revenue any sum for railway construction, because the entire amount has been wanted and used for payment of interest on our loans.”

And this was the country they were now asked to vote £1,500,000 sterling—and no doubt it would take another £1,000,000—to send railways into, although the Treasurer told them that one reason why they had not been able to get along was because our railways had been such a tremendous burden upon the country. Absurdity, he did not think, could go much further. The next paragraph read—

“One of the most discouraging decreases of public revenue is seen in the receipts from the Southern and Western Railway, which will be £40,000 short of the estimate, and £5,717 short of the actual receipts of the previous year; and this notwithstanding an additional length of 57 miles of line recently opened to public traffic.”

Just imagine that! Fifty-seven miles of additional line had been opened for traffic, the whole of which was towards the sheep country, and yet they were told that that fifty miles had added something like £40,000 to the deficit, and they were asked to make further additions to railways of that kind. He for one could not see it.

“The same cause which injuriously affected our Customs duties also affected our railway traffic—namely, the contracted yield of mineral, agricultural, and pastoral products.”

Well, there were no mineral or agricultural products on that fifty miles of line; and, if there had been, there would not have been such a great loss. One noticeable thing in connection with our railways was, that they did not pay until they came down near the maligned townships, and parts of the country where settlers were located. The line between Brisbane and Ipswich paid very well, considering the fearful load of expenditure it had to bear; the line from Brisbane to Toowoomba paid reasonably well; but directly they got beyond that, to the squatting side of the country, it did not pay at all. The Treasurer went on to say—

“But notwithstanding this, the additional mileage of line should have counterbalanced the loss from diminished traffic. It has not done so, however, and one cause of unprogressiveness stands out prominently. Railway extension, to be successful, should stimulate settlement. Has, then, the settlement which we had a reason to expect been induced by the extension of the Southern and Western Railway?”

The answer was an emphatic “No.” He (Mr. Mackay) entirely agreed with that, and it made one wonder when they heard gentlemen debating about this Western country, how they could forget what had happened on the Darling Downs. After all these years’ experience, what had railways done for settlement on the Darling Downs—country as good, to all accounts, as the other? What did the gentlemen who owned the vast estates on the Darling Downs contribute to the railways? And how was it that these estates were not turned into farms? They heard the Treasurer state to-night that if the lands in the Western Railway Reserve had not been sold they would now be settled with farming communities and their produce would have increased the traffic on the line; but how was it that the lands on the Darling Downs had not been turned into farms by this time? Let them have this matter settled before they followed a system that had been notoriously a failure from beginning to end—the carrying of railways through the pastoral country. The Treasurer told them, also, “capitalists had been cramped in their operations by the bleeding process they had undergone;” but he contended that if any

one had been cramped it was the settlers throughout the country who had to pay the penalty.

"No doubt, however, these huge estates, having been purchased by influential corporations and wealthy persons, will be improved when their owners have been allowed time to acquire fresh capital, and this will ultimately have the effect of bringing additional traffic on the line."

Now, the hon. the Treasurer was a shrewd sensible man, and he would ask him—why had no improvements been made upon the huge estates on the Darling Downs, such as Eton Vale, Westbrook, and Clifton?—what reason was there to justify them in spending further heavy sums in carrying railways into pastoral country when they could see close at their doors railways that had been alongside large pastoral estates and so little improvement going on in those estates? They heard a good deal about capital, but it struck him that the same had happened in Queensland that had happened in Scotland and Ireland and other parts of the world—that directly men made capital from sheep they would go to England to spend it. How much did the revenue of this colony benefit by sheep squatters? Certainly not a sufficient modicum to justify them in indulging in more railways to bring in more sheep country. There was nothing to justify anything of the kind. The next paragraph in the Treasurer's Statement was sarcastic, and he would call the attention of the House to it—

"So much for the revenue of the colony. Let us now examine the expenditure. I doubt if there is any country in the world in which the Central Government undertakes and performs so many and so varied duties as here. Just glance, sir, down the headings of the Estimates of public expenditure placed before you, and you will find sufficient evidence of its multitudinous functions.

"The Government has provided, free of cost, passages from Europe to our shores for 106,000 people—more than one-half the present population of the colony; it subsidises our charitable institutions on a scale of liberality rarely equalled in older countries; it drills, clothes, and pays the Volunteers—"

Then came a sore point, that they would hear of again before long he (Mr. Mackay) was afraid—

"it bears the entire cost of the education of the young."

He was astonished to hear that from the Colonial Treasurer, of all men. One of the chief boasts of that hon. gentleman's own country, Scotland, was its excellent system of national education; and Queensland ought to be proud of a system of education which was likely to have similar beneficial effects, for our system, like that of Scotland, was specially calculated to

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turn out an educated people; and it ought not to be sneered at. The sentence proceeded—

"It maintains reserves and parks for public recreation in the principal towns of the colony; it provides roads and bridges everywhere."

But the Government were not going to provide roads and bridges any longer, and the unfortunates who required them would have to make them for themselves. Governments seemed to constantly forget that it was they who were the sellers of the land. Were he the owner of a large estate, and intended to sell it in selections, he would put it into the best shape possible in order to induce buyers to purchase and to prosper. Those who bought land from the Government had no other resource to look to for improvements in their means of communication; and he never could understand why, after the contract was made, those people should be constantly taunted about their roads and bridges. It was a great mistake, and the country would never prosper until this bugbear was put out of the way, and good roads and bridges were maintained. The sentence went on to say—

"It supplies railway communication to some districts at a price which does not pay the working expenses of the lines."

That brought him back to the point he started from. Why had not this Government, beyond any of their predecessors, done something to adjust this matter of railway communication, inducing more traffic along the lines? The tariff was not too low, as the Colonial Treasurer stated; on the contrary, it was so high as to prevent that communication there ought to be. The paragraph ended with these words—

"And it even relieves the Queenslanders of one moiety of the cost of killing his own marsupials."

On first reading that sentence he thought there was deep joke in it somewhere, and after turning it about in all directions he had come to the conclusion that it was one of those specimens of Scotch "wut" generally supposed to be so difficult to understand, and, when understood, so very wide of the mark. The marsupials did not belong to the people of the colony; if they belonged to anybody they belonged to the Government. The speech then referred to the proposed tax on property. In his opinion, land was the proper basis of taxation. Why should a man who made improvements be taxed more than one who did not? It had been a great curse to this colony, allowing men to take up land in large blocks and hold it until other people improved it for them, and benefited them while the process was going on. It would have been better for all parties if there had

been a tax on land from the very first day it was alienated from the Crown. The next sentence was one which no doubt applied to the "lower orders"—

"While the working man is free to carry his labour to the best market, taxation solely for the improvement of property should not be allowed to encroach upon his means."

They must be tramps who were here referred to, for respectable mechanics and artisans had homes of their own. We pitied the poor fellows who carried their swags about the country. A good deal had been said about the squatter and the farmer, and it had been asserted that the squatter was the farmer's best friend. But they had only to look around to see that the direct contrary of this was the fact, and that wherever the farmer came into connection with the squatter the farmer went to the wall. They were then told that suitable endowments would be made to local bodies; and it had been said that a number of *et ceteras* were to be given to certain of those local bodies which would not fall to the lot of others. If it was intended to favour those local bodies whose representatives here sided with the Government, all he could say was that the system would not work: it would not be good for the Government, and he would be the last man to think that the Colonial Treasurer and the Minister for Works would countenance such a plan, and although rumours to that effect were rife he did not believe a word of them. Further on, the Colonial Treasurer said—

"Most of the Government departments are over-manned, yet it would be a task, as I have been taught by experience, far beyond the strength of any Ministry to suddenly reduce all the official establishments."

That was certainly not the case with regard to the Ipswich workshops. He knew a good deal more about that affair than had been told the House, and some day he might feel inclined to tell the whole story. He was sorry the Government had not taken his advice about giving the superintendents longer time, so that they might reduce their staffs as they would in any ordinary large business establishment. Neither did it seem a particularly difficult task to reduce the ninety-five policemen. The Premier had informed them that the increase in the Railway and Postmaster-General's Department was necessitated by the extended lines and services, but would be at least partially recouped by increased returns for works performed. Previously in the Speech the Premier had stated over and over again that the greatest losses had been incurred where new works were concerned; and yet they were told, here, that larger profits were expected from those very places, and he failed to see how the two statements could be reconciled. Re-

ferring, again, to the police dismissals, it was strange that no reductions had been made in the native police. White men could do their work equally as well, and he did not think it creditable that in this nineteenth century Queensland should employ men who were notoriously savages to do its police work. Then the Premier gave his "melancholy example"—

"In my own department, for instance, a Customs officer was appointed three years ago to a place where he has never had the opportunity of collecting Customs revenue, and where his departmental head does not consider his presence has prevented Customs frauds; yet his removal, now, would necessitate the abandonment of a considerable amount of Government property provided for his convenience, while it would also discommode the public through certain small official duties having been thrust upon him to his discharge of which the residents have now become accustomed."

This official who had been discharged seemed to be a useful, civil, and obliging man—and civility was not a too abundant quality in the Government service; and he was somewhat surprised that the Premier should have made a "melancholy example" of a servant because he happened to be civil. Time would not permit him to analyse the Speech thoroughly, but he would just refer to another item or two in it. The Colonial Treasurer had told them, what they were all very sorry to hear, that the decrease in the number of sheep had been something fearful, but he failed to see that that was an argument why they should be induced to spend vast sums on extending railways into still more distant sheep country. The next sentence read—

"But pastoral occupation with sheep has been pushed further west through various causes, and it is satisfactory to know that the westerly advance of our railways will soon enable them to recover the traffic which they have temporarily lost."

A statement had been made by the hon. member for Leichhardt which seemed to him (Mr. Mackay) to show that fully two-thirds of the sheep sent down were consumed by the people in the colony. Was, then, the country justified in making hundreds of lines of railroads to bring down the sheep for the consumption of the people of the colony? The thing seemed utterly absurd. Next they came to another item, and it was at a part where he had expected to see some statesmanship displayed—

"Instead of cutting down the expense of Government and curtailing the costly establishments, which involved an outlay quite out of proportion to the available resources and population of the colony, it would have been a much easier and less invidious task to allow the expenditure to proceed on the same scale as before, and to propose additional taxation.

No easier method of augmenting revenue suggests itself to a Treasurer than to increase the Customs duties."

Their Colonial Treasurer had found out a much easier method, for he came down to the House and asked it to grant him a loan of three millions. In the Colonial Secretary's Department he observed a decrease of £31,000, which, with the other departmental diminutions, totted up to £163,000, and that £130,000 of the money came out of the roads, bridges, and men knocked off Railway Works. But for the latter there did not seem quite so much reason on the part of Government as they had been told about. The following, from the Bundaberg paper, would say something about that in referring to the construction of the Bundaberg railway—

"Government has quite a staff here in full pay already, and this, be it remembered, on a 44-mile railway line being built by contract. There is a resident inspecting engineer, a drafting clerk, and two Government inspectors, who travel up and down the line wherever work is proceeding. What with the contractors' staff of engineers, inspectors, overseers, and those of the Government, the line is thick with them."

Now, the Colonial Treasurer had stated that Queensland was the most heavily taxed colony in Australia. If it was, what had been done by the Government to prevent it? It certainly was not a good plan to hunt so many people out of the country as they had, for since the present Government came into office between three and four hundred carpenters had left the colony. These were the men who were the real taxpayers, and the very stamp of men that the Colonial Treasurer anticipated deriving his revenue from. The Colonial Treasurer then went on to say—

"After what has been already stated, the Committee will not be surprised to see that the largest item in the proposed Loan Estimate is that of £1,500,000 for the extension of our railways into the western interior. This sum provides for extensions to the extent of 500 miles at £3,000 per mile."

The House, before it gave a single penny of this money, should have full details before it—the engineer's plans and estimates, and everything to be obtained about this line. It was, to his mind, the same story which had been brought before the House over and over again any time during the past sixteen years, when Government cried, "Oh! give us the money, and we will make cheap railways." What justification was there for a Government to say, as appeared a little further on in the Statement, that they would be able to avoid additional taxation by means of these extensions, when there was no improvement shown to justify it. To give £1,500,000 for railway extensions to be constructed at £3,000

a-mile where they could see no profitable result was out of the question, and although the engineers deserved credit for their reduction in the price per mile and in the working expenses, that was no reason why they should commit themselves to a heavy expenditure of which they could not see the end. The statement said that £3,000 a-mile for the further extension westward of the lines would be sufficient. For the last eight or nine years he had been in such a position that he was well acquainted with gentlemen resident out in the West, and he (Mr. Mackay) could say he never believed it was the country for settlement that had been claimed for it. There was, it was true, a rich soil and rich grasses; but if, on the other side, hon. members had investigated with the Board of Inquiry into the diseases in plants and animals, and which had taken considerable trouble to investigate the grasses growing in the West, they would have seen that the grasses were of the kinds that did not get better but worse by grazing.

The PREMIER: *Hinc illæ lachrimæ.*

Mr. MACKAY continued that he had nothing against the fattening properties of the grasses. But what did they read in the *Courier* that morning from a gentleman who was thoroughly well able to speak on the subject, and who plainly showed that it was absurd to come and tell them that people could go and settle in a climate such as that. Having a good climate on the coast, as well suited for purposes of settlement as the interior, they did not need to go into the wilds of Queensland for farming country. Let him remind the hon. the Premier of what had happened in the Highlands of Scotland during this century, when the farmers—the blood and sinew of the country—had been hunted out and had gone to Canada, their farms being next tenanted by sheep; and a similar thing had occurred in Ireland. The experience they had since gained had led them to banish sheep out of the country, and the men were again taking their places as before. It could be no justification, therefore, to the House to suggest that railways to the interior would add to the development of sheep farming. It would be one of the greatest mistakes the country ever made, if they were led into the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds for such a purpose. There was no instance of such a railway in Scotland, Ireland, America, or Canada, and but one in Australia, where the line was made by private enterprise to a pastoral district. If railways were to pay at all they must be constructed in the agricultural districts, and therefore he was surprised that Government had not come down with a proposal to construct suitable railways in the districts where the

people were to be found. In the latter part of the Treasurer's Speech he said—

"Five hundred miles added to our then main lines will carry each of them into the richest of our country, of value sufficient to tempt capitalists to undertake our future railway-making on the basis of land grants."

It was a direct insult to put such a statement as that before the capitalists they expected to be attracted here from the old country. Did the Treasurer say that were this country ever so good it would justify them in making railways? Suppose such a thing were possible, that the whole of the 500 miles were constructed out to this western country, and that any company then came and gathered up the traffic, the whole of the money which Government received would be wanted to pay the charges out in the West. There was plenty of capital in England for investment, and that being so he was glad to observe that the Colonial Treasurer had made one suggestion he concurred in—that there might be a system of guarantee. If the Treasurer did propose that, he would have him (Mr. Mackay) with him.

The PREMIER: I never proposed any thing of the sort.

Mr. MACKAY said that he had received letters from firms in the old country asking for particulars of a railway with which his (Mr. Mackay's) name had been mixed up—the South Brisbane line—and wishing to know if it would be guaranteed by Government, on the plans of their own engineer, to pay 4 per cent. on the capital. There would be plenty of capital forthcoming if the Parliament were to guarantee even a small percentage, and he desired to see the system introduced. Before he concluded he desired—feeling compelled against his will—to make a personal reference: he wished it clearly to be understood that he represented one of the wealthiest, most numerous populated, and, he might add, best abused of the electorates of the colony, and that being so he had a right to speak on behalf of that electorate. Had it not been for political spleen, something more like justice would have been done to that electorate before this. He did not stand before them a hard-up man. He had heavy interests in the colony. It was true he might not cut a great figure in public; he did not keep a carriage and drive about, but he could keep his feet all the time, and there were none of his bills going about. He belonged to the class of workers in the colony—to the class of men who worked hard and paid their way. He had heard, since he had been in the House, a good deal about mechanics. He was a mechanic himself, and was proud of it. He well recollected when he earned his 12s. a day, and now he might sign a cheque with some

of them on the other side of the House who pretended to be great magnates. Several times he had been very glad to avail himself of being a mechanic, and had found it a very useful thing to be one. He had worked at the Government Printing Office, and he could tell them that when he left he did so with an assurance that he could come back whenever he liked. He had since earned as many pounds a day as he then earned shillings, and was equally pleased, as was natural. However, that was not the question. He could say that there were many constituencies which were not getting their due share of expenditure; and he contended that it was the first duty of every hon. member of that House to look to those portions of the colony which were populated chiefly by the settler classes. Let them have a central railway to go, as engineers would say, to some objective point—to either Clermont or Springsure, or both; let other lines go to Roma, or to Charters Towers, and there let them remain until they had shown by the traffic on them that extensions were justified. Their great object should be to look to what was likely to be for the prosperity of the whole colony, and not merely study the interests of one class. And, as regarded that class, the pastoral tenants, he would tell them that the very best market they could have for their meat was Queensland itself. The member for Rockhampton made a very true remark, when he said that squatters were getting quite enough for their cattle at £5 a-head; and he agreed with that hon. member, that it was humbug to compare the beef and mutton of this colony with that of the mother-country. He had seen Australian tinned beef and mutton opened at home, and found it to be ragged—all fibre, in fact; but what otherwise could be expected when cattle were driven hundreds of miles, over perhaps bad country, before they were killed? If they wanted to promote the prosperity of all classes, they must look at their actual position and act accordingly. Our position was this—that we had a certain amount of men and money; and it was their duty as members to see that they did not stretch their efforts too far—that what they did was for the benefit of the populous parts of the country. If that was done he was certain it would be better both for those who resided in the populous parts of the country, and for those whose interests were in the more distant and sparsely-populated districts.

Mr. WALSH said that of all the nonsense that had ever fallen from the lips of any hon. member of that House he knew nothing that had come up to that they had been listening to from the hon. member who had just sat down. They had heard the policy

of the Government described in various forms, and all he could say in regard to their railway policy was, that he trusted it would prove to be more beneficial to the colony than the visit of the hon. member to Philadelphia had been. With reference to the Financial Statement he looked upon it as being the most explicit, and certainly the most able, ever delivered in that House. Had the criticism of it been in the hands of any other than the late Colonial Treasurer it would have met with severer treatment than it had done, perhaps; but although he had listened very attentively to that hon. member's comments upon it he failed to see that many faults had been found with it. It was the statement of a Treasurer who evidently knew what he had to deal with. They had been told that they would have £1,000,000 less to expend this year, owing to the falling off in wool, tin, and copper; but they all knew that in such things there was a constant rise and fall of prices, and that when things got to their worst they were sure to mend, so that there was every reason to hope for a better state of affairs in regard to those products. The hon. member for South Brisbane had told them that the best market for their beef and mutton was to be found in Queensland; but that was not his (Mr. Walsh's) opinion, as he could not understand why, with Singapore, with its six or seven steamers coming in and going out daily, so near to us, we could not find a market there, not for tinned meats such as had been sent to England, but for our cattle. He thought too much attention had been paid to supplying the people of England with fresh meat, although that might be done some day; and that there was no reason why we could not export salt beef to the Cape, for instance. He did not view the matter as a squatter, but as a business man, as anything which increased the trade of the colony must tend to promote its general prosperity. He had entered that House prepared to support the present Government, when in Opposition, on the policy they had enunciated, and he was glad to find that now they were in power they were determined to give effect to that policy. He quite agreed with the late Treasurer that some limit should be placed to the cost of our railways—that it should be less than hitherto; and he had been glad to find that a contract on the Central Railway had been let at less than £2,000 a mile. There were, unfortunately for the colony, two wretched railways which would never pay—namely, the Bundaberg and Mount Perry, and the Maryborough and Gympie lines. So far from benefiting the people of Maryborough, he believed that since the formation of those lines had commenced two-thirds of the business men had gone insolvent. He thought that railways should

only be constructed where there was proof that they would pay interest on the cost of construction, and if the hon. member for South Brisbane could prove that his favourite line there would do that, and be for the benefit of the settlers, he would support it. There was one point in connection with trunk railways, which was this: that in this colony we had no navigable rivers into the interior, and that if ever we want to settle the country we must have railways. For some time the Western railway passed over only what was wretched bad country, but now it was getting on to the good land, and the same would be the case with the Central line. At the same time, he thought that the large runs could be very profitably cut up into smaller estates, as the country was so richly grassed as to permit of that being done with advantage. For instance, one gentleman, Mr. Tyson, had 200 miles water frontage on the Warrego, which could be far more advantageously used by having a large population settled on it. In connection with railways was the question of land laws, and he must say for his own part that he should be glad to see the day when the land question was not made a party question, but both sides would join in making a good Bill, which they certainly had not at present. He thought, for instance, that a better tenure should be given to pastoral tenants, so that they might be induced to invest their capital. The hon. Colonial Treasurer had in his speech gone in for retrenchment, and from his (Mr. Walsh's) opinion it was necessary, as he knew places where far more Civil Servants were employed than was really necessary. With regard to the dismissals from the Ipswich workshops, he looked upon Ipswich as having been the curse of the country ever since its foundation, and he hoped the workshops would be brought down to the metropolis, where they ought to be. It was unjust to the city, and a thing unheard of, that materials should be landed here from England and then carried twenty-five miles to Ipswich. The poor man's cry had been very useful to some, but no man was a greater enemy to the poor man than those who raised the cry. It was an insult to the working classes, who were quite able to find employment, and did not want to be kept as paupers. As to the police force, if any reduction was made it should be in the native police force. In his district the blacks were now just as bad as ever they were, and he maintained that people ought to protect themselves. Only two days ago a telegram had been received, stating that two horses belonging to the Government, and costing £85, had been spared and eaten by the blacks within seven miles from Port Douglas. He was very much pleased to hear that the

horses belonged to the Government, as it was better so than that they should belong to a poor carrier. He had known carriers to have their whole team taken, speared, and eaten. The white police were a credit to the colony and an improvement upon the native police, for whom there was no need. They were simply a staff to polish the boots of the inspector, keep his spurs and stirrup-irons bright, and see that the gold band on his cap was in thorough repair. He thoroughly approved of the action of the Government with regard to the sale of runs. Though he should have been glad to see competition from the other colonies, it was well known in this case that there would be no competition because the tenure was too short, and there was no inducement for outside people to inspect. An instance had been related to him as a fact in which a man came to Bowen and levied black-mail on two or three persons by threatening to bid against them. Was it desirable, in the interests of the colony or in the interests of society, to allow a number of such people to attend the land sale in Brisbane and then levy black-mail all round at the land sales throughout the colony? They would, if they allowed that, be encouraging a class of swindlers who ought to be in gaol instead of at large. A good deal had been said in the debate about the falling off of the revenue, but he considered that neither the Colonial Treasurer nor the Colonial Secretary had sufficient moral courage to tell one great reason why the revenue had fallen off, or else they thought it would be impolitic to do so. Through the miserable action which had been taken in respect to the Cook district, there had been a loss to the revenue of £30,000 to £40,000 for the last year, as he could prove by figures. It was a fact that in 1874, when there was a rush of Chinese to the Palmer district, the hon. the Speaker, and the present Minister for Works, knowing the danger and hardships that would result, called the attention of the House to the fact of the Chinese having come. The Government, however, did not interfere then, nor in 1875; but they interfered in 1876, when there were 20,000 Chinamen on the field, and all the places fit for Europeans to work had been swamped by Chinese. They had, in fact, to quote a proverb, "shut the stable door after the horse was stolen." They allowed the Chinese to come when they might have prevented them, and they prevented them when there was nothing left but Chinese digging. Every right-thinking man protested while the goldfields were good that it was wrong to allow the Chinese to come and reap the profit of the work of the European. That view was represented to the Government, but nothing was done until 1876, when action was taken. The result was that the

Chinese had since been decreasing, until there were now not more than 4,000 or 5,000; and the European population on the alluvial goldfields had also been decreasing. Commercial ruin had been brought upon a large number of carriers, storekeepers, and others, and the returns from Cooktown, from £80,000 a year, had fallen to something like £30,000 or £40,000. Had the European population been in any way benefited he would have been the last man to object, but the Government had failed to benefit a single European, and were not likely to benefit one. By shutting out the means of working the goldfields they had simply deprived the colony of its ordinary revenue, which was now very much needed; and the late Treasurer and the present one knew it very well, but they were afraid to face the subject. He had his own opinion on the subject, and as long as he sat in the House he should express his views as clearly and explicitly as he could. He meant to say that the action taken had done harm in more ways than one. Had the Chinese not come on to the goldfield in the early days a greater amount of capital would have been taken out of the alluvial fields, and that capital would have been devoted to the development of the very rich reefs that existed in the district. He pointed this out to show that legislation, when it came, came too late, and at a time when it was impolitic. The great anti-Chinese storekeepers were now all going insolvent, and wanted the Chinese back. The goldfields were virtually abandoned and left to the Chinese, because the average earnings of a Chinaman were 15s. to 20s. a week, and, as every one knew, it was impossible for a European to live in that district unless he got £3, £4, or £5 worth of gold in the week. Hon. members did not generally consider that there were 400 square miles in the Palmer district with alluvial gold all over it, and rich reefs which all the bad Acts that could be passed would not prevent from being worked. A death-blow had, however, been administered to the white residents, from which very few would recover. No hon. member was less anti-Chinese than he was, but he held that they were an inferior race whose labour should be utilised by Europeans, who should get the benefit. He would ask any hon. member whether the lands on the Johnson, Mossman, and Daintree Rivers—the richest sugar lands in the world—were to be utilised by white labour? No lands in the colony were equal to those for rice, coffee, tea, sugar, and all tropical products; but white men could not take up the country unless they got some labour to utilise it. They had virtually shut out of the colony the class of labour which some day or other they would have to admit. Sooner or later, separate and distinct legislation would have to be brought forward for that

portion of the colony. With reference to the exports and revenue from Cooktown, he found the results were as follows:—The export of gold in 1874 was £492,660; in 1875, £664,466; in 1876, £691,272; in 1877, £641,327; in 1878, £456,965; and up to the 30th April in this year, £95,552. With regard to the revenue, he would point out that in the early days goods were received duty paid from Brisbane, and therefore the amounts appeared smaller than they otherwise would. The revenue derived from Cooktown in 1874 was £22,951 16s. 7d.; in 1875 £49,524 10s.; in 1876 £67,273 9s.; in 1877 £83,567 6s. 10d.; in 1878, £56,015 7s. 3d.; and in 1879 up to the 30th April, £14,201 5s. 5d. It had been said of the late member for Cook that he was always in favour of spending public money in the Cook district. He (Mr. Walsh) could assure the House that there was no district had a better right to look for such expenditure. Admitting all that had already been spent a large balance still remained to the credit of the Cook district; so that, when reasonable votes to make good roads to the goldfields came before the House, they were entitled to, and would, he felt sure, receive the support of hon. members on both sides, especially as the reaction for the better must come from the Cook district. They had passed through the worst ordeal, and for the future the Cook would be the most important district in the colony.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow; and the House adjourned at a-quarter to 11 o'clock.