

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE 1879

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

2. It is not proposed at present to produce the papers, as the matter is still under consideration.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. Whether any offer has been received to construct the second Dredge on the same terms as those accepted in the case of Messrs. Smellie and Co.?

2. Whether such offer has been accepted or declined?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McIlwraith) replied—

1. Yes; from Messrs. Walker and Co., Maryborough.

2. Neither accepted nor declined.

PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION RETURNS.

Mr. MOREHEAD rose to move the adjournment of the House, to call attention to a return furnished by order of the House, printed the 22nd of May, 1879, purporting to give in detail the expenditure of certain sums of money voted by the Legislative Assembly in connection with the late Philadelphia Exhibition. This return he had moved for, hoping that it would furnish what he sought—the details of the expenditure; but, on reading it, he found that either the Government were not in the position to supply them, or that they had not had the information put in their hands which they ought to have had by an individual or individuals connected with them. By the return, he found that there were payments made to a Mr. Angus Mackay, the Queensland Commissioner, of £1,000 to defray his expenses, and an additional sum of £500 to visit and report on sugar cultivation in the West Indies. In reference to these payments, there was a foot-note at the bottom of the return stating that the payments to Mr. Mackay were made on the authority of special Executive minutes, and that the Government were not in possession of any vouchers showing how the money has been expended. When a large sum of public money had been spent in this way it was the duty of the individual who expended it to have supplied the vouchers for the expenditure. He always understood that this Mr. Mackay, whoever he might be—and he had been told he was a member of the House—was in the position of correspondent to the *Queenslander*, and, in fact, was subsidised by the State to act as travelling correspondent for a journal in this city. It really was monstrous that such an amount of money should be placed in the hands of any individual just for him to play at skittles with or make ducks and drakes of, and who when he was asked to furnish vouchers did not furnish them. This wonderful expedition of the Exhibition Com-

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 11 June, 1879.

Questions.—Philadelphia Exhibition Returns.—Financial Statement—adjourned debate.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. STUBLEY asked the Minister for Works—

1. Have the Government received any report from the Chief Engineer or Engineer in Charge of Surveys of the Northern Railway, with respect to the proposed deviation of that railway at Townsville?

2. If so, will the Government lay such reports on the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) replied—

1. Yes; a preliminary report.

missioner seemed to have resulted very much like the expedition of the celebrated Moses, the son of the Vicar of Wakefield, who went to a fair and came back again, having "swopped" a very good horse for a gross of green spectacles—the gross of green spectacles in this case appearing to be £700 for models, implements, &c., which, when sold, realised £388 1s. 6d., less the cost of selling £134 3s. 6d. That was the outcome of the expedition of this wonderful Mr. Mackay, the discoverer of America. And he (Mr. Morehead) must say that he had a feeling of ill-will in this particular towards this gentleman for upsetting the traditions of his childhood, for he had lived in the belief that Columbus was the discoverer of America, until he had read in the columns of the *Queenslander* that America was discovered by Mackay. Another thing he noticed in connection with this expenditure was that, last night, this gentleman was reported to have said that although he was a poor mechanic, earning his 12s. a day, he was now able to draw a cheque larger than any member of the Ministerial side of the House. He might be able to draw the cheque or any number of cheques certainly, but he could not do it and get them paid out of that 12s. a day, and it seemed not unlikely that this £1,500 he had received from the Exhibition might account for the largeness of this great cheque. The hon. member had gone in for a good deal of "high falutin," and said that he did not keep a buggy and drive about—why he did not, if he could afford it, he (Mr. Morehead) did not know—that he felt confident in himself, and could keep his feet and could work and blow, having, no doubt, had considerable experience in blowing when he started to discover America. He had also told the House that he was in a sound financial position. That was eminently satisfactory to him (Mr. Morehead); but if the hon. member were a man in the position to draw cheques to an unlimited amount, as apparently he was, did one bank keep all his money, or was it an association of banks? At any rate, he (Mr. Morehead) would not be inclined to trust it all to one bank. The hon. member then said that he was one of the workers of the colony—that he was not a drone. Well, he (Mr. Morehead) did not see where his work came in when the hon. member went over to America—no doubt, drinking the best water he could get on board the steamer, and no doubt in the best cabin, which he would have all to himself, though he (Mr. Morehead) would have declined to share it with him. When the hon. member arrived in America, he was said at one time to have been called General Mackay; at another time, Judge; and once he even descended to the title of Colonel;—at any rate, he impressed upon them that he was a very great man. But the hon. member

must recollect that he was not in America now, and that, perhaps, a prophet had more honour out of his own country—at least, they did not want that kind of talk, here. It might have been very well for the hon. member to have told the people in America that he could draw as big a cheque as anyone in Queensland, but here he must tone himself down a little, and sink that great "I" he was so fond of. When he did that, he would find it his duty to give an account of the money entrusted to him by the House while he was Commissioner at the Philadelphia Exhibition, and a full account of how he spent the £1,500. But to tell them by a foot-note, when they asked for the information, that it could not be supplied was a positive insult to the House. The House having voted the money, the person receiving it ought to account to the House for his trusteeship, and not let them be told simply by a foot-note to the return that no vouchers could be obtained from Mr. Mackay. Under these circumstances, it became the duty of the House to compel Mr. Mackay to give a report of all these large sums of public money which had been expended. The money was not given to be played with, nor to go about America on a "high falutin" expedition. It was furnished for a definite object, and that object was not attained. The mission was an utter failure, and Mr. Mackay was not the man to have been sent to America. The consequence was, that it had already upset a mind at no time an over strong one, and it was very unfortunate that the hon. member had not subsided into the position he occupied before he went there. There had been no adequate return for the money expended, and no vouchers of the expenditure. From beginning to end, Mr. Mackay's appointment was a failure, and the fact of his not giving any vouchers showed there was something worse than failure. He moved the adjournment of the House.

Question put and negatived.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the debate on the Colonial Treasurer's motion—

"That the Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole further to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty"—

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he would commence the few remarks he had to make by referring to certain passages in the speech delivered, last night, by the hon. member for Cook. But he would not imitate the tone of that hon. gentleman, who described the speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane as "nonsense,"

and the speeches of other hon. members on this side of the House as "rot." Such words were not according to his taste. Referring to the recent dismissals from the Ipswich workshops, the hon. member for Cook said—

"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."

From this it was evident the hon. member, though he might be an old colonist, did not know much about Ipswich. He (Mr. Macfarlane) maintained, for the number of its inhabitants, it had done more to advance the material prosperity of the colony than any other town he knew of. It was the first place where cotton was grown, and great efforts were made there for the furtherance of that particular industry; and it had also started a woollen mill. Those facts alone showed that the people of Ipswich were not behind the times, but took advantage of everything tending to the progress, not only of their own town but of the whole colony. Besides this, Ipswich, so they were informed, had the very best conducted hospital in the colony. Indeed, the chief distinction of the Ipswich people was that they were a practical people, and if everybody copied from their example they would not be bad colonists. The hon. member for Cook added—

"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."

That showed that the hon. member knew as much about the metropolis as he did about Ipswich. Indeed, it showed that he knew just as much, or as little, about railways; for it was a thing unheard of in his experience that railway workshops should be constructed near a terminus—in the majority of cases they were at least fifty miles away. He would now refer to portions of the speech of the Minister for Works. That hon. gentleman, replying to the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson), said:—

"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."

He had studied this passage carefully, and he had failed to see how the dismissal of a number of men from Government employment could be beneficial. Of course, the Minister for Works based his argument on the assumption that the dismissed men were useless men, towards whose support the other working men of the colony were contributing through the taxes. He (Mr. Macfarlane) denied that those men were either useless or were not required. He

was willing to admit that if all railway-stock was to be obtained from home, and only repairs effected in the colony, the men would not be required: but if they could be profitably employed by the Government, as they could easily be, he failed to see how their dismissal was beneficial to the colony at large. He would put the matter in as simple a form as possible. Suppose the colony had only 300 inhabitants, instead of over 200,000, and that the debt was £50 a-head, or a total of £15,000;—if one-third of those men were suddenly swept out of existence the remaining 200 would be saddled with a debt of £75 per head. It was not, therefore, wise to pay off working men when they could be profitably employed, for not only did such a procedure add to the public debt of each individual in the colony, but it also compelled them to pay more in the shape of taxation. The Minister for Works also said that for every man dismissed three had been employed by the Government. That statement looked very well on paper, but those 700 or 900 men who had been put on were employed in day labour or navy work. The men who had been dismissed from the Ipswich shops were not navvies, but engineers, turners, moulders, boiler-makers—indeed, the only high-class artisans in the colony. Were those men to be asked to do navy work? But if 900 men had been put on to construct new railways, would it not be wisdom on the part of the Executive to keep these men at their employment to prepare the necessary rolling-stock for the lines on which those 900 labourers were at work? There was another statement made by the Minister for Works to which he wished to draw attention. That hon. gentleman said—

"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."

How was this to be reconciled with the hon. gentleman's previous argument that the men had been dismissed because they were worthless? In one breath they were told that these were not good workmen, and in the next that they were above doing anything mean, or receiving wages for work they had not done? The hon. gentleman concluded his speech by saying—

"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."

It was strange that the Government should be so ungrateful as to turn round on the

very men who had placed them in office, and turn them out of work when there was ample employment for them. That there was this ample employment was evident from the reports of the Commissioner of Railways, who constantly recommended that all rolling-stock should be made in the colony, and had said over and over again that the engines and carriages made here were superior and lasted longer than those sent from abroad. And yet, with this information before them, and with the fact that there was a sufficient staff in existence to turn out work of the best quality, the Minister for Works preferred to see the men discharged and the machinery standing idle, in order to have the work done by contract. This was certainly not being wise in their own generation; and with that remark he would, for the present, dismiss the subject. Coming, now, to the Financial Statement, he would refer to the Colonial Treasurer's remark that the revenue from Customs was likely to be about £90,000 less than that estimated for last year. That was not a very large difference, after all, considering the severe trial the colony had passed through. But he would warn the Colonial Treasurer that, if he expected to receive during next year from the Customs the same amount as was received last year, he would find himself grossly mistaken. All the wholesale houses had been over-importing during the past year or two, in spite of the pressure existing in commercial circles. The result was that stocks were far too heavy, not only here but in all the colonies, and merchants held sufficient goods to meet all the demands of the retail trade for some time to come. There would this year be a large decrease in imports, and there was no doubt the Colonial Treasurer would find himself at the end of the financial year minus a considerable sum in his Customs estimates. It might have been wise, therefore, to have increased the Customs tariff in order to meet the too probable deficiency. Referring to the falling-off of traffic on the S. and W. Railway, the Colonial Treasurer furnishes two reasons—first, the operation of the Railway Reserves Act in preventing settlement, and, secondly, from the great diminution in the number of sheep in the districts which that railway tapped. The latter reason could hardly be held valid, for the total decrease in the Moretons, the Darling Downs, and the Mitchell, since 1869, was only about 200,000, and that could only account in an infinitesimal degree to the great falling-off in traffic returns. The Colonial Treasurer affirmed that most of the Government Departments were over-manned. The Estimates showed that the diminution in the number of persons employed by the Government was 47; and as 106 had been paid off at Ipswich, he felt

encouraged to believe that the Minister for Works intended to reinstate some of those men after the lapse of a short time, or put others in their places. The strange thing was, that while most of the Government departments were over-manned the stress of the reductions should fall upon one particular branch, and that the poorest. The equalisation of the men to the work required could certainly have been effected without utterly destroying the efficiency of an important branch of the Works Department. Other departments, it was noticeable, had been increased in officers, so that they could not possibly have been over-manned, and if the balance had been struck by transfers instead of by dismissals no new men need have been taken on, and no unnecessary suffering would have been inflicted on innocent men. The subject of branch railways had been already referred to by preceding speakers, and he would only dwell upon it for a few moments. These branch railways had caused a considerable amount of discussion in the various districts where they had been demanded. Each district looked upon itself as being the best entitled to a branch railway; and if the Ministry had announced their intention of selecting the sites of those railways where they would be most likely to pay he should have had nothing to complain of. The Colonial Treasurer had referred to the Darling Downs as a suitable district in which to construct branch lines. It appeared to him (Mr. Macfarlane) that there was already sufficient trade in the districts of East and West Moreton to make a railway pay if proper facilities were given to the coal trade. The coal trade might be doubled, or more than doubled, if facilities were given for bringing the coal to deep water. A large shipping house had recently given an order for 350 tons of coal in the week, but the owner had to decline it, not because he could not get the coal, but because there were no means of delivering it. If the House, instead of going to the outside districts, where it was problematical whether railways would pay, would after due consideration make branch lines where they would pay, he should not find fault. He had no objection to trunk lines, but, seeing that the money already spent had been devoted to them, on the grounds of common-sense if on no higher grounds it was right that the districts where population was centred should be looked after. He would go so far as to say that the expenditure on trunk lines and branch lines should go on together hand in hand, but further than that it would not be wise to go. But what did the Colonial Treasurer propose to do? He proposed to expend £1,500,000 on trunk lines, and £300,000 on branch lines, a proposition which was

simply preposterous. If the Government were strong enough to carry out their idea of extending the trunk lines far into the interior, it would be the greatest blow the colony had received; and many commercial men who were not bound to stay in the colony would leave it. He trusted, therefore, that the House would see that if trunk lines were to be made, no money should be spent upon them without an equal amount being expended on branch lines. He had noted one or two other matters, but would not take up the time of the House any further.

Mr. BEOR said he desired to make a few remarks on the Financial Statement which was before the House. Many faults had been found with it, but they appeared to him to have been of a somewhat superficial nature. One subject which was touched upon in the Colonial Treasurer's Statement, and which seemed to him to be the most important matter mentioned in it, had scarcely been referred to or criticised at all—namely, the matter of immigration. He should like to have seen a little more in the Statement about the provision which was to be made for immigration and the mode in which it would be conducted in the future, because he presumed that nobody in this colony was of opinion that immigration ought to be stopped for any long period. No doubt the majority of the people of the colony considered that it was a wise and prudent step to stop immigration for a time, and more especially under the system that had been going on for the last few years. He presumed, however, that no one would reconcile himself to the prospect of immigration being discontinued for any length of time. He should like to have heard the subject treated of in the speech a little more fully, and he wondered that it had not been more alluded to by the Opposition. According to his impression of the system of immigration they had hitherto had in the colony, it was a wise thing to stop it, if for no other reason because of the radically bad nature of the system itself. The fault which had been found by the Opposition with regard to immigration was, that the sum of money put down was insufficient. He did not agree with that criticism in any way whatever. He hoped and believed that the sum would be amply sufficient, because they ought never to be asked again to pursue, to anything like the same extent as hitherto, the system of assisting immigration—or, at all events, of paying passages. Immigration ought to be fostered—firstly, by grants of land, as had formerly been done in the colony; secondly, by altering in a judicious manner the laws of land settlement; and, above all, by giving more publicity throughout Great Britain to the advantages which

people possessing a small capital enjoyed when they came here. By some means of that sort they might tempt a stream of immigration as continuous, almost as large, as they had hitherto attracted, and certainly much more valuable; and the immigrants would not be dependent on paid passages;—in fact, persons would be encouraged to pay their own passages, and that class of men would probably bring considerable quantities of capital with them. There were a large number of people in Great Britain of small—probably very small—means who would be tempted to come if they only knew the advantages awaiting them in soil, climate, cheapness of land, and in many other respects. Another matter which was only noticed cursorily, and which might have been treated of more fully in the Financial Statement, was the mode in which railway operations were to be carried on in the future, and how those railways were to be carried on by means of private capital instead of borrowed money. It had been remarked by the Opposition that the Colonial Treasurer was very inconsistent in coming here, and at the same time condemning the railway reserves system and advocating the making of railways by giving Crown grants to persons willing to make the railways for that consideration. That seemed, however, to be a very transparent criticism, as the two systems were diametrically opposite. In the one case the Government sold large quantities of land to persons who would make precisely the same use of them when bought as they had done previously as leaseholders;—not a single half-penny more capital was introduced on account of those lands, and there was no inducement to promote settlement on them. By the other system we should undoubtedly sell the land to persons who would introduce large amounts of capital into the colony for the purpose of making the railway; and, when they had made it, their very first object would be to promote settlement on the lands which had been granted to them. There was another difference to be noted—namely, that in one case the whole of the land which had been improved was disposed of, and in the other only a part to be taken equally and fairly from the whole was granted. The main difference was that in one case there was no inducement to encourage settlement, and in the other there was every inducement. The only way in which the people who made railways under those conditions could hope to recoup themselves was by disposing of the land granted to them and promoting settlement upon it, so as to make a traffic upon the line they had made. There could not, therefore, be a more transparent, flimsy argument than the contention that it was inconsistent to object to the railway reserves system, and at the same time to advocate the con-

struction of railways by Crown grants. The great mistake made in adopting the railway reserves system was in supposing that by the system all the advantages of the American system of making railways would be retained, whereas, as a matter of fact, all the disadvantages were retained and all the advantages thrown aside. Therefore, he was of the same opinion as a writer in the *Courier*, some two or three days ago, who suggested that the system of making railways by grants should be adopted at once instead of waiting until the railways had reached some 400 or 500 miles into the interior, as suggested by the Financial Statement. Another subject which was most prominent and noticeable in the Financial Statement, and which had engaged a good deal of attention, was the subject of local taxation. More than one hon. member on the Opposition side had urged that it was wholly wrong at this particular period to enforce upon the people who used the roads throughout the colony the expense of construction and repairs. Hon. members who had attempted to pose before the country as the working man's friends had said that it was wrong to relieve the working men of the colony of the onus of providing roads, and to make those who used them pay for them. If the roads were made and repaired out of the general revenue, the general body of the people, composed to a great extent of working men, had to contribute towards paying the expense instead of it being borne by those who used the roads. He congratulated the working man on the advocacy he had found on the Opposition side of the House. The leader of the Opposition said that the Divisional Boards Bill was a mere abstract of the Local Government Bill, with the addition of two most objectionable clauses. He appeared not to have noticed that there was besides that another addition of very great importance. Those two additions, the hon. gentleman said, were with regard to voting by post, and the provision that rates should be levied or assessed, not upon the value of pastoral properties, but upon the annual rent; and the hon. gentlemen pointed to the latter as an indulgence to the squatters. Now, he (Mr. Beor) would like to know what was the difference in that respect between this Bill and the other one? What other test of the value of such properties could they have but the rent? Nine-tenths of the whole of the runs, if put on the market, would not bring a different sum from the rent now paid. It made very little difference whether the proposed system were adopted or that of the Local Government Bill, which provided the rate should be paid on the net annual value—that was the rent at which it might reasonably be expected to let from

year to year. What different rent was likely to be got from that which was actually paid? The framers of the Bill had no doubt inadvertently proposed the word "rent" as synonymous with the expression "annual value." In the Local Government Bill all properties were to be rated alike; and if hon. members would look to the sixtieth clause they would find that it was provided that the rate to be levied in any one year should not exceed 1s. in the £—that was to say, upon properties in general. In the Bill proposed there was a special provision in regard to pastoral properties, and what was the concession made to the cormorant squatter in this provision? It provided that every person who occupied Crown lands for pastoral purposes only should pay not exceeding 8 per cent. One shilling in the pound was only 5 per cent. That was the provision said to be made for pastoral tenants, and the term "annual rent" was equivalent to "annual value." The hon. leader of the Opposition seemed to think that the assessment ceased at the annual rent, whereas, in point of fact, it was also made upon buildings and other improvements on such lands. The members of the Opposition had been anxious to parade themselves before the House and the country, not only as the protectors of the working man, but also as the advocate of free-selectors; but no provision was made in the Local Government Bill for free-selectors. They were a body of men toward whom this (Ministerial) side of the House held that every indulgence should be extended. Laws had been made for free-selectors, and, with the object of inducing settlement, lands were offered to be paid for by deferred payments on the easiest and most advantageous terms possible. The framers of the Bill had taken that into consideration, for there was this difference between this Bill and the Local Government Bill—free-selectors before were assessed at the value of their property, but now they were not to be assessed at the value of their property at any time, because it might sometimes be as high as £3 or £4 per acre. This Bill provided—what the other omitted—that no homestead or conditional selection should be computed at greater annual value than 8 per cent. of the capital value of the fee-simple at the time it was selected. That might and probably would make a material difference in nearly every case. The selector being hampered with many difficulties in cultivating the ground and subduing the soil, was entitled to every indulgence, and therefore he should not be called upon to pay on the present value of his selection, but on the value at the time when he selected it—which would probably be a difference of some pounds in his favour. He (Mr. Beor) did not expect hon. members of the Opposition to point out the ad-

vantages of the Bill: but it would have been fair on their part not to say there were no alterations or additions except the two objectionable clauses, and then make the statement a ground of attack upon the unfortunate squatters. There had been another argument tacked on to this subject, with regard to the extension of railways and the way in which they were to be paid for, the members of the Opposition having urged that they were entirely for the benefit of the squatters, who should, therefore, be looked to to pay for them. But whoever on the Opposition pointed out how the pastoral tenants were to contribute to the payment of these railways? They were projected by members of the Opposition when sitting on the Treasury benches; but did those gentlemen then point out how any difference was to be made in order that the pastoral tenants might be made to contribute in a larger degree to the cost of lines which it was now said were for their benefit? The pastoral tenants would be very much obliged to the late Government for having planned railways which were to be chiefly of benefit to them; but he did not agree with the assertion made by previous speakers that the railways were chiefly for the benefit of the pastoral tenants. He would concede to the late Government that the railways were planned for the good of the colony and not of the pastoral tenants, and would point out that when they laid them before Parliament they did not speak of the pastoral lessees as the owners of the land—they knew then that the land was the property of the whole colony, and that it was not likely that when these railways were made the Government would not reap any benefit from them. If the pastoral tenants would reap any benefit from them, the country would reap much more, for when these lands by means of the railways were made to attain to the level of the runs in the settled districts the holders would, he presumed, have to pay more rent for them; when they were put on the same footing with the runholders in the settled districts as regarded advantages they would also be put on the same footing as regarded rents. The character and the nature of the criticisms made upon the statement showed how difficult it was to find any solid ground for complaint in it. Had there been faults of a serious character in the statement they would have been detected by the able speakers from the other side who had criticised it; and he believed that the Treasurer, in making out the Financial Statement, had met as well as was possible the difficult position in which the colony now was, and had solved the problem how to steer through the present difficulties with the least pressure upon the people, and the least check upon the future progress and prosperity of the colony. He believed that

the hon. gentleman had already secured the thanks and approval of the country for the manner in which he had stemmed the difficulty, and he believed that such approval would become more firm the more the country contrasted the statement with the criticisms passed upon it.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS: In rising to speak upon this motion I do not propose to follow the minor details which have been so ably treated by my hon. friend the late Colonial Treasurer, who I think said sufficient under that heading. My observations shall have rather a general tendency than a particular one. In the first place, I think it is well to refer to the unparalleled period of prosperity through which the colony has passed for the last four or five years;—everything has been of a nature calculated to encourage enterprise, credit has been ample, and the resources of the country up to a late period have shown a remarkable elasticity. During this period, a period in which I had some share in the Government of the country, we were authorised to raise several loans, and it was our good fortune not to have to appeal to the tariff for the means to meet the interest on those loans. What is spoken of as the elasticity and buoyancy of the revenue has been always sufficient to meet our increased obligations; but I think we must not overlook the significant fact that during the same period we have also been introducing a large number of our fellow-countrymen, and I entirely differ from the spirit of the remarks which have just fallen from the hon. member for Bowen on the subject of immigration. I attribute, to a large extent, our capacity to meet our increased indebtedness to the fact that we have been spending considerable sums of money upon this object, and I contend that we have succeeded on the whole in introducing a class of people to whom ought not to be attributed the exceptions which have been taken to them. On the whole, the people we have introduced have been fair samples of the population in the old country.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I believe them to be so; and I have had an equal opportunity, at any rate, with the hon. gentleman of observing the working of our immigration system. In all immigration we must have some characters which we would rather not have—that is a condition of the system; but, take the people we have introduced as a whole, they are a fair section, as it were—good and bad—of the population of the old country, and in that sense ought not to be despised; on the whole they have been good material, and I believe that they have done good work. I believe that immigration forms the real source of our wealth, and unless we recognise this fact we shall be foregoing the opportunities we have for making this a great country, and for

securing the means of meeting our increased indebtedness. During the period to which I have referred—namely, from the years 1874 to 1878, we have, according to one of the tables furnished with the Financial Statement, introduced 34,649 people, and our whole population has been increased by 73,000. My contention is, that if we had not introduced these people we should not have been able to meet the increased indebtedness devolving upon us in consequence of the increased loans. The Premier knows this full well, and it is one of the points to which I take the greatest exception in his Financial Statement, that he has submitted, in the matter of immigration, to pressure on behalf of his colleagues and the party of which he is now the head, because I believe it to be in opposition to his real convictions—it is certainly in opposition to the statements made by him, here, previously. It must be, and I hope it is, in opposition to his own convictions that the amount which he proposes by way of loan to carry on immigration for the next four or five years is only £100,000—a very insufficient sum indeed. Judging by the past, it is not one-fifth of what we have spent. During the last five years we have spent on immigration a little more than £560,000, and if we take into consideration the results, the amount has been very well expended; to that amount has to be added £138,000—the expenditure for the current year. That may seem to be a large amount, but I look to that expenditure as having been, to a great extent, the source of our wealth;—it has enabled us to carry out the enterprises in which we engaged successfully, on the whole, and unless we maintain and carefully keep in view this source of future prosperity we shall be getting into deep water. I do not overlook the fact that during the last six months we have seen a very unparalleled depression—a depression which has never been experienced to a similar extent in this country, and which, in my opinion, has up to the present time exceeded the crisis of 1867–68; but there seems to me to be no reason to anticipate that this depression, resulting largely from financial complication in the mother country, will continue for any length of time;—even now it would seem that the clouds are breaking, and I suppose that the hon. the Premier must be of the same opinion, otherwise his anticipations for the future would not have been so glowing in their character. My hon. friend, the late Colonial Treasurer, has dealt with these anticipations for the future. I do not pretend to deal with them in detail; but in one sense, both hon. gentlemen are agreed that we must look forward during the present year to a considerable deficit. The future must, of course, be a matter of speculation. My hon. friend

differs from the Premier in this respect, and his calculations for the future are not so encouraging as those of the Premier. I am not prepared, now, to analyse these differences: but I am content to accept, at any rate, the fact that our liabilities for the future must be very considerable, and that they will tax our utmost resources to meet them. I do not care which hon. gentleman's anticipations are taken: there must be an agreement in this assertion, that at the present time and with the present prospects we shall have to do our best to meet our existing engagements, let alone the engagements for the future. Before I refer more particularly to our present engagements, I shall make some comments on what the hon. the Premier said in his statement regarding the manifold matters with which we have to deal in governing the country. I fancied I noticed in his remarks, though he did not absolutely say so, that he believes we are exceeding our proper functions in taking upon ourselves so much, instead of leaving it to private enterprise. I fancied I traced in these remarks an indication that we were tending in a direction, in that respect, not consistent with our hopes of future prosperity and of good government. He referred to our undertaking railways, post offices, and immigration, and said that everything now was under the charge of the Central Government down to the destruction of marsupials—indicating thereby that it would be very desirable to relieve ourselves of some duties. So far as local government is concerned, I agree with him; we ought to adopt the best means of divesting ourselves of these functions, which now appertain to the Central Government, and devolve them upon local bodies, but I disagree with him in his belief that this community is not competent to undertake many works which we have not yet contemplated. When we compare the position of communities and nations in the old countries, we see how they devote their whole energies to the maintenance of armies and navies for their own protection, and how their wealth and intelligence are centred in this effort to maintain national existence. Fortunately, we are not called upon to drain our resources in this direction, but we may well devote our energies, intelligence, and our united efforts towards making the best of this country by the introduction of people, by the formation of roads and railways, by educating the young, and in any other way by which the community as a whole may profit. I would even say that we may look forward to even further developments. I see no good reason why we should not be our own bankers. I believe we can offer security, under proper safeguards, to carry out a national system of banking on a safer and more permanent footing than any sup-

plied by the present local private institutions. I believe, as a matter of wisdom and policy, we should adopt a national currency, based upon our national credit, and given effect to by a note issue on a metallic basis. This is not an unfit object for our consideration as a community, and I hope we may not be deterred by anything that has been said from advancing this principle—that whatever is good for the community for the whole it is to the advantage of that community to carry out, if it can be shown that it can be carried out on safe-and-sound principles. And now passing to the actual works in hand, I observe that the hon. the Premier speaks in something like hesitating terms of the works under contract and already authorised by Parliament. The hon. gentleman says—

“To complete the works already sanctioned by Parliament, therefore, a total amount of £580,000 will be needed in addition to the sums already raised under the various Loan Acts. It will be for Parliament to consider whether these works shall be carried out on the scale authorised, or whether either reductions or modifications shall be proposed.”

Now, is it possible that the hon. gentleman contemplates a revision of our past legislation, of the authority given for the construction of these lines? It would seem in that statement that, simultaneously with the assertion of the policy which he proposes for the construction of railways into the distant interior, we may have a policy under which we may be called upon to revise the works now under construction. I promise the hon. gentleman my most consistent and cordial opposition in this respect, if he should attempt anything of the kind, and I hope it is not seriously contemplated. This is one of the points which brings me to the consideration of another statement of the hon. gentleman, and which subject is a part, in fact, of his policy. As stated in his Financial Statement, he contemplates a repeal of the Railway Reserves Act. How far is it to be repealed? Is the consideration of the question to attach to the actual works now under formation, or is it to be limited to the obliteration of the lines by which portions of the country have been reserved for a specific purpose? I certainly must tell the hon. gentleman that until I see what measure he is going to substitute for our Railway Reserves Act, on what principles he proposes to carry out his future proposals, in that respect, also, the repeal of the Railway Reserves Bill shall have my cordial opposition. I shall not give my consent—

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman should not misquote me, when he can refer to my speech. I never said that we intended to repeal the Railway Reserves Act. I quoted the clauses proposed to be repealed.

Mr. DOUGLAS: That is a very serious question, and until I see how he is going to find the means for making these railways to the interior I shall not consent, so far as I am concerned, to the repeal of a single line in the Railway Reserves Act, which gives a guarantee that these lines will be made, and that from the special reserves set apart for that object there will be forthcoming the means of paying both the interest and capital for the construction of the lines. In connection with this matter, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. gentleman, and especially his colleague the Minister for Works, to a quotation that I will read. A change must, at any rate, have come over the latter, which would now entitle him to entirely forego the principles which he strongly expressed at an early period during last Parliament, and acted upon throughout. The hon. gentleman, who is now Minister for Works, is reported in *Hansard* for 1875 to have stated—

“He agreed with the hon. gentleman—”

He there refers to you, Mr. Speaker—

“so far as the policy of the Government was indicated to be the sale of land for the construction of railways instead of applying for loans for railway purposes, because the system of loans always bore unequally upon different portions of the colony. If the district which he had the honour to represent was taken into consideration, it would be easily seen that that part of Queensland had as little interest in the construction of railways in the southern part of the colony as in Victoria.”

Does the hon. gentleman think that, now?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Well, he will have to reconcile that opinion with the advocacy of those principles which now lead the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government to justify a repeal of essential portions of the Railway Reserves Act. For some months, and for several sessions, indeed, the chief point of attack by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government against the Railway Reserves Act has been—and he now re-asserts—that it is the fruitful source of all our difficulties—that that Act, indeed, has done nothing else but bring us into difficulties. Now, I will tell him and the hon. member for Bowen, who last spoke, what the Railway Reserves Act did do, and I shall quote you, Mr. Speaker, as my best authority in the matter. I have on more than one occasion referred to this, and in my opinion it cannot be too often referred to, because I look upon it as one of the most important features of the Railway Reserves Bill. Whether that Bill is to last or not—whether in all respects the principle of that Bill was justifiable or not, I do not now say. I did not at first advocate it. I opposed the first illustration of this railway reserve system as I found it in

the Western Railway Act. I thought at that time, and so expressed my opinion, that this was not the way, or the best way, of dealing with the question;—that the Railway Reserves Bill was only accepted as a *pis-aller*—that if we could not get the railways in one way, we could at any rate get it that way. However, this is what I believe the Railway Reserves Bill did do, and it is expressed in your words thus—

“Mr. King said that they also passed the Roma Railway Bill—”

The PREMIER: What are you quoting from?

Mr. DOUGLAS: The quotation is from a speech made by the hon. gentleman at Maryborough—

“They had also passed the Roma Railway Bill. This was a most important measure, not merely because it provided for the extension of the Southern Railway, but because it was a step towards the settlement of the squatting question. By that Bill 21,000 miles of land had been resumed and held upon terms that, in his opinion, squatting runs should have been held on from the first—that squatters are allowed to use it until the Government wants to sell it. He looked on this Bill as the thin end of the wedge that would destroy the present squatting system, and introduce a more equitable method of dealing with Crown lands.”

I have always thought so, and it is further developed in the Railway Reserves Bill, which has been conclusively endorsed by the previous Parliament. I hope that will not be lightly set aside by this Parliament, for by the passage of these Acts we have secured a guarantee and a precedent that we have to deal with the Crown lands as the property of the people in the form that we please, in accordance with vested rights—not setting them aside, but acting upon our legal rights. We have, at any rate, clearly stamped upon our statute book this fact—that the present squatting tenure is simply a six months' notice to quit, under the powers which we possess under this Railway Reserves Bill, and that we possess similar powers to deal with the whole Crown lands estate of this colony in the same way if we see fit to do so. We have resumed from lease, after due notice, portions—very large, wide portions—of this territory for specific purposes, and it is in our power, if so it please this Legislature, to resume the whole of the present territory occupied under Crown lease in exactly the same way as we resumed in this case. We have that power; we have illustrated it; we have stamped that upon our statute book. There it stands, and, so far as I am concerned, we shall not pass it from our statute book until I see something else substituted for it which will conserve our rights in that respect. This brings me to the proposals which the hon. gentleman makes. I now lay aside the discussion on the existing

financial position of the colony, which has been ably dealt with already, and I shall say a few words with regard to the proposals which the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and at the head of a powerful party makes with regard to those public works which he thought ought to be carried out. In the first place, I take no exception to the amount which the hon. gentleman proposes to raise by way of loan. When we come to particulars we shall have a good deal to say on this matter, but it seems to me that such an amount is not beyond our powers both to raise and to expend judiciously, provided we agree to the particular objects upon which it is to be expended. But I entirely differ with the allocation of the amount which the hon. gentleman tells us will probably be embodied in the Loan Bill. I think that the sum of one and a-half million to be expended upon western extension of our railways is far beyond what is necessary at the present time, and far beyond what present circumstances would justify us in expending. A loan of some kind we must, of course, authorise. We are at present committed to certain works under contract, which must be completed. The hon. gentleman has told us that it will take £580,000 to complete these works. Under existing circumstances, it is not probable that we can raise a sufficient amount from sales of land; it appears, therefore, absolutely necessary that we must raise the money in order that these works may be carried to completion. Starting, then, with that item, I admit that for that purpose we ought to authorise a loan. Going, however, to the item of £1,500,000, which the hon. gentleman proposes to devote to western extensions—as I previously said, it considerably exceeds the amount we can wisely spend upon that purpose, if the loan is to be limited to three millions. I think the claims of the settled districts should, at any rate, be considered on a parity with those western extensions. In this respect I take exception, also, to the statement of the hon. gentleman that these lines can be made at £3,000 per mile. I do not think he should stake his reputation and his experience, which is very great, upon this subject in such a way. I do not believe that any lines sufficiently substantial and suitable for the purpose required can be constructed for that price. It is no use running our heads into a noose in this respect. We have had experience of this in the past. It is true that our extravagance in the past in this respect has been great, and, although that may be remedied, I do not think that our experience would justify us in coming to the conclusion that we can construct and equip a line for use at such a price as that mentioned by the hon. gentleman. I do not think we

can afford to build ephemeral lines that would be washed away by the first flood. We must build them sufficiently substantial to stand the wear and tear of the vicissitudes of the weather. We should not be justified in spending borrowed money, for which the public credit had been pledged, upon works which are not of a substantial character, and I do not think lines as substantial as those at present in use can be made at the price named. I think there is a popular fallacy with regard to branch lines in the settled districts—that they can be constructed at altogether a cheaper price than any hitherto known. I am very anxious to see some line constructed in the settled districts of as cheap a character as possible; and I think a line might be constructed at a cheaper price than anything that has yet been built, but such a line must be constructed under peculiar circumstances. Branch lines, such as are spoken of, or some of them, ought, I think, to be carried out, but they must be built as substantially as any we have now. I think if we agreed to build a line to the Logan, as we will have to do some day, we could see if we could construct it less substantially, with due regard to safety, than those we have at the present time. I believe we ought to have the commencement of a northern extension, at any rate as far as Sandgate, and I believe that line ought to be as substantial as any we now have. I am not going to talk at large upon possible questions of this character, but I will refer to one line that will be required in the district I represent for mineral traffic, and probably eventually for passenger traffic. There is a short line from Maryborough to the Burrum, which will develop one of the largest and richest coalfields which has hitherto been explored in this colony, and that really must come under our consideration in connection with any general scheme of railway-making. And eventually that line will probably be extended to Bundaberg, for I foresee that unless that is done we shall not reap in the district anything like the benefits that would arise from a continuous line. The two lines will be only really of use when they are connected to the fullest extent, and when Gympie is in connection with Mount Perry, *vid* Maryborough and Bundaberg. The line to Burrum would be a step towards this. I may further say, with regard to branch lines, that though there may be lines designed and constructed of a cheaper and less substantial character than those we now have, I think it is desirable that we should have some experiment of the kind; but there are some branch lines which are of quite a great importance to the people as western extension, and some of those lines must be built as substantially as any we have at the present time. However, this brings me to

the point that if we are to raise this £3,000,000—if in addition to our present obligations, which are considerable, and which just at present do not look very promising, though I have a firm faith in the capacity of this country to meet all its engagements, and to provide for future public works on a similar scale to that which has been hitherto carried out—still at the present time, and under present circumstances, I believe that it is a very serious thing to undertake the heavy obligations which are now proposed. I hold, however, that it is the bounden duty of the hon. gentleman not to rest satisfied with generalities in this respect. He has told us that the means of meeting this indebtedness has to be obtained from the Crown lands. His words have been more than once quoted, and have been the subject of a good deal of comment; I shall therefore not now quote them. It is sufficient that they have been explicitly and distinctly stated, and under that statement there is nothing which will lead me to think that the hon. gentleman has come to a definite conclusion as to the mode in which he is really to meet the increased liabilities which will eventually devolve upon us if we authorise this loan, for whatever purposes it may be authorised. The hon. gentleman told us that this loan would increase our liabilities by about £130,000 a-year, and he hardly expects this from the ordinary elasticity or buoyancy of the revenue which has been previously spoken of. He expects to receive that in some definite concrete form, either with result of sales of land or in some form or other, I suppose, from increased rents in the pastoral districts.

Mr. HILL: He is not likely to get much out of that.

Mr. DOUGLAS: The hon. gentleman says he is not likely to get much out of that. Well, if he does not, I say he will not get his loan, for it is from that source, and that source alone, that we can chiefly depend for the increased revenue that is required. The hon. gentleman says that we are to have a minimum of people introduced during the next few years. We are only to expend £100,000 on immigration; we are to borrow as much money as possible, but he has declined up to the present time to tell how he proposes to meet the increased indebtedness. I will promise him my support if he will show me—as I can show him—how he can meet that increased indebtedness. The hon. gentleman remembers, I dare say, that only a few weeks ago we disposed of certain leases of Crown lands, under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1876, at a minimum price of £2 per square mile. They fetched that rate, trammelled as those leases were by all the conditions of free selection over the whole of their area. Practically, they simply confer a

grazing right, and nothing more, for five years, under a tenure in every respect inferior to that which is now held by the pastoral lessees in the inland unsettled districts. We have seen that the tenants of these runs have been content, in most instances, to give the minimum upset price.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They could not help themselves.

Mr. DOUGLAS: The hon. gentleman says they could not help themselves. That, at any rate, is probably a test of the value of the land which they now possess as leaseholders. They have their stock there; they had plenty of time to move out. The Act conferred rights upon leaseholders ample to enable them to move out to the westward if it was to their interest to do so, but they did not choose to do so. They preferred to give £2 per square mile rather than leave the leaseholds they occupied. In some instances, it is true, additional rent was given. From information I received from the Land Office, I find that in some instances the rents were considerably higher than the upset price. In one instance the rental received was £10 12s. per square mile; and there are others at £5, £2 5s., £2 9s., £3, £3 1s. These, it is true, are exceptional; and, so far as we can judge, these prices were brought in consequence of the competition that was brought to bear upon them. We are not entitled to presume it was not *bonâ fide*.

The PREMIER: We know it was not.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I will be content to take the £2 minimum;—that is quite sufficient, and at least three-fourths of the country was taken up at that price. Now, I wish to ask the hon. gentleman—and in this respect I am acting simply as instructor to the head of the Government, and I shall be happy if he takes my advice—I shall point out the way for him, and he may follow it if he pleases, to find revenue, for the purpose of meeting our increased indebtedness. I maintain that, under present circumstances, we are not entitled to increase that indebtedness, and I have pointed out that, at the present time, every leaseholder that now holds land holds it, as has been proved by our statute book, under a tenure of six months' notice. That being so, we are at any time justified in altering the conditions upon which leaseholds are held, and I will point out how that may be done. In the first place, I will show the hon. gentleman—I dare say he already knows, but I wish the country to know, what rents are actually given, and the prices that the present leaseholders of this magnificent country—which is spoken of as the garden of the West, as the pastoral paradise—are paying for the privilege of occupying it. In the "Votes and Proceedings" of last year there will be found the report of the Under Secretary for Lands on the work of the

Lands Department during the year 1877, and therefore the figures I quote are authoritative. I find on page 190 an enumeration of the districts, the number of runs available or unavailable, and the rents which the different pastoral lessees are giving. I find in the Darling Downs district there was an area of 13,211 square miles, yielding a rent of £12,865 8s. 9d. There was not much unavailable country in this. The best portions of the Darling Downs, as everybody knows, are sold; and this is rent which is obtained for the remainder of the land, which has been pretty well picked over. There is nothing of any great value in the lands now under leasehold on the Darling Downs, which bring in that rent. The area in the Leichhardt is 19,611 square miles, yielding a rent at the rate of £1 0s. 7d. per square mile. That is the total amount both available and unavailable. The unavailable land, I may say, is deducted from the whole area, and often contains some country that may be used—if it is not of the very best, it is often not the very worst. In the Maranoa district there are 25,222 square miles, giving a rental at the rate of 17s. 2d. per square mile. In the Warrego there are 38,351 square miles, giving a rental at the rate of 13s. 4d. per square mile. In the Mitchell there are 32,631 square miles available, averaging a rental of 13s. 3½d. per square mile. In the North Kennedy the average rises considerably, 5,701 square miles averaging a rental of £1 0s. 4d. In the South Kennedy there are 6,779 square miles the rental of which averages 17s. 2½d. In the Cook, where the area is smaller, being only 2,187 square miles available, the rental averages 8s. 3½d. In Gregory North—and these are figures which I wish particularly to direct the attention of the House to, and probably the hon. member who interrupted me just now, the hon. member for Gregory, will note this, and I dare say will be able to throw some light upon it—in the Gregory North, as I was about to observe, there are 38,649 square miles available, at an average rental of 4s. 1½d. In Gregory South there are available 24,334 square miles, unavailable 15,788 square miles, the average rental being 4s. 10½d. In Burke there are 18,637 square miles available, the average rental of which is 6s. 0½d. The total area of the two Gregorys and of Burke district which is available, and which may be considered good pastoral lands, comprises about 81,620 square miles. Now, following up Mr. Tully's statement in connection with this, I find that during the year 1877, 112 runs, comprising a gross area of 6,627 square miles, were purchased at auction. The sum realised in payment of the first year's rents was £5,257 9s., which, computed on the available area, gives an average of £1 0s. 2½d. per square mile. Of the runs sold, the highest price

realised was £2 17s. 4½d., in the Warrego district, and the lowest in the Cook. The appended return, marked "G," will supply all the details of the sales effected. Then Mr. Tully goes on to show how, taking the whole of the runs in the colony, the average rental per square mile is 11s. 10½d., or about 89 of a farthing per acre. That is, that the whole of the Crown lands are rented something below a farthing an acre. The market value is something above that, as tested by recent sales. If we take the valuation—that is, the sale of coastal runs, which are the least valuable—it will be found that they bring a far higher rental. They will bring at least four times the average rental of runs in the unsettled districts. That is the state of things as given by the Under Secretary for Lands. Now, here at once we see what may be done in the way of increasing our revenue, if the hon. gentleman thinks fit to adopt this source of increased revenue. These are matters for us to consider. We cannot take a general statement that he is going to find the money by some means from the land, but we are entitled to have some specific information from him as to how he proposes to get this increased revenue. It seems to me that there is only one way to do it. If the hon. gentleman is going practically to repeal the Railway Reserves Act—if he is going to embark in a large scheme of public works wherever required, then I say on the principle already recognized under the Railway Reserves Act, he is entitled to reconsider the whole land question so far as relates to squatting tenure. What is more, the hon. gentleman is bound to do that, and to go into the question of the unsettled districts and the tenure under which runs are there held. He has already practically admitted it. I remember the words he spoke at the end of last session when advocating his loan of £3,000,000. He then admitted that he could not look for the means of meeting the increased indebtedness from increased taxation; he admitted that there was only one mode of meeting this increased indebtedness, and that was from the Crown lands. He did not say how, but he has so often inveighed against the indiscriminate sale of Crown lands that I can only come to the conclusion that he means a revision of the system under which Crown lands are held. There is no other means of arriving at what he intends, although he does not tell us. Now, could there be anything inequitable in this? The hon. member for Gregory, for whom I have great respect as an explorer—as I have indeed for all gentlemen who display so much enterprise and ability in pushing out and occupying the country in the interior—that hon. member does not surely expect that our commercial depression is going to last for ever. I my-

self believe it to be only temporary; and with the introduction of capital as it is now flowing into the other colonies, we may expect that the extraordinary financial depression, from which we have lately suffered—mainly attributable to unjustifiable land speculation in New South Wales—will in two or three months terminate, and that things will revert to the position they were in a year or two ago. I have shown to that hon. gentleman that he is now paying about 4s. 10d. a square mile for his magnificent run. But I will not specify his particularly; I will speak generally of the tenants of North and South Gregory and Burke, who are now occupying a magnificent territory at something like one-tenth of what leaseholders are willing to give in the coast districts. Is not that a clear case made out for a revision of the tenure under which they hold their runs? In the Mitchell they are paying something less than one farthing per acre for what is described to be the finest pastoral land, and would it be too much to ask them to pay at least one half-penny an acre? What would that amount to?—I take it that it would amount to £1 6s. 6d. per square mile, or considerably less than the leaseholders in the coast districts have now agreed to give under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1876. Why, compare the paradise of the Mitchell with the scrubby coast lands;—and yet we are told that it would be difficult to obtain such a rent as I have mentioned from the leaseholders there. I believe it is not an unusual thing for persons to purchase coast stations and stock, and to pay for them prices which are supposed to cover the whole of the property, and afterwards to transfer a large portion of their stock to the fine pasture lands in the far West. If that is the case, surely it would not be too much to ask those gentlemen who rent that fine land to pay a half-penny an acre instead of a farthing. I may mention that I have altogether omitted in my calculation the unavailable area, but have merely taken the actual available area, which in the three districts of North and South Gregory and Burke exceeds 81,000 square miles. I think, after what I have stated, we are justified in securing something like an adequate rental from the Crown lands. Let me compare the rent of £1 6s. 6d. per square mile that would thus be paid with the rent now paid by conditional selectors for some of their lands. What does it cost a conditional selector per square mile—I will take it at the lowest computation? What does the conditional selector who often goes in for grazing pay?—and I will here dwell upon something that is not often dwelt upon—namely, the amount of land under cultivation by conditional selectors. Reference is made in Mr. Tully's report to the very small

amount that is actually under cultivation in these words—

"According to the returns there are 2,829 homesteads in occupation and 5,751 conditional purchases. The total area in cultivation in homesteads is 19,770 acres out of a gross area of 393,184 acres, which is about five acres in every 100. The area of enclosed lands is about 39½ acres in every 100.

"In regard to conditional purchases, the total area in occupation is 3,061,014 acres.

"The proportion which the cultivated land bears to this is '87 per cent., the enclosed lands being 49 per cent."

There is a statement made by authority of the Under Secretary for Lands, which must lead us to conclude that the amount of land under cultivation is very small, and that by far the largest proportion of it is taken up under conditional terms for grazing. I may remark that in another page Mr. Tully points out that for the last year the average of cultivation both for homestead and conditional purchases is highest in the land agent's district of Beenleigh—

"With the exception of Beenleigh, there seems to be little cultivation on selections in the colony. The land is almost entirely used for grazing purposes."

Now let us see what a conditional purchaser who takes up land for grazing pays for his square mile. He pays £160, which extends over ten years—that is, he pays £16 a-year for ten years for the right of acquiring a square mile of country, and this, it must be remembered, besides having to comply with all sorts of conditions, such as fencing, &c. I therefore submit that it would not be inequitable to demand an increased rent for pastoral occupation under lease per square mile more in proportion to that paid by the conditional purchaser. The pastoral tenant pays a rent for twenty or thirty years; he pays, say, £1 6s. 6d. per annum per square mile, yet the conditional selector, for ten years, pays at the rate of £16 per square mile. The conditional selector is supposed to be making money all this time on his small area, after paying £16 per square mile for ten years; and I hope that we shall not be told by the hon. gentleman that the pastoral lessees' outgoings are so great that they cannot afford to pay a half-penny an acre, especially as in the outside districts they are not incommoded by conditional selectors, but have the country all to themselves. Many of these gentlemen leased over 100 square miles, but I will assume they lease 100 square miles; well, for that, they would have to pay, at the rate I have specified, the sum of £132 10s. I suppose that 100 square miles in the interior portion of the Gregory district, or the Mitchell, would at least carry 50,000 sheep—and we have been told that the carrying capacity of that country is very great—and for that, all that

they would be required to pay, according to the rate I have specified, would be £132 a-year. I think that would not be too much to add to the outgoings of those pastoral lessees. I submit, therefore, in connection with this subject, that there is an opening for the re-consideration of the whole pastoral tenure of the colony, if we are going to do away with the railway reserves system. I think that is justified by the circumstances to which I have referred. I am sorry to say that, on the whole, I have come to the conclusion that the hon. the Premier, whilst designing great things—and I will give him credit for wishing to carry out great works and that when he says they may be done he sees the possibilities of the future—I have come to the conclusion, sir, that the hon. gentleman's statement, as made to us, is characterised by a want of real vigour and a want of muscular determination to do the thing he professes he is willing to do. I say that a man who professes his willingness to do what the hon. gentleman says he is willing to do must be possessed of strong nerve and determination, and must be able to inspire his followers with confidence in him. It is ridiculous to say that we can go on, year after year, borrowing money to carry out public works, unless we can face the difficulty there is sure to be, before long, of meeting our increased indebtedness.

The PREMIER: You have made it already.

Mr. DOUGLAS: The hon. gentleman says I am responsible for the position of affairs at the present time, meaning that the Government of which I was a member brought things to that point to which we have arrived. I do not think any legislation on our part could very much have affected the position from which we are at present suffering. The cause of the financial contraction of the present time which has so much paralyzed our industries is quite removed from any local cause; and whatever opinions the hon. gentleman may have of the course of legislation previously, what we did could not have much to do with the present position of affairs, which is attributable, chiefly, to causes beyond our control. Nevertheless, I am very well aware that however they have been brought about, we have now to face them, and this is the objection I have to the position the honourable gentleman now occupies. I believe he has good intentions and is willing to do much for the country in the way he has described. I do not take exception to the amount which he has proposed to expend upon a public works policy; but I do very much object to the application of the money as he proposes. Before I can give my consent to it becoming law I should have to hear very good reasons for voting for it, and should require a complete re-

casting of the policy before it could have my consent; but, as I say, I do not object to the amount. I do not object to a large sum of money being raised for the purpose of carrying on some combined system of public works with the introduction of population from beyond the seas. If that is carried out in some way or other I shall endeavour to give it my support, shaping measures in the best form for our present circumstances; but I herewith emphatically protest against the form in which the proposition has been put before us. The Financial Statement, in that respect, has been very insufficient. When the hon. gentleman indicated that the raising such a loan as he described was a cardinal point of his policy, he was bound to show categorically, and in a definite form, how he would obtain the increased revenue to meet the increased interest caused by increased liabilities. He has not done so, and in that respect his statement is lamentably deficient. I think he has missed an opportunity. People were and are now prepared to appreciate the gravity of the situation; they are prepared, I believe, to make some sacrifice and recognise the fact that if we go on borrowing money we must find means for providing the interest upon the new liability. It will not do to go on as we have hitherto done; the times will not admit it, and it therefore follows that some direct and unmistakable provision must be made if this scheme is to be carried into effect. I am aware the hon. gentleman has many admirable qualifications as a public man. He sees more clearly, perhaps, than some of those who support him what really are the interests of the country. I wish that before now he had more clearly expressed his recognition of what was necessary really to be done in order to effect what he sees may be done. But he has not done that. He has limned out to us the outline of a somewhat ambitious scheme, in which I do not entirely agree, though I think the leading features of it must be some day carried out. He has limned out this scheme without showing how it is to be carried out in the only way it can be carried out. In this respect it is lamentably deficient. He has ambition—he longs to climb, but he fears to state the clear conditions by which the summit can be attained. He reminds me a little of the story we have all heard about Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth. Like Sir Walter, the hon. gentleman says—

“I fain would climb, but that I fear to fall.”

And I would answer him as Queen Elizabeth answered Sir Walter Raleigh—

“If thy heart fail thee, do not climb at all.”

I have done my best to point out to the hon. gentleman how he may climb, and I have a firm conviction that, so far as any rate as we know at present, he

has failed to show us how we are to climb—how we are to provide for this increased indebtedness he tells us we may safely incur. I am so firmly convinced of this that I shall take upon myself to discharge what I believe appertains to my rights and duties in this respect. I have not consulted with a single member on what I propose to do, but I feel I shall not discharge my duty to the country or to my constituency without securing to myself, and without giving to others an opportunity of affirming, our complete dissatisfaction with the Statement that has been made on this occasion. I stand here on my own rights and on my own responsibility, leaving others free to act as they will. I stand here as a member of the Liberal party, but I have not consulted them in any respect with regard to the course I am now about to pursue; but I think I should be wanting in my duty to the country at large if I did not here endeavour to express what I believe to be the insufficiency of the Statement that has been made to us. I shall therefore move as an amendment—

That the proposals made to meet present and anticipated liabilities, as declared in the Financial Statement, are insufficient and unsatisfactory.

The PREMIER: I am sure no one could have anticipated, from the previous course of the debate, that a motion of this kind would have been brought forward, especially from one occupying so prominent a position on the Opposition side. The amendment he has moved is tantamount to a motion of want of confidence, and, taking that view of it, I am quite prepared to adjourn the debate, and test the feeling of the House upon it. I am rather astonished that the motion should have come from the leader of the late Government. Hon. members on the other side have surely had ample time to come to some determination as to their course of procedure on the propositions contained in my Financial Statement; and the speeches of the leader of the Opposition and the ex-Colonial Treasurer certainly did not lead me to expect that a motion of this kind would have been brought forward. But I accept the challenge that has been thrown down, and am willing to appeal to the members of the House as to whether my policy is to be carried out or not. I should have thought the same object could have been obtained by negating my proposition to go into Committee of Ways and Means. But the challenge having been distinctly thrown down, I accept it as a vote of want of confidence, and now move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. GRIFFITH rose to a point of order. No member who had already spoken on an original motion could move the adjourn-

ment of the debate—even after an amendment had been moved.

The SPEAKER: The mover of this amendment introduces a fresh question, and until the question was put by me a member who had spoken could not either move or second a motion for adjournment.

The PREMIER: I am quite satisfied, sir, that your ruling is correct, and that I have a perfect right to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it would save them from much embarrassment if they were informed who was the leader of the Opposition. Hitherto he, and those who sat on the Ministerial side, had been led to believe that that office was held by the senior member for North Brisbane, and that hon. gentleman had never intimated that there was any intention to bring forward such an amendment as that now moved by the senior member for Maryborough; and in face of such a hostile movement from the other side, he thought the Premier was quite justified in treating it as a motion of want of confidence, and moving the adjournment of the debate. To say that it was not tantamount to a motion of want of confidence was to say what was not true, and to take objection to the course pursued by the Premier was paltry. The hon. member for Maryborough knew well that he intended this to be a motion of want of confidence in the Government. If that hon. member was going to lead his party, why did he not come to the front, instead of sheltering himself on the back benches? Were there to be two leaders of the Opposition—one to sit on the front bench, and the other to lie in ambush and bring forward motions adverse to the present Administration? With all due deference, he would say that a more dastardly attack had never been made on the Government than that made to-night by the hon. member for Maryborough. If there had been any previous intention of bringing forward such a motion, it was only in accordance with the courtesy usual in such cases that notice should have been given. He was certain it was made with an intention to surprise the Ministry: whether it would succeed or not was a matter which the future would decide. If they were to have two leaders of the Opposition, or three, or four, or five, by all means let them have them; but let the fact be known. They had had a very clear and eloquent speech, last night, from the senior member for Enoggera, who went thoroughly into the question under discussion; and other hon. members occupying the front Opposition bench had followed his lead; and now the hon. member for Maryborough rose up from the back benches, delivered a blatant tirade against the Financial Statement, and moved an amendment tantamount to a vote of want of

confidence in the Government. By all means, let the question be fought out as soon as possible, so that the House might get some business done. If the present Government were to be turned out, let the Opposition do it, if they were strong enough; but let there be some finality. If they went on nag-nagging in this way the entire session would be wasted. This was the advice he would tender to the hon. member who, apparently, led the Opposition, and to his very dangerous off-sider, the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I do not exactly understand what the hon. gentleman who last spoke means by saying that I have made a dastardly attack upon the Ministry. Am I not as free to act here as any other hon. member on either side of the House? I am free, and I shall remain free as long as I have a seat here. I have acted in this respect entirely on my own individual responsibility—a right which I presume the hon. member does not pretend to contest. Has not the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government—has not the Minister for Works—exercised that right on previous occasions? I hope every hon. member who values his position as a representative of the people will remember that he has rights superior to those of any party. I have exercised that right and shall continue to exercise it. While loyal to the party with whom I act, I am still more loyal to what I believe to be the true interests of the country. In virtue of that right I have moved the resolution now before the House, without consulting a single member of the House except yourself, sir. I have not said one single word about it, and hon. members on this side of the House are as free as those on the other side of the House to adopt or refuse to adopt this resolution. The leader of the Opposition is just as free, as fully constituted for that purpose, as he could be. I am here as a supporter of his; more than that, I am here without expectation or hope of office, and without a wish to occupy the position I have previously occupied, or any position in office at all. I shall not forego the rights which I have expressed my determination to exercise, and which I shall continue to exercise, I hope, for the good of my constituents and the benefit of the country. This may be done, I feel convinced, with perfect loyalty to the gentlemen with whom I act. If I can be of any value at all I will be, but only with the full recognition of my practically independent position. I therefore would express a hope that the hon. member for the Mitchell will forgive me for having taken this course. He has no right to say what he has said, and I hope in future he will be more guarded in the expressions he makes use of. He has no right to apply the terms he did to the

action I have taken to-night. That action was dictated by a conscientious belief in what—from a mistaken conception it might be—I conceive to be my duty. Such action has over and over again been taken by hon. members on either side who have seen fit to express their individual opinions in the way I have expressed mine. I see no reason on this occasion for the adjournment of the debate. I do not occupy on the present occasion that prominent position which the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) does. Whatever interpretation the hon. gentleman may put upon the motion I have moved I care not. I feel well convinced that the amendment will not be carried, and I reserve to myself the right to do what to me seems fit, with the permission of the House, in dealing with that amendment. I do not think my position in the capacity in which I stand, after my declaration, is such as to justify the hon. gentleman in concluding that this is a motion of want of confidence in the form he has described it to be. I am not in any way the leader of the Opposition, and, assuming to myself the rights of an independent member, I do not think he need necessarily put that interpretation upon the amendment as to conclude that it demands the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: I quite admit, as the hon. member says, that it is quite competent for him to introduce any amendment on the motion before the House. But when I challenged his motion as a vote of want of confidence, it was cheered and assented to by the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

The PREMIER: If the motion is only a private one, I care not a straw for it; but if it is a vote of want of confidence let it be understood so. If it is a vote of want of confidence let it be accepted as such manfully, so that everyone who speaks to the main question will know to what intent he is speaking. If the late Colonial Treasurer and the leader of the Opposition do not see fit to move a want of confidence motion, let them express their opinion of a motion brought forward by an occupant of the back benches. Now that such intention is disclaimed, I have no objection to the debate going on; but while a vote of want of confidence is hanging over our heads it is not my intention to go on with anything else. I shall be quite ready to discuss such a motion any day that may suit the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I understand that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has moved the adjournment of the debate. My hon. friend the member for Maryborough has stated that he moved the motion without consulting any member of the House except yourself (the Speaker), and we all accept his state-

ment as perfectly correct. I quite agree that when the existence of a Government is challenged by a direct motion of want of confidence, it is desirable that a day should be fixed for the discussion and any other business adjourned until the motion is disposed of. I do not think, however, that there is sufficient reason for such a course when a private member moves an amendment which may have the form of a vote of want of confidence. As long as Government by party continues it must be recognised that there is a great distinction between a direct party attack made under ordinary circumstances and after consultation, and a motion made, as in this instance, by an hon. member on his own motion entirely. Under those circumstances, it is not at all necessary that the debate should be adjourned. I do not dispute the right of my hon. friend to move this motion; it may be a convenience if it has the effect of confining the remainder of the debate to the one clear point, namely, the inadequacy of the means suggested by the Government to pay interest for the loan they propose. I am now only concerned in pointing out that it is inconvenient and undesirable that the business of the country should be delayed because my hon. friend has seen fit to move this amendment. The Government must understand that the motion has not been made by the Opposition as a party attack upon them. It may be the means of submitting a definite issue for discussion—namely, the one particular respect in which it is said the policy of the Government is defective. I would also point out that, although it is the practice when a direct vote of want of confidence is moved to suspend business, there have been innumerable instances in other parts of the world where similar motions have been made, not in the way of direct party attack. During the present session in the Parliament of Great Britain motions of this kind have been very numerous. Several motions have been moved there which, if moved by the leader of the House of Commons, would have been taken as votes of want of confidence, and would have led to the suspension of other business; but, coming as they did, that course was not followed. I trust, therefore, the hon. gentleman will see no difficulty in proceeding with the business of the House.

The PREMIER: Before reading the motion, I would like it to be understood by the House what the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment meant by saying he had not consulted any member of the House except yourself. There was an impression throughout the House that he moved the amendment in consultation with yourself, and with your approval. I should like to give the hon. member an

opportunity of explaining himself. The terms of the motion, which is most distinctly one of want of confidence, are, "That the proposals made to meet the present and anticipated liabilities, as disclosed by the Financial Statement, are insufficient and unsatisfactory." Suppose that motion was carried, what would be the result? The Ministry must resign; they could not carry on; and the further result would be that the hon. member for Maryborough would be sent for. Votes of want of confidence in exactly similar form have been actually brought before the House. I brought forward two myself in this form, and as soon as I rose to propose the amendment the present leader of the Opposition was the first to rise, and suggest the adjournment of the debate to discuss the vote of want of confidence. Exactly the same hon. members who would vote for a want of confidence motion would vote for this amendment. Such being the case, why does not the leader of the Opposition bring forward such a motion himself.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I shall do so when I think proper.

The PREMIER: I shall not allow the debate to go on without knowing the nature of it. Let the leader of the Opposition throw down the challenge, and I will accept it. I regard the amendment as a vote of want of confidence, because the leader of the Opposition distinctly assented to it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I corrected the hon. gentleman before on that point. He is, indeed, mistaken; I said nothing of the kind, but preserved a most careful silence.

The PREMIER: I was looking at the hon. member at the time, and thought the amendment had his assent. I regard the motion as one of want of confidence, and can accept it only as such. I shall therefore insist upon the debate being now adjourned.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I can say only if the hon. member chooses to insist upon the adjournment of the debate the matter rests entirely with him. The motion was made by a private member without consultation with any other member of the House. I had nothing to do with it, and was as much surprised that it was moved as any other hon. member. I think, if the hon. member for Maryborough will excuse me for saying so, that he has chosen an inconvenient time for the motion, and it would be far more convenient to move such a motion after consultation with the members of the Opposition. We certainly should not have chosen a time when our own ranks are thinned by an accident. If the hon. gentleman (the Premier) chooses, under these circumstances, to insist upon the adjournment of the business of the House, let him distinctly understand that the delay is his, not ours. So far as I am concerned, and on the part

of the Opposition generally, I offer to go on with the business. We are willing to go on; the hon. gentleman may adjourn if he pleases; he has a majority strong enough to do so, but he would be committing a great mistake. As regards the making of a party attack, we shall do it when we think it expedient as a party.

The SPEAKER drew attention to the irregularity committed by the leaders on both sides, in speaking more than once on this question. He had not, however, checked them, as he was of opinion that, in such a case as the present, the business of the House was facilitated by allowing them to discuss the terms of agreement.

The PREMIER: I am sure it is evident, from what I have said, that it is not my object to delay public business, but that, on the contrary, I wish to see it carried on. I wish to see the debate closed; but I do not desire to see any side-issue introduced in the way that has been attempted by the Opposition. At all events, I thought, at first, the amendment came from them; but after the distinct disclaimer that it is not a vote of want of confidence I have no intention of delaying business. I am desirous that the business should go on, but I never saw a motion which could be more clearly construed as a vote of want of confidence than this. As it has been stated by the leader of the Opposition that it is not intended in that light, I am quite content to take the sense of the House upon it if the hon. member for Maryborough has not the courtesy to withdraw it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The hon. the Premier has said that it has been distinctly disclaimed that the amendment was a vote of want of confidence. What I said was that, so far as the Opposition as a party are concerned, it is not brought forward as a vote of want of confidence by them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is no doubt very inconvenient for the leader of the Opposition to discuss this matter. He has told us that there has been no consultation about the amendment. I believe it is usual in the other colonies, when a vote of want of confidence is moved, to refuse to transact any other business until that is disposed of; and, if I read the signs of the times aright, from the manner in which the amendment was received, I cannot help thinking there must have been some collusion—there must have been some consultation. I should like my colleague to ascertain clearly whether this amendment is brought forward as a vote of want of confidence. We know the shifts and dodges to which the hon. gentleman opposite can resort; we know how he can set rumours afloat, and how after giving stabs in the dark, and after setting rumours afloat in the streets by means of his emissaries, he can come in the House

and disavow being the author of them, saying he knew nothing about them in the same way as he has said he knew nothing about this amendment. If he did not know anything about it, somebody not far off him did.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: To whom do you refer? Name; name!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am speaking with reference to the adjournment of the House. I am speaking of persons who set rumours afloat.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Who are they?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not in the habit of interrupting the hon. member, but always give him full sway, and do not think it right that he should raise this howl against my remarks. Without having any consultation with my colleagues with regard to the amendment, I wish to say that I regard it as a vote of want of confidence, and shall treat it as such, notwithstanding the denials which have come from hon. members opposite.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I think it desirable to state, as a matter of explanation, that I only consulted the Speaker in reference to the form of my amendment. The Speaker was not cognisant of its terms, as I did not even read it to him. It is only right that I should say this, as it seems to be understood by the other side that Mr. Speaker knew the terms of the amendment. With the exception named, I had no consultation whatever with any person about it.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member say that he simply consulted the Speaker as to the form of the amendment, and no one else?

Mr. DOUGLAS: Yes.

Mr. REA said he could well understand why the Minister for Lands should be surprised at hon. members on the Opposition benches acting independently, if he supposed that they were ruled by mandate as hon. members opposite were. Time after time it had been asserted that the amendment had been moved without consultation with the Opposition; but these denials apparently went for nothing with hon. members opposite, who were dragooned outside as to what they should say inside the House.

Mr. GARRICK: I sincerely regret the position taken up by the Minister for Lands;—it may suit the cross-benches of the Opposition, but it is altogether out of place on the Treasury benches. The hon. gentleman should assist to conduct the business of the House with common decency—I will not say with refinement, for we do not expect that from him, and all the training on the Treasury benches will not confer it upon him;—but we have a right to expect that the business will be conducted decently. And it is indecent of the Minister for Lands, after a distinct denial has been given by the leader of the

Opposition that there had been any consultation with the hon. member for Maryborough, not to accept it. When a distinct assertion is made by a prominent member of the House, or any member, it is a form of the House that it should be received and it should never be challenged from the Treasury benches. After what has been said, it seems unnecessary to re-affirm that there was no consultation about the amendment. It was a bombshell to me, and I do not believe, as the hon. member for Maryborough states, that he conferred with any member of the House about it. It seems to me that there is no necessity for adjourning, and that it would be more convenient to let the debate go on. If I speak, I shall discuss the Financial Statement as if no amendment had been moved. I shall not even interpret it as confining the discussion to one issue. If the Premier chooses to have the adjournment we cannot help it, but this amendment is made by an independent member of the House who considers he is carrying out his duty to his constituents by moving it.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down should be the last man to lecture the Minister for Lands, and do the respectable business, for when he was in office he often allowed his passion to rise and often roared. The hon. member talked about members on the Government benches not taking denials; but when they heard the leader of a late Government, when he was clearly proved to be in the wrong in regard to particular transaction by his own handwriting, get out of it by declaring that his memory was a blank on the matter, and when they heard an ex-Minister deny a certain thing on the plea that there had been too much whisky drank at the time of its occurrence, in what way should the denials from the Opposition benches be taken? The late Minister of Lands should confine his lectures to hon. members near him. The members sitting on the Government benches had enough of his highly moral and respectable tone already, and the hon. gentleman should be the last to lecture any member of the House for being bouncible. The Premier had put the amendment in the proper light—it was a vote of want of confidence, and should be treated as such, and the leader of the Opposition must have his team in bad training when he allowed one of them to propose such a motion without consulting him.

Mr. AMHURST thought it right that he should make a statement. As he came down the passage that afternoon, he overheard a conversation;—he did not want to hear it, but his ears were too long. What he heard indicated that it was known to some hon. members opposite that the amendment would be proposed, and he warned the hon. Minister for Works, who said that

he would never believe the Opposition would be guilty of doing anything by a side-wind.

The PREMIER: After what has passed, I intend to say a few words in withdrawing the motion for adjournment of the debate. After the disclaimer given by the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for East Moreton, the House must see that public business cannot be attempted unless we have some understanding as to the issues to be tried. The position of the leader of the Opposition is really much more questioned than mine by the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Maryborough; but as he does not regard it in that light I shall proceed with the debate. Had the leader of the Opposition intimated at an earlier period of the debate, as he should have done, that he disclaimed the amendment as a vote of want of confidence, this wrangling would have been put a stop to.

MR. GRIFFITH: I do not think my position as leader of the Opposition is at all interfered with by the amendment the hon. member for Maryborough has moved. I only wish to say, further, that I do not think I am to blame for not speaking earlier, because I took the very first opportunity of doing so when I could catch the Speaker's eye.

Motion, by permission, withdrawn.

MR. HILL said he should not have risen to reply to the hon. member for Maryborough, who sat down immediately before the motion for adjournment, if that hon. member had not alluded so pointedly to the district he (Mr. Hill) represented, and to himself, in his very able speech. He regretted that some more prominent and able member on that side of the House had not followed in reply to the hon. gentleman; but he felt that though he might fail in words, yet from his own personal experience and knowledge of the district the hon. member had alluded to, he was not behind anyone in the House in intimate acquaintance with it. He had been there since the time of the very first settlement; he was fully aware of the resources of the district, and how far they could bear taxation, and what was to be done, and what might be done with them. He knew, as he had said before in that House, that there was an immense amount of wealth lying dormant there which only needed the introduction of capital to develop. He knew that the country there was inferior to none in Australia. He had travelled through all the colonies south, and he had seen no better country anywhere than there was there; and instead of there being a decrease in the number of sheep there, there had been a very great increase during the last ten years, notwithstanding the general diminution of stock throughout the colony. In 1869 the number of sheep was only 472,751,

and it was now four-fold, although the total number in the colony had diminished almost one-half. Sheep and cattle, he contended, had been placed too much in apposition with human beings by hon. gentlemen opposite, and more especially by the hon. member for South Brisbane. No one could appreciate more than he did the criticism of the hon. member for Maryborough, which was courteous and statesmanlike compared with the speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane, which was full of gross personalities and gross insinuations against the Crown tenants. He said that hon. member took advantage of the shortsightedness of the residuum of the public to hoist himself into the position he now occupied. He took advantage of their shortsightedness, not being acquainted with the relation of cause and effect; and he further pandered to their worst passions—to envy and jealousy—in holding up others to their contempt who were above them, and who held better and a more unassailable position than they did themselves. He considered gentlemen like that—he hardly knew what to call them in suitable terms—they were nothing but professional politicians and political adventurers. But their words did not deceive many members of that House. On looking at the returns it would be seen that in 1869 they had 8,600,000 sheep, and in 1878 they had only 5,400,000, and to them the result was plain that they had lost very nearly £1,000,000 that had been introduced into the colony, and which did not go directly into the pockets of the squatters, but was circulated for the benefit of every tradesman, professional man, and working man, and, in fact, every inhabitant of the colony. The percentage, he could assure them, which went into the pockets of the squatters was a very infinitesimal one, and almost invariably when it did go to him it was reinvested in opening up, improving, and in adding to the value of the waste lands of this colony. In his opinion not only should no decrease in the number of sheep in those colonies have taken place during the last ten years, but during that period the numbers should have been doubled at the very least, and the difference then would be that, instead of having about a million and a-half coming into the colony for wool, they would have perhaps four millions, and that, too, capable of further extension. That would be very appreciably felt by every individual in these colonies, and they should not have heard so much about these very bad times. In his opinion the position of the outside districts had been fully entered into and explained by the hon. member for Maryborough; and, speaking from practical experience, he could say that they had quite as large an area of good grazing country as New South Wales,

where they now depastured 25,000,000 sheep, and where the money for that wool came into the colony from England every year. But he said Queensland had not the same natural advantages as New South Wales. They had not the same navigable rivers—the highways of commerce—such as the Murrumbidgee and the Darling, traversing the country; and they were compelled to have recourse to artificial means for opening up and developing it. He therefore said that these great trunk lines of railway which were projected were the only means by which the colony could be put on a par, in prosperity, with the adjoining colony. In his opinion, their construction was amply justified, and he should strongly advocate their being pushed on with the utmost vigour. He said this not with regard to his personal convenience or interest. So far as he was concerned, railways might stop where they were now: but he believed that, in the interests of the development of the whole colony and of everybody in it, it was most essential that these lines should be pushed on vigorously. He would say, with regard to the additional burden that the hon. member had suggested should be put upon the occupiers of these outside districts, that they were at present not in a position to bear them. If they had the benefit of a railway their rents might require adjusting, but he did not see even then that they should be called upon. The hon. member for Maryborough might call it a policy of liberality, but he (Mr. Hill) called it a policy of infidelity and repudiation. These men were induced by certain pretences to go out there;—on the fulfilment of certain conditions they were to have leases for a certain number of years at, he admitted, a very nominal rent. The hon. member had made the bold statement that 100 square miles of that country would carry 50,000 sheep; but he (Mr. Hill) knew well that there was not 100 square miles in the colony which in its natural state would carry 50,000 sheep. Thousands of pounds had to be expended in fencing, dam-making, and other improvements to the property of the Crown before 100 square miles could be made available to carry anything like half that number. And he would put it to hon. members that the pastoral tenants were entitled to some consideration with regard to the interest on the money thus invested by them. The hon. gentleman had boasted in the House to-night that he destroyed, or helped to destroy, the security of every pastoral tenant by subjecting them to a tenure at six months' notice. What was the value of that? They had heard about agrarian outrages in Ireland, but surely that was worse than any tenure in Ireland. They had heard enough of that sort of thing here and

in the old country as well. He maintained that if a better tenure were given, and more inducements were held out for the introduction of private capital, and more confidence was established with home capitalists, they would not hear of one-half the distress there was now in the colony. They would hear nothing about hundreds of men, besides the Ipswich workshop men, walking about the country looking for work, while there were thousands and millions of pounds of reproductive work to be done in the interior of the country if they could only get capital to do it with. It was through the action of the so-called Liberal party—gentlemen who gave nothing to the colony, but who tried to take from those who had what they had, that had so weakened and so impaired the position of the Crown tenants that they could not get money to enter into reproductive works at all. He had heard allusions to men who had made fortunes by squatting going home to spend their money. Those fortunate individuals were very few so far as he knew; but he had the honour to know one gentleman who was originally a member of that House, and who was once Treasurer of the colony, and who must stand high in the estimation of hon. gentlemen opposite. He certainly stood high in his (Mr. Hill's) estimation, and he had been residing at home, and no doubt was doing a great deal of good there, not only for himself, but for the colony as well. Men of his stamp and standing, and, he might say, his wealth, acted as an advertisement to the colony; and he believed that for every one of them that went home they were pretty certain of getting twenty back. He only regretted that there was no prospect of more of them going home. With regard to the additional burden that was to be levied upon these men, together with the additional insecurity which was held over their heads, why the position of Damocles would be no worse.

"Destructus ensis cui super impia Cervice pendet,"

if they were to be placed in that position. He could assure hon. members that instead of the runs being dead gifts at a rental of 4s. 6d. per square mile, he believed the country would see at the end of September, when the rents were due, that a great proportion of those dead gifts were thrown up. He had seen it before in 1866, and he should be sorry to see it again; therefore, he thought that instead of every inducement to bring about such a state of things by hon. members opposite, every thing should be done to encourage the pastoral lessees if they ran short of funds, as he had no doubt many of them would. He believed that the prairies of the colony were perfectly capable of carrying 25,000,000 sheep, and that of itself should make us induce capital to come in, and

thus give employment to labour. That was the principle on which they should act, for the colony had not enough money yet to burst up as they had done in Victoria, and therefore they should wait until they had something more than they had got.

Mr. SIMPSON said he had not intended to say anything on the Financial Statement, but hon. members opposite had made the debate take such a general form apart from its financial character that he should make a few remarks. He might say that he went into that House to assist in putting out the late Government, and that he was elected on that distinct understanding. He was not like some hon. members opposite who were also elected on that understanding, and when the Douglas Administration went out crossed over with them. He certainly intended to vote with the Ministry who took their place, and he should give them a good and fair support as long as he approved of their measures. Looking at the Financial Statement, there was one point that was equally admitted on both sides of the House, which was that at the end of the present year there would be a very large deficiency in the revenue amounting to something like £200,000. He did not think that anyone had attempted to deny that fact, not even the late Treasurer. Another thing which had not been attempted to be denied was, that we Queenslanders were very heavily taxed. With the exception of New Zealand, there was not one of the Australian colonies that bore the same taxation as Queensland. The colony was expensively governed, the Civil Service had been increased in a ratio far beyond the means of the country, and the whole system of administration of the laws had been most expensive. As far as the policy of the Government was foreshadowed by the Financial Statement, he would only refer to one or two points. He thought that nearly every hon. member of that House had, at one time or another, said that retrenchment was necessary. He certainly told his constituents, before his election, that if they sent him to that House he should advocate retrenchment, and he thought that every new member had come in with the distinct understanding that he would do the same, and that there were very few old members who had not advocated retrenchment at no very long time back. They had an enormous Civil Service to govern a population of 200,000 persons; and he thought it was a perfect disgrace that they should have to spend so much on the administration of the laws in Queensland. Some members—he thought all—of the late Government admitted that retrenchment was necessary, but the present Government had the courage of their opinions, and immediately commenced the

work of retrenchment. What, however, was the consequence? Why, that nearly every member on the opposite side of the House got up a cry because some workmen at Ipswich were dismissed. He thought there were two reasons that led those hon. members to adopt that course—one was that the working men had a vote, and another, that the Fortitude Valley election was near at hand. He approved of the railway policy of the Government to a great extent; at the same time he should only advocate railways being made on commercial principles—where there was some chance that they would pay. He should not attempt to follow all the arguments which had been used in connection with the railway policy, but would only treat it from one point of view. Referring to the speech of the hon. Colonial Treasurer, that hon. gentleman said that the sum of £1,500,000 for railways into the interior would provide for extensions to the extent of 500 miles at £3,000 per mile, which amount he believed would be sufficient. That was an item to which hon. members opposite had made the most objection. He thought, however, it would not require a very great insight into the traffic of the railways already made to show that that railway would be a payable one. He should base his opinion on that subject solely on what the wool traffic was, and what it would produce. He took the present rate of carriage of wool from Dalby to Brisbane, which was 8d. per ton per mile, and if they carried a ton of wool for 500 miles at that rate it would amount to £16 13s. 4d. At the end of that 500 miles it would take 600 sheep annually to produce a ton of wool, so that every 600 sheep would give nearly £17 of carriage. He presumed that capital to construct the line could be got at 4 per cent., and if another 4 per cent. was added to that for working it would take 8 per cent., or £120,000 per annum, to leave that 500 miles of railway clear of all loss to the colony. To produce that £120,000 would only require about 4,000,000 sheep. If, however, we took into consideration the large amount of through traffic in passengers, goods, and live-stock, and add to this all the intermediate traffic, he was sure, if at the end of 500 miles they had established 2,000,000 sheep, the line would be a thoroughly paying one. He thought there was a great deal of nonsense talked about farming being the great industry of the country. There was no hon. member could dare to say that the mining and wool-producing interests were not the two things that would keep the colony going for a long time to come;—it would, in fact, require only a small quantity of land comparatively to produce more grain than the people were likely to require. But if they would take the traffic of railways on another basis, he could state that

he paid annually 5d. an acre for carriage for all land he had occupied for the last ten years he had been in Queensland. He did not think it would require a very large area at the end of the 500 miles to pay for the railway if they paid 5d. an acre for carriage. The hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith) had told them that he did not object to these railways, but he wanted to see how they were to be paid for. He thought that would not be very difficult, as they could be made to pay by the traffic, by the land sold alongside of them and at the other end, and by the increased rents that could be obtained from runs. In the matter of retrenchment the Government did not go far enough. He believed in paying the Civil servants well, making them work, and having as few of them as possible. Every man in the service should do a fair day's work, which, under the late Government, they did not do. Under the present Government he hoped they would be made to do it. He advocated further retrenchment, and suggested that there might be a large saving upon the education vote. He thoroughly believed in teaching every child elementary education, making it free, compulsory, and secular if they liked; but why should the rich man have his children taught for nothing? Why should there be expensive endowments for grammar schools or colleges, and university examinations conducted at considerable expense, while roads and bridges were wanted all over the country? If he had his will, he would take the endowments away from the grammar schools altogether. There might also be considerable reduction in law expenses of the country. The hon. member (Mr. Mackay) said, in referring to farmers and selectors:—

"He thought not only were they a thoroughly manly race, but they were also a better-off race 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."

He (Mr. Simpson) was very happy indeed to hear this statement. It gave him much pleasure to know that the farmers were succeeding so well. He was a farmer himself—and there was nothing that would give him greater pleasure than to think that all the farmers and selectors of Queensland were as well off as the squatters. The hon. member set himself up to be the champion of the farmers and working men; but probably the mechanics and artisans of the colony would not thank him for something he said. He quoted from the Colonial Treasurer's speech a sentence

which, he presumed, applied to the "lower orders," and respecting that sentence he said—

"They must be tramps who were here referred to, for all respectable mechanics and artisans had homes of their own, and did not go hawking their tool-chests about the country."

Mr. MACKAY: I rise in explanation. What I said was, that I would be sorry to see respectable men tramping about the country with swags on their backs.

Mr. SIMPSON said this explanation did not make the slightest difference. What the hon. member said was, that all respectable artisans and mechanics had homes of their own, and, therefore, he drew the conclusion that he (Mr. Mackay) meant, every man who carried his swag about the country was not a respectable man. And this was the champion of the working men who stated that every man who had no home of his own was not a respectable artisan. He (Mr. Simpson) did not agree with him. A great many respectable men were carrying their swags about the country, and they were probably as respectable as some members of the House. The hon. member had said it was not a good plan to hunt so many people out of the country, and he made the statement that three hundred or four hundred carpenters had left the colony. He (Mr. Simpson) did not believe one single syllable of that sentence. He did not believe that anything approaching that number had ever left the colony. A few carpenters might have been induced to go to Sydney because there was a large and special undertaking there where carpenters were employed; but to think they were better off in New South Wales than in Queensland was a great mistake indeed. A few men might go to seek work there, but as many were coming to Queensland. The best thing to relieve the present depression of the colony would be a rise of 2d. or 3d. per pound in the price of wool, or a doubling of the price of cattle. That would induce employment for the working man, and increase their wages. The hon. member (Mr. Mackay) had also set himself up as the farmers' advocate. In his speech he said—

"An hon. member made a very true remark when he said that squatters were getting quite enough for their cattle at £4 a-head; and he agreed with that hon. member, as it was humbug to compare the beef and mutton of this colony with that of the mother-country."

A pretty sort of a farmers' advocate these remarks proved the hon. member to be. Was it not well known that the farmer could not succeed without stock? How many of them lived by agriculture alone? It was hard for them to get only £4 a-head for their cattle, or a very low price for their wool, and the hon. member should

be very happy to see them getting better prices. If farmers were to be prevented from keeping stock it would certainly ensure their speedy ruin, while if the price of stock were reduced it was simply so many pounds out of the working farmers' pockets. It had given him (Mr. Simpson) great pleasure to see some of the working farmers on the Downs topping the market in the prices for their sheep—getting 13s. 6d. per head for them, while the squatters' sheep were passing at from 7s. to 8s. per head. As to the late Government, they were, politically-speaking, the most corrupt Government that ever Queensland had seen. He knew nothing of the individual members of it, and said nothing of them personally, but as politicians the late Government were most corrupt. They claimed to be then, as they claimed to be now, the advocates of the poor man. What had they done? They found, when they went into office, that a man could take up 320 acres of land at 6d. an acre: they at once reduced the area to 80 acres. They found the poor man able to take up as much land as he wanted at a moderate price, and immediately they limited the area and insisted on his residing on the land and paying 30s. an acre for it. At the same time that they insisted on residence and the charge of 30s. there was no good land to be got.

Mr. GARRICK: Why?

Mr. SIMPSON: Because it was not there.

Mr. GARRICK: Because you took it all.

Mr. SIMPSON said he would show the hon. member that it was some of his own colleagues who took it. At the same time that they were charging 30s. an acre, there was a very fine reserve of 3,700 acres which one of his colleagues wanted to get hold of, and which was free from flood, well grassed, and with plenty of good timber. The land they were charging 30s. an acre for was twelve or fifteen miles from timber or water, and it was a fact that this reserve was put up to auction and sold at 15s. an acre—land within easy distance of a township which would have been the very thing for homestead selection, and the 3,700 acres were sold at 15s. an acre. This was the poor man's Government!. At the same time that they were thus selling land to one of themselves, they were issuing certificates that ought to have been withheld and refusing those they ought to have issued. In one case the *bonâ fide* selectors on adjoining selections, with a narrow road between them, were not allowed to consider a fence on one side as a sufficient boundary, but they were compelled to fence down both sides of this perfectly useless road. In other cases they gave certificates when there was no fencing at all. He repeated the charge he had made

against the late Government, but believed that those gentlemen, personally, were deceived. He did not suppose that had they known such things were being done they would have permitted them. But as a Government their maladministration was such that these things went on while they were in office. They talked about encouraging farmers and selectors, instead of which they encouraged the towns at the expense of the country. They had enormously increased the cost of Government. They educated the rich man's son at the expense of the poor. The poor man's son did not want grammar schools and universities; he wanted to learn reading and writing, and then go to work. So long as the present Government held to the course they had laid down, and ran at all straight, he should support them in preference to their predecessors in office.

Mr. PATERSON said he quite agreed with what had been said, that the 500 miles of railway, when completed, would produce, within a few pounds the revenue that had been mentioned—namely, £120,000 per annum. As a question of figures, he believed that was correct; but they would have to get the sheep there first, and the happy state of things predicted might be put back by a variety of circumstances. Several speakers had remarked upon the poor selector and the poor artisan, but he did not hold with those who preceded those titles by the word "poor." He was happy to believe there were very few poor in this country, for no man could be called poor who had strength and labour at command; and as to farming, a moneyless man had no business to become a selector. Although every facility should be given by law to induce men of small means to enter upon the cultivation and settlement of the land, still the land laws ought never to be such as would induce men who were poor to go on the land at all. In Britain, one of the first questions asked by a landlord of an intending tenant whom he did not know was, "What is your capital," before he decided whether he was a proper tenant or not. The hon. gentleman who spoke last referred to a remark of the Colonial Treasurer that it was highly improper and not to be thought of that any additional taxation should be placed on the shoulders of the working men. But that statement was quite unnecessary on the part of the Colonial Treasurer, because during the general election the working men took care to elect none supporting any additional burden on their backs. It was the cry throughout the length and breadth of the land that the interest on any loan required by either the then Government or their successors to carry out their public works policy should not be charged

through the Customs, or in any indirect way upon the working men's shoulders. In his remarks to-night he would confine himself to one or two principles enunciated in the Premier's Statement. A great deal had been made about the assertion that the Consolidated Revenue appeared to the world in very bad form by reason of the exclusion from it of the proceeds of the land sold under the Railway Reserves Act and the Western Railway Act. But there was nothing in either of those Acts setting forth that the Consolidated Revenue should not receive the proceeds of those sales;—they merely provided, and very properly so, that separate accounts of them were to be kept. This was provided in section 13 of the Railway Reserves Act and section 15 of the Western Railway Act, so that the whole affair was merely a matter of book-keeping. Stress had been laid on the fact that the books had been kept in such a way as to exclude the sums in question from the Consolidated Revenue, but that was no reason for asserting that the principle of those Acts was bad, because an alteration of the system was a mere matter of administration and did not require an amendment of the Acts. All that the Act provided was that the money, on being paid into the Treasury, should be kept in a distinct account, the reason for this being that the interest of the money expended in the construction of the lines specified in those Acts should be paid from funds derived from the land within the railway reserves, and not from any outside source. That was a very proper conclusion for the legislature to arrive at, for the money ought certainly to come from the lands benefited by the expenditure. Indeed, the whole thing lay in a nutshell, and, as he had said before, it was a mere matter of book-keeping. As to this railway legislation being the cause of the present financial embarrassment, he would only say that, but for the money derived from that source, the colony would have been £430,000—the sum derived from land sales under those Acts—out of pocket. Those sales were perfectly legitimate, and the only embarrassment they had caused was to those who so indiscreetly purchased them. He did not believe those lands were worth to-day, or would be for twelve years, the money paid for them; but that was a matter which concerned only the purchasers. The sales were largely advertised; the auction rooms were closed to none who chose to attend; and purchasers bid with their eyes open to the consequences. If these sales were a melancholy circumstance, they were melancholy to the capitalists who invested their money there. As to the operation of these Acts having discouraged settlement, the thing

was too ridiculous for the House to swallow. Would any common-sense child, let alone man, say that any of the capitalists in question were forced to purchase? And as to the capital expended being grasped by the Government, that was nonsense; for if there was any grasping at all it was on the part of those who were so anxious to grasp the lands. He was sorry to see terms of this kind introduced into the Statement, for they showed that it was pervaded by a spirit of ultra-squatterdom which ought never to have appeared there. The whole burden of the song was, that there should be no demand made on the squatter until the railway actually reached the land he occupied. No encroachment upon the land would be allowed until the iron horse reached it, and then from 2,000 to 3,000 acres would be sold to small men prepared to pay for it. When it was considered that the lands of the selector cost him 2s. per acre per annum, while those of the squatter did not cost a fiftieth part of the amount, it seemed a great pity there could not be separate markets for the selector and the squatter. The time would come, as he had before said, when there must be a levelling—when the price of land paid by the squatter must be brought nearer to the price paid by the selector, and the price paid by the selector nearer to that paid by the squatter. Another part of the Speech, which was illogical when viewed by the side of the proposal to borrow £1,500,000 for trunk railways, was the statement that Government “supplies railway communication to some districts at a price which does not pay the working expenses of the lines, to the great enhancement of the value of private lands, and the general benefit of their owners and occupiers.” If that was the state with the old lines, what hope was there for new extensions? He should like to have some further explanation as to who the people were who enjoyed such benefits as were indicated? The Speech continued,—“It carries all our newspapers gratuitously, and defrays half the cost of transmitting every letter or telegraphic message.” Now, a very large portion of the community did not participate in that benefit at all; and he did not see, in the present financial exigencies, why there should not be a revision in the scale of postage and telegraphy. The fact of carrying newspapers free meant a cost of £20,000 extra to the colony. He was very happy to see them carried free; still, if such a great loss resulted, the people—especially those in the outside districts—might be called upon to contribute something to the expense. It might seem a backward step; but if they recognised the necessity of pruning in other departments, there was no reason why they should not endeavour to alleviate the condition of the colony by retrenchment in that direction. He now

came to the leading principle in the Statement, and in order to elucidate his views, he would go back to the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition with regard to railways. That hon. gentleman had been twitted in the House and the Press with now opposing the policy which he enunciated to the country before the general election. As he understood it, that hon. gentleman's policy was on a very different basis from that promulgated by the present Premier. The essence of his policy was, that both branch and trunk lines should be carried on hand-in-hand, and the trunk lines westward should be extended wherever there was a chance of their paying—using that term in a modified form. If the receipts from railway traffic would not cover the working expenses and the interest as well, the latter would be looked for from the only correct source—namely, from the properties benefited by such extensions. He clearly understood that was the hon. gentleman's policy, and he hoped he had not departed from it. But what was the position assumed by the present Government? Being well aware, by the result of the election, that the people of the colony would not submit to increased taxation through the Custom-house, they were thrown back upon other sources, and there was a cry raised in some parts of the colony—and he would back it out—that local self-government should be introduced. Advantage was taken of this cry, it was enlarged and descanted upon throughout the colony in view of the Financial Statement, as coming events cast their shadows before. The provincial districts were now required, when very poorly able to bear the burden, to take upon themselves the whole responsibility of their roads and bridges. He thoroughly approved of the plan of making the districts contribute, the Government assisting them with £1 for £1, or even £2 to £1; but the Treasurer proposed to initiate reform by saddling upon property the expenditure incurred for its improvement, and removing the responsibilities of local works from the central Government to those who would be benefited. He (Mr. Paterson) quite agreed that the property of those who were benefited by public works should be taxed to contribute to the cost of those works. It was better that payment should be made in that form, but the Colonial Treasurer should have said—“Gentlemen, we are going to ask you to take upon yourself the burden hitherto borne by the general Government.” Take the Logan, for instance, and say that £25,000 had been hitherto spent in the southern part of the colony south of the Brisbane River. The Colonial Treasurer should not ask the people to take their burden upon their shoulders at once, but should propose that the people should take

£12,500, and in lieu of the other half a railway should be carried through the district so as to lighten the traffic on the main roads and leave only the feeding lines to be kept in repair. If a line could be constructed at a cost the interest of which should not exceed the £12,500, that would be a reasonable compromise. But mark the difference. All the provincial districts were asked to bear the burden, and get no railways. The result would be the same as of yore;—indeed, it was a question whether the construction and repair of roads would be as well done as when the work was under departmental supervision. The people were not asked to do this, because it was desirable to establish local self-government to benefit the whole of the community; but in order to adjust the finances so as to enable a margin to be made at the end of the year to be devoted to paying interest on the cost of the construction of trunk lines. Let us go westward and apply the same principle to the pastoral tenants, and ask them to contribute to what modern science had defined as the best road in the world—the railroad. If the Government gave them such a road, surely we were entitled to ask them to come within the scheme of the Treasurer, and be placed on the same footing as the smaller districts in the settled portion of the colony? What was a good principle in one case was a good one in the other. He would go further, and hold that the squatter who had taken up western territory, the riches of which had been so much descanted on, had done so when there was no promise of a railroad; and if he wished to have a railroad now, he should come forward and say, “Give us a railroad; cancel the old contract, and we will take another on better terms to the country.” Now would be the proper time to put such a proposition before the gentlemen most interested—the squatters of the colony. If they had entered upon their contract when they had no hope of railway construction, the country had a right to ask them to come to fresh terms in order that the taxpayers of the colony should not be called upon to pay one sixpence towards the deficiency in the interest on the capital to be expended in improving the outside districts. Something had been said about tenure, and last night the hon. member for Leichhardt (Mr. Macfarlane) had remarked it was a question that the House would always receive with displeasure. This question of tenure was a subject deserving of serious consideration;—in fact, the existing tenure of the Crown lands of the colony required revolutionising, and the policy of the squatting party ought not to be to retard settlement. In his election speech at the School of Arts, the Colonial Secretary made a statement to the effect that the railways should be allowed to reach the western in-

terior, and that then the lessees would give up lands as required for settlement; and in his Financial Speech the Premier declared something very similar: they ought, he declared, to set their faces against the alienation of the western lands until the railways reached those districts. But why should they do so? Surely, as men of common sense they could estimate the value of the land before and after the railway got there. If the value was 5s. per acre, let the House look upon that as the price, and open the land to the world; if any man had the pluck to go out there to settle upon land, let him have the opportunity. The same idea permeated the hustings' speeches of hon. members opposite; the policy indicated by them was to run the main trunk lines out West, and when that had been done provision was to be made for settlement and the land was to be doled out at a price. So long as they had two kinds of land tenures in the colony healthy settlement would not progress. The only excellent way to fix people upon the soil was to place all holders on an equal footing, and charge interest at the rate of, say, 5 per cent. on the value of the land; and if squatters could not prosper on the same terms as selectors, their industry deserved to die. It was a parody on legislation, and a very strong exposition of the want of common-sense, that to this day the tenure of squatters was on the same basis as it was thirty-three years ago, and when he reviewed the squatting tenure he could not see what cause there was for complaint. If the House did not take care it would be made still stronger. It began with a permit to occupy, and now it had developed into a twenty-one years' lease with the right of renewal. He did not wish it to be inferred that the tenure had not performed its functions; on the contrary, he considered it had, and that there was time for a change. The squatter should have every encouragement to settle upon the western lands, and make improvements upon them; but the only legitimate way to effect this was to give an indefeasible title, not upon cash payment, but upon a fair interest such as could be had upon the cash market value of the land. There was no other mode of settling the question satisfactorily, and the sooner it was decided the better, and he verily believed there was no hope of bettering the present squatting tenure. Let the squatters face this question manfully, and let the scheme be thought out to see whether they could not alienate land upon an annual payment of interest on the fair market value. It would be ridiculous to ask the graziers to pay 5s. per acre in cash. The House should desire to arrive at the fair value of the land for pastoral purposes, and to give the squatters as much land as they liked, with fair restriction as to settle-

ment and upon an annual cash payment upon the basis of interest upon the principal involved. He was also surprised at the conspicuous absence from the Financial Speech of particulars of the branch lines proposed to be undertaken. One well-known member opposite, the hon. member for Normanby, was a great advocate for branch railways, and he would give the House a quotation of what the hon. member said before his constituents, as he could not understand the consistency of his position and that of some other hon. members opposite. The hon. member said to his constituents—

"In good agricultural districts a cheap system of branch lines would have my support, where settlement had taken place or would be likely to take place to justify the outlay."

There they had a well-known member of the Assembly, who sat on the Government benches, saying he would support branch railways in any good agricultural district, or even where there was hope of settlement; and it seemed very strange that in the Ministerial programme the Darling Downs only should be mentioned, for the House knew there were other districts where the experiment of a cheap line of railway might very well be made, and with much advantage to the districts and a saving of expenditure for roads and bridges. Something had been said about the absence of traffic on their railways. In the Financial Speech it was stated that the traffic expected by the Roma extension had not been realised, but that, on the contrary, the traffic receipts of the Southern and Western Railway had decreased. He wished to say to the House that no traffic of farm produce had been expected until the railway got to Roma; and that none would come eastward even when the railway was extended that far. The original anticipation was that the whole traffic resulting from agricultural settlement in the vicinity of the Western Railway should go westward, for it would never pay the farmers there to compete with farmers on the eastern seaboard. The diminution of the railway receipts arose from another cause—he believed the same as had produced a diminution of railway traffic in older countries. There had been a depression all over the world, and, according to a paragraph he had read in the *Birmingham Post*, it had affected the goods and passenger traffic on the railways in the mother country; and he believed that the same cause had produced the diminution here;—everybody lately had been buttoning up his pockets and spending only what was absolutely necessary, and the decrease of traffic had arisen, not because the western lands had been sold in large blocks, but because there was a general depression. He trusted that if the matter came to the vote the

principle he had alluded to would be thought of by hon. members on both sides. If it was good for the provincial districts to take upon themselves the burden of their own roads and bridges because it improved property, it was also good that the principle should be applied to the holders of property in the interior, which it was proposed to reach and improve by the extension of the railway lines of the colony. It might be said that the pastoral lessees were only tenants, and that as the property belonged to the Crown the Crown would receive the benefit of the improvement; but it must be remembered that the pastoral tenants held the country in many cases for terms of twenty years, and for all the House knew when these leases expired the grasses might be perished from over-stocking and the land converted into a wilderness.

MR. GARRICK: I do not intend to occupy the time of the House at any great length, for the subject of the Financial Speech has been already fully discussed; but I do not feel justified in allowing the motion to be put without saying something upon it. The Financial Speech begins by drawing attention to the general deficiency between the revenue estimated by the former Treasurer, and the revenue estimated by the present Treasurer with the knowledge of ten months' receipts. It then shows under what headings the deficiency, which is stated to be £234,000, occurs; it is mainly under three headings—Customs, lands, and railways; and, after analysing the cause of the deficiency, the Colonial Treasurer goes on to estimate his own revenue under these particular heads, together with the other heads of the budget; and after that the Speech refers to the retrenchment in expenditure, and concludes by reference to the loan. I intend to refer merely to its more salient points. The Speech says that there is a deficiency in the Customs of £90,000—that is, that the actual receipts for the present year, calculated upon the receipts for ten months of the year, as compared with the late Treasurer's Estimate, show a deficiency of £90,000. The hon. gentleman then refers us to table W, showing the exports and imports during ten months of 1878-9, and points out the purchasing power as shown by these exports is so reduced as to account for the smaller amount of imports, and consequently the smaller amount of Customs duties which have been received. But I would point out to the hon. gentleman that that is hardly an accurate way of accounting for the deficiency in our Customs; for it will be noticed, and particularly in our pastoral products, that the return of exports does not show the quantities, but only the values. Take the item of pastoral produce: this does not at all show that there is a falling-off in our

purchasing power with reference to imports, for this reason—if the hon. gentleman can show me that the value of our produce alone had fallen—that we were exporting a smaller value. But what is the fact? That there is a fall in prices—in the value of money; but it is not a fall in the value of any one commodity. With reference to these exports, what do we find? They are not paid for, it must be remembered, in money—the Treasurer knows that full well; but they are paid for by our imports in kind. If it could be shown, in reference to the exchanges, that the value of commodities at home which we receive in exchange for commodities raised here had fallen, the estimate is an inaccurate one. That is clearly made out. It is a well-known fact that woollen and cotton fabrics, and manufactures in which coal and iron form part, and in which the question of wages largely enters, are largely reduced in price; so that what I would point out is this—that if we ourselves have a fall in the value of our exports, there has been a fall in the values at home of all those commodities for which our exports are exchanged; so that unless you can show that there is a fall only in our exports, and not in the price or general value of money, it is no test for arriving at the conclusion that our imports are thereby lessened. With reference to the question of gold, although there has been a falling-off in the value of our gold export, that is not a question to which the argument I have alluded enters. The gold exported in 1877 was £1,499,000, and in 1878 it was £1,155,000. Now, the difference between these sums does not, I believe, afford a purchasing power for our imports. We know, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Walsh, that a large part of the difference in our gold export has arisen from the savings of the Chinese—that the Chinese never bought imports with these savings, and instead of doing as Europeans would have done—made this money capital for the development of more permanent gold industries, in the shape of quartz reefs—they have simply left the country, taking these savings with them, and they never afforded any purchasing power at all that would have affected our imports. So that, I say, when the Treasurer estimates that we have had a falling-off in our exports, he ought to have gone further, and shown that these exports all went in exchanges for imports, the value of which have not been affected. I say that, at home, commodities which we have been exchanging our exports for have fallen like our own exports, and that although we are raising a smaller value, yet inasmuch as prices have fallen we may be receiving a great deal more in

exchange than appears. I think there is another reason why our imports are smaller than they were. Hon. members will notice, according to table W, that the imports during the year 1877 were of a very unusually large character. There was during that year, no doubt, greater commercial activity than there had been for years before, or than there has been since. There is no doubt merchants got in heavier stocks during that year than during previous years. I find that the value of our imports in 1877 was £3,674,000, while in 1876 it was £2,983,000. Hon. members will therefore see that our imports in 1877 were about £690,000 in value above the imports of 1876, merchants in 1877 having laid in and accumulated larger stocks than in any previous year. Therefore, when we come to 1878, we find that after the drought, which occurred in 1877, but the effects of which were not fully felt until 1878, tradesmen of necessity, when trade became bad, ceased to give the large orders they had previously given. It is not for the reason given by the Colonial Treasurer that there is the smallness of imports in 1878 as compared with 1877, but it is for the reason I have stated. Perhaps there was over-trading on the part of merchants during 1877, and we were obliged to shorten our imports during 1878. After the Treasurer had analysed the reason for the deficiency in the estimate of his predecessor, he refers to the revenue that he is likely to receive. He says he expects to receive during 1879-80, £570,000. Hon. members will notice that this is £50,000 more than will be received during the current year, and £1,730 less than was received during 1877-8. Now, on what basis does the Treasurer expect that increase of £50,000 in his Customs? Has he shown any reason which will satisfy us that he will get that increase? As I have shown, he says the estimated receipts for this year from Customs are within about £1,000 of the receipts in 1877-8; I have shown that during 1877 the imports were unusually large—larger than for several years before; and, I would ask, is there any expectation that the imports of 1879-80 will in any way reach the unusually large imports of 1877, or that they will exceed the imports of the current year so as to increase Customs duties by £50,000? Under what head are we to look for this increase? Has the hon. gentleman shown that our exports are likely to be increased? He himself dwelt upon that in showing the deficiency in the estimate of the former Treasurer as being a very serious thing, by affecting our purchasing power. He says if our exports are not so large we cannot get imports, and his Customs will not be realised. Taking some of the heads, the hon. gentleman informed us, with regard to cop-

per, that there had been a decline in the export of copper and tin, on the year 1877, of £170,000, and I will ask whether there is any probability of our reaching, with our present knowledge, anything like the yield of copper in 1877? Will it reach the hon. gentleman's estimate for this year? We know that the mines from which the copper has hitherto been produced have been stopped altogether, and that those at Copperfield have been stopped for some time; so that, looking to this mineral, there is no reliable data for the hon. gentleman to go upon and to say that the yield of copper in 1879-80 will be like that of 1877. I will ask the honourable gentleman if he can show any data with reference to the production of gold, and whether there is any probability that this year our yield of gold will be restored to anything like what it was in 1877? I will take the opinion of the hon. member for Cook, who has told us that there is no probability of any such thing. We know that a large proportion of the gold in 1877 was got by Chinamen out of alluvial ground; but that has gone, and there is no probability of the same amount being got in 1879-80. Then, again, the hon. member has referred to moving on sheep to the westward, and the probability of there being an increase; but I will ask him if there is any likelihood of our wool, this year, realising the same as in 1877? I say that there is not. The honourable gentleman cannot show by his exports that we shall raise as much produce in 1879-80 as in 1877, which is the year which he fixes as his basis; and yet he expects to get £50,000 more from Customs receipts. Now, supposing we cannot see any probable increase in our exports, do we see any probable increase in our population? Is the population of 1879-80 likely to exceed that of 1878-9? We know that not only has immigration been suspended, but that it has been actually stopped; and hon. members may have noticed that for some time past the balance of intercolonial arrivals and departures has been largely against us. I ask, then, where are we to find the sources of this increased prosperity which the hon. gentleman anticipates? I say the hon. gentleman has failed to show that he will get this increase of £50,000 from the Customs which he has set down for this year. The hon. gentleman has stated that he is not going to have a larger loan expenditure than in 1877, and where, I ask, are we to get this £50,000? The next thing which the hon. Treasurer alluded to as showing a large deficiency on the estimate of his predecessor is land. It has been pointed out that there was a deficiency of £46,000 on auction sales, £10,000 on pre-emptives, and on rents and homestead selections £28,000. Now, the hon. gentleman in analysing the cause of this, principally

referred to the Railway Reserves Acts, and he visited those Acts with a great deal of abuse—probably more from political reasons than anything else. He alluded to the sum of £430,000 from sales under the Railway Reserves Act, and said that out of that £430,000, £300,000 was obtained from what he termed “abnormal sales.” I may here remark, that the information given in Table G lumps the whole sum; whereas it would have been very much better if it had been shown how much was for pre-emptives, as a very large portion of it was for pre-emptives. If the hon. member had had it divided into the various classes of purchases, it would have given us some idea of the extent of what he calls “abnormal sales”; but as he has not done this we are obliged to form conclusions of our own. He says that £300,000 was received from abnormal sales, and he has very much complained at the Government forcing the Crown tenants to purchase these lands, thus withdrawing £300,000 from the circulating capital of the colony and putting it into fixed capital. Now, considering this £300,000 represents a sum collected during a period extending over four years, it seems rather absurd to talk about its being withdrawn from circulating capital and being put into fixed capital, and of its having seriously interfered with ordinary commercial operations. Why, only a few men in the western districts have withdrawn sums larger than £300,000 from the circulating capital of the colony, and have fixed it in an investment which for some time to come will be a waste. The argument of the hon. gentleman is absurd. Why, the withdrawal of £300,000 from the circulating capital is a mere drop in the bucket compared with the large sums that have been used to speculate with in cattle. As hon. members are aware, there was for a long time a large speculation in cattle. We know that money flows from our banks every now and then, and that large demands are made for the purpose of carrying on particular speculations that promise to give large profits, and there was a very large amount of speculation in cattle; and no doubt, whilst the returns show a decrease in the number of sheep, they show a very large increase in the number of cattle, which, however, the hon. gentleman did not point out when drawing the attention of hon. members to the decrease in sheep. It is in connection with this speculation that so much money has been locked up, and will continue to be until there is something like equation between supply and demand—that is, until the outside country is brought within marketable distance, so as to bring something like a remunerative price for cattle. The hon. Treasurer has told us that he is going to get something like £70,000 from land sales; but I should have liked

him to be more explicit, and to have shown us how he is going to raise it. Why, sir, the auction sales, this year, have only amounted to £19,000 for the Consolidated Revenue, out of which £10,000 has been received in a very special manner—namely, by the sale of lands within the city, which is not likely to be repeated during the ensuing year. The table shows that, during this year, £51,000 was all that was received from all the reserves, and a large portion of that was pre-emptive; some was for homestead and conditional purchases, but the table does not give any indication of anything that will be at all likely to bring up the sum to such an amount as £70,000. Where, then, was the honourable member to get it? Has he shown any increased prosperity, or any likelihood, during 1879-80, for proceeds to that amount from auction purchases of land? He has told us so himself that £300,000 of the £430,000 received in the Railway Reserves was for abnormal sales, and as £70,000 was for pre-emptives, only between £50,000 and £60,000 would be left for other sales. The Colonial Treasurer says he will receive £70,000. If he is going to get this money at all, and I do not believe it, he will get it by carrying out what he himself has called the abnormal sales under the reserves system; and he cannot get it in any other way. I do not believe he could, at the present time, do what other Governments have done in this direction, for the times are against him;—he could not get such an amount as they have got. The Treasurer takes credit for £35,000 for pre-emptives during 1879-80. With all due deference to him, he was bound to show how he would do it; yet he has given no reason at all proving that the squatters will be able to spend that amount during the year. If hon. members will look at the table N, they will find that the pre-emptives have continuously decreased. It is well known that the squatter will not take a pre-emptive until he fears his land is to be proclaimed for auction or selection. He gets the grass of the land for less than a halfpenny an acre; but if he takes it under his pre-emptive right he has to pay 10s. an acre. Whether it be his own capital or borrowed capital that he works upon, the interest on the 10s. will be enough to make it plain that it is to his advantage not to convert his leasehold into freehold until forced. The pastoral tenant only converts his leasehold into freehold when he fears that it will be proclaimed open in the manner I have stated. The truth of this may be seen at once by reference to the table to which I have already referred. In 1872, when there was no fear of resumptions, the pre-emptions were only £1,280. In 1873 they were £6,280; in 1874, hon. members will remember, the Western Rail-

way Reserves Act was passed, and it became law in the following year—but notices had, I believe, been given in 1874, and the result was that, instantly the pastoral tenants saw reason to fear that something would be done with their runs, they made their pre-emptives, and in that year the amount was £38,808. In 1875-6, the amount was £33,920; in 1876-7, it was £41,558. The year 1876-7 was the year in which the Railway Reserves Act was passed, so that the pastoral tenants came in from time to time as they feared the Crown was going to resume parts of their runs; and in 1878-9 there was £12,554 for the ten months. It was only, then, as the railway pushed out and the pastoral tenants believed their runs were jeopardised that they made these pre-emptives; and unless the present Government have some idea of extending these railway reserves, and so frightening the pastoral tenants, this estimate for pre-emptives will never be realised. The Treasurer estimates £180,000 for homestead and conditional selections; but I will point out that we have hardly had a year in our most prosperous times in which such an amount has been exceeded. Where are the lands now for selection? I myself, when Minister for Lands, threw open nearly the whole of the lands of East and West Moreton for selection under the Act of 1876. In that same year there were immense areas proclaimed open in the districts of Wide Bay and Burnett; large areas were proclaimed on the Darling Downs;—and yet with all these thrown open, only £144,000 has been received. The Treasurer has taken credit for £36,000 during the next year over these receipts; and I again ask him where he is going to get his money from? It will prove to be like his estimates with reference to Customs receipts, pre-emptives, and auction sales. He cannot show how his estimate is to be realised. Let us analyse the matter, and see where the purchasers are to come from. It is either the holders of present selections who intend to extend their selections, or new selectors; and I would ask if this year or last has been so prosperous that the present holders have been able to acquire the fresh capital which they would need to enter on fresh speculations in land? If it does not come from the present holders of selections, from whom will it come? It may come from those men who have been provident enough to save something from their wage; but has it not been a hand-to-mouth existence with them of late, and are they likely to have acquired means to select? It may be that the miners have gone in for purchasing selections out of their savings; but do the mining returns show those symptoms of prosperity during 1877? What source, then, are we to look to? It should be from men coming to the coun-

try with a small capital; but do we not know that the present Government have entirely stopped immigration? There are no immigrants coming to the colony with a small capital which they would be likely to invest here in the purchase of land. I have already shown that the intercolonial immigration is against us; and again I ask—where, then, is this £36,000 to come from? I say from no source, and the Treasurer will fail to find any data on which to rely for these additional increases, which he expects to derive from conditional and homestead selection. The next head under which the hon. gentleman expects a large increase is the railway receipts. The present Colonial Treasurer has estimated his railway receipts for the year 1879-80 at £275,000, or £40,000 more than was received last year. Has the hon. gentleman shown us any data whatever by which he is to arrive at this increase over the previous year? He gives no reasons, and does not say where it is to come from, but he simply says he is going to get it. When analysing the causes of the deficiency of this year, between the estimates and the actual receipts, the Treasurer gave two reasons why the expectations had not been realised. He said—and I think it was pretty well exploded by my hon. friend (Mr. Griffith)—that this £300,000 of abnormal land sales was the cause of the deficiency; then, when he comes to give us some account of the £40,000, he passes over this £300,000 and says nothing about it. He says not a word about this £300,000, but refers us to another thing altogether. He says the sheep have gone from all these districts, and that that is why we have had a falling off in the railway receipts. Are we likely to have those sheep back again, there? Take his two reasons. Are we likely to have this £300,000 worth of land in cultivation during 1879-80, or are we likely to have the sheep back there during 1879-80, that they may give us this extra £40,000 on the railway? The hon. gentleman simply says he estimates that the amount will be received. My belief is that he will not get it, and that in swelling out his estimated receipts in these three branches to which I have referred—namely, Customs, land, and railways—he is only preparing for himself, when he meets the House next year, the necessity of either confessing that he has been guilty of that with which he charged his predecessor, or else of having the same charge levelled against him by someone else. In touching upon the question of expenditure, I shall make no reference to departmental arrangements, but will simply allude to what the hon. member calls the saddling of property—that is, that in the Works Department, this year, there are £77,972 asked for less than last year, and that that sum, substantially, is going to be made what the hon. mem-

ber is pleased to call a charge upon property. This is really taxation on the settled districts—on the agricultural population, and is entirely ignoring what should be contributed by those who occupy large areas in the interior. The deficiency in the revenue is to be paid by the settlers on the coast lands. Does the hon. member intend to saddle any other property with any part of such an expenditure as this? Are there no other properties that might be saddled? Has the Colonial Treasurer investigated those receipts under the Railway Reserves Act? Has he found out—I do not believe he has—that, out of the £430,000 received out of that Act, £70,000 were for pre-emptives? In August last, I looked personally into the matter of the pre-emptives in the Western Railway Reserve, and I found that there had been 90,000 acres pre-empted, for which £45,000 had been paid. Those pre-emptors were the first choosers, and they were not likely, therefore, to choose an inferior quality of land. They have a right of pre-empting to 2,560 acres—six out of every block of 16,000 acres, and it should not be forgotten that they were potential freeholders to the extent of one-sixth of the land they hold. These lands were pre-empted at the rate of 10s. per acre, and the land sold by auction realised 23s. and a fraction of a farthing per acre. The market value of the land as pre-empted for £45,000 was £105,000, and the persons who pre-empted these 90,000 acres of land under the Railway Reserves Act had put into their pockets exactly £60,000. Are these men, who are not so much leaseholders as potential freeholders, not to be taxed? As the railway pushes out, and directly there is the slightest danger of their runs being thrown open for selection or auction, they will pre-empt them. We are giving the settlers in the agricultural districts no new thing. They have had roads and bridges all along. We are not adding a single shilling to the value of their farms, and are making them pay what was previously paid out of the general revenue. We are asking them to maintain what was previously constructed for them. Out West, we are giving them what they never had before—we are giving them a railway and providing them with shorter carriage and cheaper carriage, and at less risk, and at the same time improving the value of their leaseholds; and yet these men are not to contribute a single shilling to meet this deficiency in the revenue. The hon. member for Maryborough has pointed out how cheaply the pastoral leases are held, and has shown that by a redistribution of their rents they may be made to contribute more largely to the general revenue. When the Act of 1869 was passed no one dreamed that between that time and the present such immense

sums of money would have been spent in making railways into that part of the country, otherwise the rate for pre-emption would never have been fixed so low as 10s. per acre. But this is the price, without a single consideration of the immense profits conferred upon the pre-emptors by the making of these railroads. No doubt there ought to be a re-adjustment of rents, and that could be done without laying ourselves open to the charge of the repudiation of contracts. If we have made a contract with the pastoral tenant for twenty-one years, it does not follow that he is not to contribute more than he does at present to the revenue of the country in the way of a tax on his sheep and cattle; and I am convinced that if hon. members on the other side will not bear their fair share in the expenditure of the country, a time will come when they will have to be met, either by a re-adjustment of their rents or an assessment on their stock. If we were to propose such a measure now, we should be met with the plea that, owing to the immense decrease in the value of stock during the last two years, this was an inopportune time—and we readily admit it. But there have been many years since 1870 during which large profits have been made from pastoral occupation, when owners of runs could have contributed more than they did to the general revenue. If this is an inopportune time to increase the burden of the pastoral tenants, surely it is an equally inopportune time, after two years of drought and hard times, to transfer a deficiency of £70,000 to the shoulders of the agricultural settlers. This is a plea that the settlers might very fairly make, and it is worthy of the greatest consideration by hon. members. It has been said that these properties are improved in value by this; but what is the fact? Whatever tax is put on it will be capitalised, and the holding reduced in value by just that amount. If such a tax is imposed, and the owner of an agricultural holding wished to sell it after the imposition of the tax, the purchaser will say that, as the property is encumbered with a newly imposed tax, he will not accept it at its former value. You are therefore reducing the capital value of those holdings by the amount represented by the capital of the tax you propose to put on. It should be remembered, also, that the whole of the tax will come out of profits. There is not here the same distinction between landlord and tenant as at home, so that it can be fixed what shall fall upon rents and what upon profits. There the occupier of land is a freeholder, and the whole tax will have to be got out of profits. Every extra burden upon the agriculturalist is an extra charge, and whatever his earnings were before they must in future bear the further charge of this tax. It is

not, therefore, a charge in the sense the Colonial Treasurer puts it that would benefit the holding, but one which will have to come entirely out of earnings. The Colonial Treasurer said that it is not desirable that any increase should be made in the Customs duties: but nobody ever said it was desirable—we are already complaining on that point. What is the taxation of the colony, and by whom is it borne? The only direct taxation is the stamp duties and licensing; the great bulk of taxation is indirect—£570,000 for Customs and £35,000 for Excise. All the other taxes are for value received, rent for runs, or value for services. Of these indirect taxes the mechanic may pay as much as the richest man in the community. Should there be no reference to the great interests protected in the colony? The man who carries on a large industry has the protection of the State, and is thereby enabled to reap his profits. Is he to pay no more than a mechanic does? By the system of indirect taxation the wealthy man may contribute as little as the ordinary mechanic. The Colonial Treasurer said it was undesirable to increase taxation; but the question is not whether it is desirable to increase it, but whether it shall not be lessened. I say the Colonial Treasurer has had an opportunity for a new departure in taxation. He should have endeavoured to fix that taxation with some reference to justice to the interests different persons have in this colony. But, no; he leaves the question as it is, and adds further to the contributors to indirect taxation between £70,000 and £80,000 for roads and bridges. I say the Colonial Treasurer has failed to do a duty, where he had an opportunity, with regard to the apportionment of this loan. He has asked for a loan of three millions, of which about £1,850,000 is for trunk lines, including those already authorised, and £300,000 for branch lines. Having endeavoured to point out the great benefit which will be conferred on the owners of runs in the West, and the position of the agriculturalists within the settled districts, together with their contributions to general revenue and further taxation, I ask whether that is a fair distribution of this three millions of money?—whether, in fact, this £1,850,000 should be devoted to following sheep—for that is what it must be called—and £300,000 only of the vote should be allocated for branch lines? We must remember that the taxpayers of this country have to pay five per cent. on the £3,300,000, which has been expended on the Southern line. The net earnings of that railway, last year, were £50,000, and the taxpayers have had to contribute, within about £125,000, for the cost of the construction of that line. Take the Central line, which has cost about £1,400,000. The net return is about £18,000 for the year, while it costs the

country about £65,000 to £70,000, all the difference falling upon the persons who contribute to what is called taxation. Upon them the difference between the earnings and the interest on the cost of construction of those lines falls. Are you going to repeat this with the £1,850,000 asked for the construction of Western lines? It was the duty of the Colonial Treasurer to show, without doubt, where we were to get the £133,000 for interest on the new lines. When he is asked how he is going to get £40,000 more revenue from the railways than last year, he simply says, "I will get it." With reference to the £133,000 interest on the £1,850,000 for the extension of trunk lines, he simply says, "I will get it." But that is not sufficient, because if the money is not got, upon whom will the burden fall? The hon. gentleman says it is very easy to go to the Custom-house—and I have no doubt if the money is short the burden will fall upon the taxpayers. He will probably be out in his estimates to a large amount, and will not find the £133,000 for interest. I say the hon. gentleman is bound to hold the taxpayers of the country harmless in the matter, and he is bound to show that the agriculturalist will get a fair share of the money to be expended on those lines. I will not say a word, now, about the line through my own district. I can well imagine, when the Financial Statement was in the Cabinet, the discussion as to where the £300,000 for branch lines should be expended. When it was decided that they were going to fix upon the Darling Downs, the decision was no doubt another "coincidence." This Government never appear before us to take the next step without illustrating another "coincidence." If one could have looked in when the matter was under discussion in the Cabinet, it would most probably have been found that all the members were indulging in a lunar observation. I will not delay the House any longer. When the Colonial Treasurer comes to meet us, next year, he will probably tell us that he has been out in his Estimates. That will be the first thing—"I thought to get £50,000 more from Customs; I am sorry the state of the colony has prevented it. The land revenue, I regret to say, has not realised my estimate. From railways I expected £40,000 more, but the prosperous times have not come. I have got a loan of three millions, and introduced capital which should go largely to develop western interests. It will come most opportunely in bolstering up western interests, and the banks will find a way to help their customers to it." But when the Colonial Treasurer comes and tells us that, he will also probably tell us that he is also out in his estimates of the expenditure—"I came down with my Estimates-

in-Chief. I imagined there would be no Supplementary Estimates; but I find that no Government is strong enough to carry out my immense reforms." He will come down, in fact, to tell the House that his expectations are not fulfilled, and the payment of the interest on his loan is not provided for.

Mr. ARCHER moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Do I understand the motion to mean that the debate will take precedence of private business?

The PREMIER said he had arranged with the leader of the Opposition that the resumption of the debate should take precedence on Tuesday, and could not understand the hon. member for Maryborough now coming forward with a suggestion to alter the arrangement.

Mr. DOUGLAS explained that he had understood the debate was to take precedence to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fourteen minutes to 11 o'clock.