

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 18 AUGUST 1880

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 18 August, 1880.

Absence of the Clerk.—Petition.—Questions.—Ways and Means—resumption of committee.

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

ABSENCE OF THE CLERK.

The SPEAKER said he had to inform the House that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly was unable to attend in the House.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) moved that the Clerk-Assistant perform the duties of the Clerk during his absence.

Question put and passed.

PETITION.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH presented a petition from certain Electors in North Brisbane, relating to the proposed alterations in the Tariff and other proposed alterations, and praying for such legislation as would give reasonable encouragement to the manufacturing interests of the colony.

Petition read and received.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. AMHURST asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Will he inform the House why Mr. A. T. Ball, of Mackay, was left off the Commission of the Peace for this year?

2. If not, was it done for any political reason whatsoever?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) replied—

1. It is not customary to give any reason for omitting names of gentlemen from the Commission of the Peace.

2. No.

Mr. SCOTT asked the Colonial Secretary—

Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with the Marsupial Pest during the present Session?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied—

A Bill is in print, but in the present state of public business it is impossible to say when it can be introduced.

Mr. PRICE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

Do the Government intend to continue the Survey, already commenced, of a Line to connect Gayndah with the Gympie and Maryborough Railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan)—

Not at present.

WAYS AND MEANS—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into a Committee of Ways and Means.

Question—

“That towards making good the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty there be collected and paid, in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon the undermentioned articles, the several duties following, that is to say—

1st. On Acids	}	An <i>ad valorem</i> duty of 5 per cent.
.. Boats		
.. Leather		
.. Screws	}	A duty of 1½d. per lb.
On Tallow		
and Stearine		
On Spirits	}	An Excise duty of 10s. per gallon.
Distilled in the Colony		
On Spirits		
Methylated in bond	}	2s. per gallon.

“2nd. That there be collected and paid on all Log Cedar Timber—the produce of Queensland—exported from the Colony, a duty of 2s. per one hundred superficial feet one inch thick.”

Mr. GRIFFITH said that in rising to consider the financial proposals of the Government, he would have occasion to refer to the Treasurer's Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure for the next year, and also to the proposals made by him for equalising the revenue with the expenditure, and for disposing of the deficiency that at present existed in the public account. When the House met this year, and for some months before it, the whole colony was in a state of expectancy. There was no man in the colony so foolish or so blind as not to know that the state of depression which had existed for the past two years was still continuing, and he (Mr. Griffith) believed that there was not a man in the colony who was not prepared to bear his share of the burden with the object of restoring the finances to a satisfactory condition and keeping up the credit of the colony abroad. When His Excellency opened Parliament, the fact that these views were shared in by the Government was patent from a passage in His Excellency's Speech, which had already been referred to during this debate, and which he must read again. It was as follows :—

“I regret that the prevailing depression, which so signally disappointed the revenue anticipations of the previous year, has not less prejudicially affected the financial period just closed. Happily, there are at length indications that the turning-point has been passed; yet my Ministers, who had hoped to tide over the depression without additional taxation, now consider it necessary, in prudence, to adopt legislative as well as administrative measures for equalising revenue and expenditure. The general application of Local Government can give little immediate relief to the Treasury, as the ever-increasing demands for road and bridge expenditure will still be met by heavy, although *pro rata*, drafts upon Consolidated Revenue. You will therefore be invited to sanction proposals for augmenting the public income with the least possible inconvenience to the taxpayer; but I trust that returning prosperity, and a prudent administration of the finances, will render any permanent addition to the public burdens unnecessary.”

During the debate on the Address in Reply to that Speech he did not think there was a single dissentient voice in the House to that part of it. They were all prepared for some scheme of additional taxation; and if any other proof were wanting that the Government intended some additional taxation it had been amply provided since the opening of the session. On more than one occasion, during the debate on the mail contract, the Opposition wanted to know how the large deficiency in the revenue of nearly £200,000, to which was to be

added an increased expenditure for interest, was to be made up, and how, in addition to that, the proposed expenditure of £55,000 was to be met, as the Government told them the mail service was to be disposed of before the Financial Statement was made. Some hon. members taunted the Government with not caring so long as they got the mail service carried, and the reply was: “You are not coming in so soon as that.” Evidently showing that, even up to two or three weeks ago, the Government had contemplated what every other man in the colony had contemplated—namely, some fair, because necessary, increase in the taxation of the people. It was not a pleasant thing to stand up in the House as an advocate of increased taxation; but, he believed they were a community who wished fairly and honestly to pay their way and stand well with the rest of the world, and who would be perfectly willing to bear any reasonable burden provided it was fairly distributed over the whole colony. They also knew that the whole mercantile community were only last week expecting some considerable increase in the Customs duties, and he for one would require a very great deal to convince him that the Premier did not write half his speech with the intention of proposing additional taxation, and then, at the end, found that he was not strong enough, in the face of a torrent of unpopularity, to stand up in his place and propose additional taxation. The hon. gentleman had admitted something of the same kind, already.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he referred hon. gentlemen very feelingly last night to the unpopularity which existed against the Premier and the Government all over the colony. However, the Government had not made any substantial proposals for additional taxation, and what they had to do now was to deal with the proposals that had been made to the House. He proposed to refer to them first of all as they stood on the Estimates. He had not the advantage of having his figures placed in a tabular form, but he thought he would be able to make them sufficiently clear to hon. members without any assistance of that kind. Before he referred to the Estimates of the Government, he thought it right to refer for a moment to one very important matter that had affected the taxation of the people to a large extent; and that was the Divisional Boards Act, which had come into operation since last session. They were not in a position to know accurately the total amount of rates to be raised by those Boards, but he understood the estimate of the Premier was about £50,000 a-year, because he placed on the schedule an estimated amount of £50,000 which, however, he said “being at the rate of £100,000 for the year, will, it is believed, meet all current demands.” He (Mr. Griffith) inferred from that that the Premier estimated the amount required for an ordinary year at £100,000. This being the first year the full amount would not be required, but the annual amount required would be £100,000, being at the rate of £2 for every one raised by the ratepayers of the Divisional Boards, and that indicated an additional taxation of £50,000 a-year from that source. He (Mr. Griffith) would observe that there was no difficulty in discovering how much of that sum was contributed by the pastoral tenant of the Crown. What they paid was exactly 5 per cent. on the rents of their runs, which were estimated by the Treasurer, during the present year, at £158,000. So that the total amount of that £50,000 contributed by the pastoral tenants in respect to Crown lands held by them was £7,900, leaving a sum of £42,000 contributed by the selectors and freeholders in the other parts of the colony—of

course, including what was paid in respect of pre-emptives. That, then, was increased taxation that had fallen upon the people since last year. He would refer now to the estimates of the Treasurer as to income. He estimated an increase of £40,000 a-year from the Customs. He (Mr. Griffith) would like to know on what the hon. gentleman based that estimate. That he had not shown. If they compared the income of the Customs of last year they would find that there was a diminution of nearly £30,000, which was made up of two items—namely, £15,000 on the *ad valorem* duties, and £15,000 deficiency on spirits. The deficiency in those two items showed pretty well why there had been a falling off in the Customs; there had been a diminution in the purchasing power of the people at large. The population, according to the hon. gentleman, showed a slight increase, but the Customs revenue, particularly in those two items, which extend so largely into general consumption and from which so much of the revenue was raised, had diminished to the extent he had mentioned. That proved that the colony had been in an extremely depressed condition, and more depressed last year than the previous one. Certainly it did not bear out the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, that the turning-point had been reached. He (Mr. Griffith) would like to know what there was in the circumstances of the colony to indicate an increase of income from Customs to anything like the extent of £40,000? Was the increase to come from the towns? So far as he (Mr. Griffith) knew, the employment of artisans and mechanics in the towns was not larger than it was before; but, on the contrary, less; there were less improvements going on; there were more houses empty in the large towns than twelve months ago. Was it to come from the farming districts? The consumption of articles which contributed to the Customs duties would be found there, he believed, to be very small in comparison with other parts of the colony; and their prosperity last season, would, he feared, not show much reason for expecting an increase. Was it to come from the pastoral tenants? He did not know that there was any probability of their largely increasing their consumption of dutiable articles on their stations. The mining industry, he was happy to say, had not retrograded; but he failed to see any large increase in the population of the goldfields, or any such large increase of production there as was likely to warrant an increase in the Customs revenue from that source. Looking at the matter most carefully, considering what was known of the actual condition of the colony, which was not by any means hopeless, but still not so satisfactory as all would like to see it, he confessed he saw very little probability of the colony raising, on the present basis of taxation, more than an additional £10,000 from the Customs. He should, therefore, for the purpose of arriving at a real honest estimate of what the revenue was likely to be, take off £30,000 from that estimated increase of £40,000. Turning to the next item, Excise, there was an estimated increase of £20,000; but that arose from a change in the duty, and he wished, first of all, to ascertain what would be the probable income on the present revenue basis. He would deduct for the present, therefore, the estimated increase of £20,000 from excise, and he would leave out of consideration the smaller items of increase. Turning now to the land revenue, the Treasurer estimated an additional £100,000 from sales by auction. If they compared the year just closed with the previous year and several previous years, there was very little probability of raising anything like £175,000 additional by auction. During a portion of the present year forced sales were made of land by auction—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that something very like forced sales were made, and by that means the revenue was increased by £60,000, and if it had not been for the land thus forced into the market the revenue would not have been much larger than it had been in the previous year. Indeed a great part of the land sold by auction ought to have been considered as land held in trust—he referred to the Victoria Bridge lands—held in trust to pay a debt of £120,000 which the colony owed, on security of that land. Those lands were already mortgaged to the public creditor, and yet they had been sold and proceeds passed into general revenue, leaving the burden of the mortgage to be met by other means. Even supposing that similar steps should be taken, it would not be possible to raise more than £75,000 this year, and therefore he could only conclude that the figure 1 had been placed in front of the £75,000 by the Treasurer, when finally revising his Estimates, in order to make his totals right. In making a fair estimate of the probable revenue he should therefore deduct from the Treasurer's estimate that £100,000, in addition to the £30,000 excessive estimate for Customs, and £20,000 additional estimate for excise, making a total reduction of £150,000. The other items of estimated receipts he had not considered it necessary to criticise—the increases were not very large except in respect to the railways, and in that direction he was willing to hope, though he could not anticipate, that the increase would be as large as the Treasurer estimated. The same might be said with regard to the Post Office and Telegraphs, where the increases were trifling. With respect to the £40,000 extra for Miscellaneous Receipts, he presumed the increase meant additional interest upon loan money deposited in the banks, and in that respect the Treasurer's estimate was probably accurate. Giving the Treasurer credit for every increase except in the three items Land Sales, Customs, and Excise, he was of opinion that £150,000 would have to be deducted from the hon. gentleman's estimate to get at the probable actual result. The hon. gentleman's estimate of Revenue was £1,722,500. Deducting from that the £150,000 would leave as the probable amount of revenue on the present basis of taxation £1,570,500. As to the probable expenditure the Treasurer's estimate was £1,689,000, but there were other means of estimating it which it was to be feared were far more reliable than the hon. gentleman's figures. The actual expenditure for the last year, according to table B, was £1,673,000, and that amount was not likely to be diminished this year. To be added to that were—£80,000 for additional interest, and £10,000 which the Treasurer estimated as the probable increase in the ordinary services for this year. The probable actual expenditure, therefore, instead of being £1,689,000, would be £1,763,000. There could be no manner of doubt as to the correctness of that estimate. Even without deducting the £150,000 excessive estimate of revenue, that would show a deficiency. Deducting that, and taking £1,763,000 as the correct estimate of expenditure, the result was a probable—almost certain—deficiency upon the ordinary transactions of the year, irrespective of any debit balances, of upwards of £180,000. That was the prospect, according to the best lights he could get and the most careful consideration he was able to give to the subject. Was it not the duty of the Government, with such facts staring them in the face, to make some provision to meet the deficit? Were they honest in neglecting to do so? The other colonies, where the same depression had been shared, had looked the matter fairly in the face, and had attempted by increased taxation to meet their deficit. It appeared quite clear to him that the means of meeting the deficit must be found either

by increased taxation or by a reduction of expenditure by that amount; and he did not see how expenditure could be reduced to that extent. He would point out to hon. members that the deficit of £180,000 existed notwithstanding that about £50,000 had actually been raised by increased taxation through the Divisional Boards Act. It would have been reasonably supposed that the Treasurer would have tried to raise by means of additional taxation an amount sufficient to cover the deficit and leave a small balance over, but instead of that he lightly—and even cheerfully—proposed some very small alterations in the tariff which, exclusive of the export duty on cedar, might yield an increased revenue of two or three thousand pounds altogether. The proposed alteration in the duty upon spirits manufactured in the colony would have the effect of discouraging an industry which supported a good many people and indirectly encouraged the growth of sugar to a considerable extent. By means of those alterations the hon. gentleman calculated upon receiving an increased revenue of £28,000, but according to the figures since supplied the increase would be considerably less. Was that an adequate measure for meeting the difficulties which now confronted the colony? Never in the history of the colony had there been a time when the people would have borne so cheerfully and with less murmuring a reasonable proposition for raising an increased income as the present. It was not ordinarily the duty of an Opposition to make any proposals to assist Governments out of their difficulties. Since he had been a member of the House he had been often tempted to violate that old rule recognised by statesmen since the initiation of constitutional government—"Time enough to prescribe when called in"—and he felt very much inclined to do so on the present occasion. Before proceeding to another part of his subject, he would repeat that in the opinion of everyone who did not look at the matter through the Treasurer's spectacles, the real amount to be raised by additional taxation to be met was nearly £200,000. It was not fair for the Government in office to be continually putting off the evil day—it was not right of them, as custodians of the honour of the country, either by extravagant estimates or other means, to avoid meeting and grappling with the difficulty. With respect to the deficit at present existing of £239,000, it did not appear that any very heroic measures would be necessary to meet that. He held that when the Treasurer came down to the House with his Financial Statement he ought to be able to show an estimated surplus on the year's transactions, unless there were some very special reasons for adopting a contrary course. It might be sometimes justifiable to show a deficiency, as, for instance, when there was a surplus already in hand, or when a desire existed to reduce taxation and trust to future increase to restore the balance. But when an actual deficit of £200,000 and upwards existed, he held that it was the duty of the Treasurer not only to cover the probable deficiency in the year's transactions, but also to propose some means by which, at all events, some part of the deficit of the past year might be made up. Without saying that the whole of the £239,000 ought to be raised by additional taxation during the present year, he maintained that it would be very hard for the Government that might be in office next year, if they were forced, as in all probability they would be, to raise this £200,000 deficiency, and also to make up for a probable deficiency in the transactions for the then next current year. It was simply like renewing bills at an enormous rate of interest. At the present time the £200,000 could be raised—not without trouble, or burden, or hardship, to some classes of the community—but the people as a whole would contribute it

cheerfully. They would not, however, bear increased taxation cheerfully twelve months later, when they found that they had been deceived by the promises of the Treasurer, and that instead of raising £200,000 at the present time by fairly distributed taxation, they were called upon then to raise double the amount. Because this system of what the Treasurer might call funding a deficit could not go on for ever. He would now say a word about the question of transferring £317,000 from the Railway Reserves Fund to revenue. The Treasurer justified that operation in his speech in these terms—

"Last year we admitted in the Railway Reserves Act Amendment Act the principle that the whole revenue of the lands ought to go to the Consolidated Revenue Account. By that Act there was transferred to the Consolidated Revenue Account £129,821 14s., being the cash balance to the credit of the Railway Reserve Fund unexpended. The whole amount that had been raised under the Railway Reserves Acts, on the same principle, ought certainly to have gone to Consolidated Revenue. Had it not been used to supply the place of moneys which ordinarily come from loan, the amount would have been available for the Consolidated Revenue. There was raised altogether under the Railway Reserves Acts £446,884 10s. 7d.; there has been already transferred to the Consolidated Revenue £129,824 1s. 4d., leaving £317,063 9s. 1d., which by the principle of the Act past last year ought also to be transferred. That balance I propose now to transfer to the Consolidated Revenue."

If the provisions of the Railway Reserves Act were considered, it would be seen that that proposition was not by any means accurate. The Railway Reserves Act and the Western Railway Act were passed as undertakings on the part of the Parliament of this colony that part of the cost of those railways should be borne, not by borrowed money, but by the proceeds of waste lands sold for the purpose. That such was the case was never disputed, even by the Premier himself, until the present session. On the contrary, last session the Premier, in making his Financial Statement, pointed out something very much of the same kind himself. He said—

"Since these railway reserve laws have been enacted, £130,000 has been withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund on their account. A portion of this amount accrued from what may be termed abnormal land sales—that is, from land which would not have been sold otherwise than for the purposes of railway construction. These abnormal sales I estimate to have produced £300,000. Deducting this from the gross amount, a sum of £130,000 remains, and this would have gone a considerable length towards covering the deficit now looming before us."

That was the statement of the Premier last year—that money had been raised by abnormal sales for that purpose. Money was borrowed on the distinct pledge that the railway for which it was required should not be constructed entirely out of loan, but that the general revenue should be partly relieved from taxation for payment of interest by the appropriation of this portion of the revenue direct to the construction of those railways. That money had been spent as revenue as much as any other money that had been raised since the foundation of the colony. Whichever way the matter was regarded, whether the revenue so raised was considered abnormal or surplus revenue, it could not be distinguished in any way from any other revenue which had been expended upon public works of any kind which might have been included in a Loan Bill. Without referring to any particular work, it might safely be assumed that at least a million of money had been expended at one time and another upon works which might have been constructed out of loan. What, then, would there be to prevent any future Treasurer, when a deficiency arose, from saying, "Here has been a million expended from revenue which we might have borrowed; let's borrow it now!" If a Treasurer went to the market with such principles, he would find that his borrowing powers

would soon come to an end. Such a proposition had probably never been made before, except perhaps by those countries where interest was always paid out of loan. He was now speaking, however, of what might be called respectable countries with whom it was safe for capitalists to have dealings, and who always, at all events, did their best to pay interest on their debts without having recourse to loan. It really amounted to this, that they had to pay a large amount of interest for last year which they were not able to meet out of the ordinary revenue, and therefore they were going to raise £300,000 by loan and pay the interest out of that. It was no more than that—judge the matter in what way they liked. Support it by any arguments they pleased, the fact remained that a proposal was made to borrow £300,000 to cover the deficiency in the revenue. It would have been better if the Treasurer had come forward and said plainly, in the circumstances of the colony, it would be safer to borrow the money. He might have proposed to borrow it on Treasury bills extending over two or three years, which he (Mr. Griffith) ventured to think would be the proper way to deal with the real deficiency which now existed. The bills might extend over two or three years and be issued as occasion arose: they need not be issued unless under extraordinary circumstances. If the deficiency were met in that way—and it was the common method adopted in other countries—it would then be the duty of the Treasurer to bring down again a proper proposal to raise, during the next year or the next two or three years, a sufficient surplus of revenue to wipe off the amount represented by the bills. If that had been done fairly—however hard the taxation had fallen on the people—no one would have found fault. The Government would not have increased their unpopularity if they resorted to any means of that kind: he thought they would rather win back some of the support which they had lost if they had shown a determination to grapple manfully with the difficulties with which the country was faced. But, instead of doing so, the Government were prepared to let things drift. He was not going to formulate a scheme whereby money might be raised to meet the deficiency, but he should make some suggestions with respect to one source from which a large part of the deficiency might be met—not the whole—without unduly pressing on anyone. The burden ought to be shared by the various classes of people in the colony according to their abilities; it ought to be so arranged that those who had the least should pay the least, and that those who could bear it best should have the most of it to bear. There was one source of revenue which was admitted by everybody he had heard speak on the subject to supply less than it ought to do—that was the Crown lands.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is not admitted by everyone.

MR. GRIFFITH said it was almost universally admitted. According to the report of the Secretary for Lands, which had been laid on the table that afternoon, there were in the unsettled districts of the colony 358,000 square miles of pastoral lands leased which brought in a revenue of £140,000. Would anyone suppose, allege, or suggest that that amount was a fair remuneration for the grass which was eaten off the land? He never heard anyone say so yet; he never heard the most ultra-squatters—using the expression in its political sense—allege that the amount paid was anything like a fair remuneration for the advantages which the pastoral tenants derived from the State in being allowed the use of the land to fatten their stock and sheep. According to the return of the Registrar of Brands, there were over 3,000,000 head of cattle in the colony—

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say, 2,500,000, and according to the table X accompanying the Treasurer's Statement, there were 5,796,000 sheep—say, 5,800,000. If we were to say that 300,000 miles of the land leased was available for pasturage he might be allowing too small an area, but, to avoid exceeding the mark, he would say that there were 300,000 miles, or, say, 200,000,000 acres of available country. The number of sheep and cattle he had mentioned included those which were depastured in settled districts, so that there were 200,000,000 acres of land carrying less than 2,500,000 head of cattle and 5,800,000 sheep. In order to find out the average number of acres to each beast it was necessary to reduce the cattle and sheep to some common proportion, and possibly the estimate fixed in the Pastoral Leases Act of five sheep being equal to one bullock was a fair one—they would be disposed to take a less estimate if it came to a question of taxation, because undoubtedly the cattle industry was considerably depressed, but for the purpose of estimating the average number of acres occupied per head these figures might be taken. Take the number of cattle, 2,500,000, as equal to 12,500,000 sheep, which, with the actual number of sheep made, say, 18,500,000, and take off 2,500,000 for the settled districts, that would leave 16,000,000 pasturing on 200,000,000 acres, or about thirteen acres for each head. An assessment of 2d. per head would increase the payment for the use of the grass by one-sixth of a penny per acre—an enormous sum truly! That assessment, he thought, would bring in something like £150,000 to the revenue; he had not worked the figures out, but it would be something like that. There were many ways by which the pastoral tenants might pay a fair remuneration for the advantages which they derived from the State. An assessment on stock had often been suggested. It was imposed on one occasion in New South Wales—notwithstanding protests against it—that was, he thought, in 1859. Another mode would be to increase the rents of the runs, but there were some difficulties in the way of doing that. It was notorious that some tenants paid a comparatively fair rental for the land which they used, whilst others paid most ridiculously insignificant amounts. Increase on the rents could be determined on only by legislation. There were various other ways of getting a fair return from the lands, but he did not think it was his business to go into details. He would not suggest repudiation or anything of that kind—the tenants should be treated with the best of fairplay. Some of the tenants said that they had only a six months' tenure; but if Parliament took them at their word, and treated them as though they had only that tenure, he was afraid they would find the rents of their runs doubled and trebled, and if they did not take them up at the increased rental others would do so. There was no doubt that the Crown lands in the interior were to a great extent wasted—that they would support twice or thrice the number of stock now depasturing on them. If they were stocked to twice or thrice the present extent the tenants could afford to pay twice or thrice the rent they paid now. The pastoral districts of New South Wales were not larger or better than those of Queensland, and a comparison of the number of stock in the two colonies showed what an inadequate use was made of the land in Queensland. He acknowledged that alterations in regard to the tenure of the pastoral lands could not be made at once. If the rents of the runs were doubled suddenly the chances were that a great many would be thrown up and they would derive no revenue from them. But considering that there was a deficiency in the current year's receipts staring the Government in the face, they ought

to cast about for some proper way of raising it. He did not mean that the pastoral tenants should contribute £150,000 additional—on the spur of the moment he had made a calculation which gave that amount. They ought to bear a considerable share of the burden, but, as he had said before, not more than other people should, according to their ability to pay. There was another reason why additional revenue should be raised from Crown lands. They had expended large sums of money in public works. £8,000,000 had been borrowed for railways, and every mile of line constructed out of that, with the exception, perhaps, of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry, and Maryborough and Gympie lines, had benefited the pastoral tenants. It might be safely calculated that £7,000,000 had been spent to render the interior of the colony more accessible, to diminish the cost of carriage, and to make the land more valuable. It was only fair that the pastoral tenants should bear some of the burden in return for those advantages. He believed the people at the end of a railway got the most benefit from it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Which end?

Mr. GRIFFITH said he meant the end farthest from the coast. The pastoral tenants got the benefit, because they had their goods conveyed to market with expedition, and much cheaper than was formerly the case. He was sorry to find hon. members so ungrateful as to say that pastoral tenants did not get any benefit from the railways which had been made specially to enable them to bring their wool to market. A large portion of the loan last incurred, and the interest thereon, was chargeable for extensions of railways which were intended to have no other effect at present than to render the pastoral lands of the interior accessible.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: To enhance the value of the Crown property.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that was exactly his argument, and the property being enhanced in value the persons who used it ought to give an enhanced price in consideration of that increase. He did not know that it was necessary to go into the matter at greater length. He had pointed out as briefly as he could some points that had struck him when he was considering the question. Although he thought it unnecessary for him to formulate the details of a scheme whereby the money required could be raised, still he felt that he should be failing in his duty if he did not place on record his opinion respecting the proposal of the Government. He therefore intended to propose the following amendment on the resolution:—

“That all the words after ‘that,’ be omitted, with a view to inserting the following words:—

“That in the opinion of this Committee it is necessary to make further and better provision for equalising the public revenue and expenditure by additional taxation, and that no proposition for that purpose will be satisfactory to the country which does not provide for raising an increased revenue from Crown lands held under pastoral lease by an assessment on stock or otherwise.”

It was not for him to state the mode in which the revenue was to be raised—the Government would have to take the responsibility of determining that. He would quote “May” to show a precedent for the course which he was taking. “May” said—

“On the 25th of April, 1853, the new property tax was proposed for seven years. An amendment was moved to leave out the words ‘towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty there shall be raised annually, during the terms hereinafter limited, the several rates and duties following,’ &c.; in order to insert the words—‘The continuance of the Revenue Tax for seven years, and its extension to classes heretofore exempt from its operation without any mitigation of the inequalities of its assessment are alike unjust and impolitic.’ Con-

siderable doubts were entertained whether such an amendment was regular. But it was held that, as the amendment was strictly relevant to the proposed duty, it could not be excluded.”

He should therefore conclude by moving the amendment which he had read.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think the amendment could be put, since it proposed an altogether new tax; it proposed a tax on Crown land by an assessment on stock, which was an altogether new tax, and which, according to parliamentary practice, could not be put. In support of what he was now saying, he would refer to “May,” who said—

“As a proposed grant cannot be increased in Committee of Supply, nor a new grant made, unless recommended by the Crown, so also it appears that a new tax cannot be imposed except with the indirect sanction of the Crown. On the 14th March, 1844, Mr. Howard Elphinstone proposed a Committee of the Whole House to consider the Stamp Acts, with the view of imposing the same amount of probate duty on real estate as was paid on personal property. An objection being taken to this proceeding, the Speaker said that the duty must be considered as an impost for the service of the year, and should therefore be voted in the Committee of Ways and Means; but it ought not to be proposed unless it could be shown that the public service required it. After some discussion, the motion was withdrawn. On the 6th of August, 1859, Mr. Selwyn, having given notice of a resolution for imposing certain stamp duties, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer approved, the latter agreed to propose it himself, in Committee of Ways and Means. In April, 1862, the Chancellor of the Exchequer having given notice of resolutions in Committee of Ways and Means, requiring licenses to be taken out by brewers, Mr. Bass gave notice of an amendment extending such licenses to other manufacturers, iron-masters, and coal-owners; but this amendment not being held to be admissible was not moved. On the 17th February, 1845, however, Mr. Roebuck moved an amendment, in Committee of Ways and Means, for extending the income tax to Ireland—an exceptional course not supported by precedent, and opposed to the principles upon which grants are made to the Crown.”

In this case the amendment was upon the subject under consideration, and not a new tax. The amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane was quite a different thing, and in his (the Chairman's) opinion could not be put. He should like, however, to hear the opinion of the Committee before the question was decided either one way or the other, because it was the establishment of a precedent.

Mr. GRIFFITH would point out that the amendment was not a proposal for a new tax, but merely the expression of the opinion of the Committee. The amendment said—“That in the opinion of the Committee it is necessary to make further and better provision for equalising the public revenue and expenditure by additional taxation.” That was simply an expression of opinion and not a proposal embodying a new tax. The amendment expressed the opinion that additional taxation was necessary, and that no proposal with respect to taxation was satisfactory which should not include a particular source of revenue. A resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means was a resolution that revenue should be raised in a certain way, which was reported to the House, and if the resolutions were adopted, a Bill was afterwards brought in to give effect to the resolution. But if the present amendment were carried, no Bill would be brought in. The amendment was simply an expression of opinion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is simply a vote of want of confidence in the Committee.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Hear, hear.

The PREMIER said in his opinion the amendment not only affirmed that taxation of a particular kind was necessary; it was also an affirmation that no other proposal brought forward, either by the Ministry or anyone else, would be accepted until that particular form of taxation was brought forward. It went even

urther than a proposition for a new tax, for it was simply a proposition for a new tax by a private member of the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH would instance as a precedent what took place in 1853, which he had already quoted. That might be called a vote of censure too—probably it was so; but it was held to be strictly relevant; and he held that the present amendment was strictly relevant also. There was a proposal before the Committee to raise about £20 on boats, and a few sums of money on other things. He could not move that other articles be included, but the Committee could affirm the desirability of something being done.

The PREMIER would point out that the instance given by the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) was perfectly consistent with the ruling of the Chairman. The motion then moved was strictly relevant to the subject of the resolution proposed by the Minister. The resolution proposed was that an income tax should be imposed for seven years, and the amendment was that it and its extension was unjust and impolitic. If the hon. member moved a similar resolution, which would have the effect of stating that the proposed alteration of the tariff was impolitic, he would be prepared to meet him; and such a motion would be consistent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Beor) said that in the eighth edition of "May," page 626, there was a foot-note which was very applicable—

"In April, 1871, Mr. Disraeli gave notice that on the 27th, in Committee of Ways and Means, he would move a resolution, 'that the financial proposals of Her Majesty's Government are unsatisfactory, and ought to be re-considered by the Government.' The resolution was intended to be moved, not as an amendment to any resolution about to be proposed in consequence of changes in the Budget, but as a substantive resolution. It was not moved, but it was pronounced by all the authorities to be irregular. Even if it had been moved as an amendment, it would not have been relevant to any resolution; and standing apart, as a distinct resolution, it could not have been moved until after the Budget resolutions had been agreed to or negatived; and in either case the resolution would have been inapplicable."

Mr. GRIFFITH, to meet an objection which might arise, altered his amendment as follows:—

That in the opinion of this Committee, the proposals of the Government are insufficient, and it is necessary to make further and better provision for equalising the public income and expenditure. And that the Committee are further of opinion that no proposition for that purpose will be satisfactory to the country which does not provide for raising an increased revenue from Crown lands held under pastoral lease by an assessment on stock or otherwise.

That was relevant to the resolution, at any rate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A distinction without a difference.

Mr. GRIFFITH said what he proposed was simply to get an expression of opinion. If this were a motion for a new tax it could not be put, but an expression of opinion could be made in any form whatever.

The CHAIRMAN said his opinion was that a new tax was proposed, and the amendment could not be put. A Committee of Ways and Means should not discuss either a new tax or general principles.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Do I understand that to be your ruling?

The CHAIRMAN said he should like to hear the opinion of the Committee.

Mr. GRIFFITH said a certain proposition made by the Government was before the Committee, and he moved that in the opinion of the Committee the proposals were insufficient. His (Mr. Griffith's) amendment did not deal with general principles—it simply suggested one

way in which the proposition of the Government might be amended. He would move that the matter be referred to the Speaker for his ruling.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the object sought by the first part of the proposition of the hon. member for North Brisbane could be much better attained by negating the tariff of the Government. He (Mr. Palmer) believed the amendment could not be put, and agreed with the opinion expressed by the Chairman. The tariff proposed by the Government could be amended, but it was not competent for any member to introduce a new tax; that must come down in a message from the Governor. The present amendment was nothing but a sidewind and was contrary to the usual practice, and quite contrary to the practice of the Home Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN said he must rule that the amendment proposed a new tax, and also was not relevant to the resolution before the Committee. The tariff in 1870 was amended by increasing or decreasing certain duties; but the alterations were made simply on the articles named in the resolution of the Treasurer, and nothing new was proposed. They could not discuss any new tax at all, and therefore the amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane could not be put.

Mr. GRIFFITH accordingly moved—That the Chairman leave the Chair and refer the matter to the Speaker.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER said the Chairman of Committees had reported to him that in Committee of Ways and Means—a resolution moved by the Treasurer to alter certain duties in the tariff being before the Committee—the hon. member for North Brisbane moved by way of amendment—

"That the whole of the words after the word 'that' be omitted with a view to the insertion in lieu thereof of the words:—'in the opinion of this Committee the proposals of the Government are insufficient, and it is necessary to make further and better provision for equalising the public revenue and expenditure, and that the Committee are further of opinion that no proposition for that purpose will be satisfactory to the country which does not provide for raising an increased revenue from Crown lands held under pastoral lease, by an assessment of stock or otherwise.'"

Mr. GRIFFITH said that before the Speaker gave his decision he would like to remark that in his opinion the amendment in question did not in reality propose a new tax, upon which ground the Chairman had ruled that it could not be put. He admitted that the question whether a new tax could be proposed by a private member was a delicate one, but it did not arise, because the amendment merely asked the Committee to affirm an opinion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, as he understood the amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane, it proposed an entirely new system of taxation. If it were agreed to it would not only veto the tariff proposed by the Treasurer, but would have the effect of substituting quite a fresh system of taxation. He contended that that could not be done by a private member in Committee of Ways and Means. Any alterations which might be made must be confined to the duties proposed by the Treasurer. It would be competent, for instance, to propose an alteration in the proposed duties upon acids, boats, leather, candles, or methylated spirits. Hon. members could only deal with these proposals introduced by the Treasurer under message of the Crown.

Mr. THORN: A different course was pursued in 1870.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that whenever he spoke he was subjected to constant

interruptions from the hon. member for the Northern Downs, who seemed to imagine that he concentrated in his little head all the wisdom of the world. If a different course were pursued in 1870—which he very much doubted—two wrongs did not make a right. If he was not mistaken, the Treasurer did in 1870 consent to certain alterations, but whether rightly or not he would not pronounce an opinion. At the time, he thought the Treasurer was wrong in so doing, and he believed he told him so. He now contended that the hon. member for North Brisbane might, if he were able, negative or alter the Treasurer's proposals; but neither he nor any other hon. member could propose an additional duty upon any article not included in the Treasurer's proposition.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he must again protest against the assertion that his amendment proposed additional taxation. It was quite unnecessary to discuss the question whether new taxation could be introduced by a private member. In England taxation proposals were invariably preceded by a message from the Crown, but there was no mention of that course in our Constitution Act. That question, however, did not arise. The only question was whether the amendment was relevant to the resolution. Upon that point he would quote from page 606 of the seventh edition of "May," who said—

"On the 25th April, 1853, the new property tax was proposed for seven years. An amendment was moved to leave out the words 'towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be raised annually during the terms hereinafter limited the several rates and duties following,' &c., in order to insert the words 'the continuance of the income tax for seven years, and its extension to classes heretofore exempt from its operation, without any mitigation of the inequalities of its assessment, are alike unjust and impolitic.'"

Hon. members, therefore, would perceive that while the original proposition concerned the new property tax, the amendment involved the continuance of the income tax for a period of seven years. "May" continued—

"Considerable doubts were entertained whether such an amendment was regular, it being the province of the Committee to consider the Ways and Means for the service of the year, and not to discuss general principles; but it was held that as the amendment was strictly relevant to the proposed duty it could not be excluded."

The amendment he had submitted to the Treasurer's resolution was in substance the same as the amendment referred to in the quotation he had just read. He contended, also, that the proposal he had made was one which could be entertained in the House, and therefore could certainly be submitted in Committee of Ways and Means. He asked the Committee to affirm the unsatisfactory nature of the taxes proposed by the Government, and intimated what would be a necessary element in any substituted scheme.

The CHAIRMAN said he ruled that the amendment could not be put, because, in the first place, it proposed a new tax. He still entertained that opinion, but even if it were incorrect, he did not think the amendment could be put because it involved "general principles." The hon. member for North Brisbane had just quoted an illustration from "May," and it was the only one he could himself find bearing upon the point under consideration. But the Speaker would observe that in the case referred to—the motion being for a new property tax and the amendment relating to an income tax—it was quite competent for the Committee of Ways and Means to consider the amendment. It was in the power of any member in Committee of Ways and Means to propose a tax of value equivalent to that originally proposed—that was to say, a

tax by which the same amount of money would be raised. But it was not otherwise competent for an hon. member to propose a new tax, nor could he discuss general principles.

Mr. THORN said that when the amendment was first proposed he was under the impression that there was a precedent for the course proposed. He discovered from *Hansard*, vol. XI., page 106, that this was so. The amendment now proposed was very similar to the amendments which were frequently proposed, in the case of financial statements, in the adjoining colonies—it was, in fact, tantamount to a vote of no-confidence. Viewed in that light, he contended that it could be put quite irrespective of any question of new taxation. Upon page 65 of the volume of *Hansard* he had named, the Treasurer proposed a duty of 6d. per gallon upon ale, beer, porter, and vinegar; and upon reference to page 106 of the same volume, it would be found that he himself moved—

"That upon ale, beer, porter, cider, perry, and vinegar, there be imposed for six reputed quart bottles 1s., and for twelve reputed pint bottles 1s."

That motion was put and passed. He ought to mention that he at that time was not a member of the Government. The motion proposed to raise fresh duties upon fresh articles. The Colonial Secretary was in the House at the time, and he must have poor brains or he would have remembered the circumstance. There was a total departure in many respects from the proposals of the then Treasurer, Mr. Ramsay. The proposed tariff was knocked into shreds, and when it came out of Committee it was quite a different tariff to that originally proposed.

The Hon. J. M. THOMPSON said he discovered from the *Commons Journal* that there was a slight mistake in the text of "May" when he referred to the amendment made on the taxation proposals submitted on the 25th April, 1853. The amendment, as a matter of fact, was entirely relevant to the original proposition, which was for an income tax, and not, as "May" led hon. members to believe, a property tax. The proposal—he would not read the whole of it—contained the following:—

"And for and in respect of the annual profits or gains arising or accruing to any person or persons not resident within the United Kingdom from any property whatever in the United Kingdom, or from any trade, profession, or vocation, exercised in the United Kingdom; for every twenty shillings of the annual value or amount thereof—

For two years from April 5, 1853,

And for two years from April 5, 1855,

And for three years from April 5, 1857,

And that on April 5, 1860, except as to the collection of moneys then due, the said Rates and Duties shall cease and determine."

The whole incidence of the proposed taxation was within seven years, and the amendment deprecated that period, and the extension of the tax to persons heretofore exempt from its operation. This amendment was allowed as being relevant to the original proposition. Referring to the debate that took place on the question, the general opinion seemed to be that in Committee of Ways and Means members might attack details, but they could not go outside any proposition in the shape of an amendment. The very case cited by the leader of the Opposition, and on which he founded his right to bring the matter forward to-day, shows, on close examination, that the amendment was entirely relevant. The original resolution dealt with an income tax extending over seven years, and extending to property not previously included in it, and the amendment had reference simply to those two details—the terms of seven years, and the inclusion of property which had not previously come under the tax.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, with reference to the precedent endeavoured to be established by the hon. member (Mr. Thorn) as to the action of the Colonial Treasurer in 1870, he would refer the Speaker to a passage in "May" which would set the question at rest at once. It was assumed by that hon. member that because he imposed, as he called it, a new tax in 1870, the motion now under discussion could be put. There was no connection whatever between them. It was laid down as positive, in "May," page 605, that—

"As a proposed grant cannot be increased in Committee of Supply, nor a new grant made unless recommended by the Crown, so also it appears that a new tax cannot be imposed except with the indirect sanction of the Crown."

That indirect sanction was given by the then Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Ramsay. The question whether a new article was taxed had nothing whatever to do with the present question.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had before him the debate in the House of Commons referred to by the hon. member (Mr. Thompson), and which the leader of the Opposition had cited as an authority in his favour. After stating the question, it described the income tax at 7d. in the £ for two years, 6d. in the £ for two years, and 5d. in the £ for three years. The proposition of Sir E. B. Lytton was a decided negative of the proposal to raise these taxes—a negative, certainly, in a somewhat abstract form, still a direct negative of the proposal brought before the House. At page 603 of "May," it was stated—

"In Committee of Supply it is irregular to propose any motion or amendment not relating to a grant under consideration; as the Committee may grant or refuse a supply, or may reduce the amount proposed, but have no other functions."

And on page 606 there was the following footnote:—

"In April, 1871, Mr. Disraeli gave notice that on the 27th, in Committee of Ways and Means, he would move a resolution 'that the financial proposals of Her Majesty's Government are unsatisfactory, and ought to be reconsidered by the Government.' The resolution was intended to be moved, not as an amendment to any resolution about to be proposed in consequence of changes in the Budget, but as a substantive resolution. It was not moved; but it was pronounced by all the authorities to be irregular. Even if it had been moved as an amendment it would not have been relevant to any resolution: and, standing apart as a distinct resolution, it could not have been moved until after the Budget resolutions had been agreed to or negatived; and in either case the resolution would have been inapplicable."

He submitted, therefore, that whether the present motion was an amendment of the resolution before the Committee, or whether it was an abstract resolution, it was equally improper.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that some hon. members seemed to have lost sight of the difference between a proposition for new taxation made in the whole House and in Committee of Ways and Means. The law on the subject was laid down by "Todd," page 451, as follows:—

"The general question of a revision of the Customs duties having been submitted to the House by the Crown, it is perfectly competent to any member, in committee of the whole House upon the Customs Acts, to offer an amendment to a particular rate of duty proposed to be levied, either for the increase or diminution of the same; it may even be proposed to insert in the schedule a new rate of duty, provided it relates to an article which is already included therein; and when the House resolves itself into a Committee of Ways and Means to consider of raising supplies for the service of the current year, it is competent for any member to propose another scheme of taxation for the same purpose, as a substitute for the Government plan."

That was conclusive on the subject. They were now in Committee of Ways and Means, but the precedents quoted by hon. gentlemen opposite were not precedents where the question arose in

Committee of Ways and Means. He would submit, therefore, that they did not apply in the present instance.

The SPEAKER: There is no doubt that the resolution proposed by the hon. member for North Brisbane is merely an abstract expression of opinion, and is not one of the formal steps to be gone through in the levying of a new tax. It simply asks that a plan different from that proposed by the Colonial Treasurer should be adopted by the Colonial Treasurer. It would have been more in accordance with our usual practice if this motion had been proposed as an amendment on the motion that I leave the chair to go into Committee of Ways and Means; but, considering that the Financial Statement is made in Committee of Ways and Means, and that the resolution which is now before the Committee was moved by the Colonial Treasurer after making his Financial Statement, the resolution of the hon. member for North Brisbane must be looked upon simply as an amendment disputing the policy of the Government as set forth in the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement. The case quoted by the hon. member for North Brisbane, and the particulars supplied by the hon. member for Ipswich, from the House of Commons journals, show that although in practice it is not usual to move an amendment of this kind in Committee of Ways and Means, yet that it has been permitted by the House of Commons. From the case referred to by the hon. member for North Brisbane, it appears that the amendment proposed was not an amendment specially referring to the question before the House, since it was not proposed to increase or decrease the tax in any way. It simply proposed to leave out certain words, and to insert certain other words. In other words, a distinct resolution in Committee of Ways and Means to impose a distinct tax was intercepted by an amendment which only expressed the abstract opinion of the House that a certain other course was desirable and should be adopted. I am of opinion, therefore, that although it is not usual to initiate a motion of this kind in Committee of Ways and Means, yet it may be done.

The Committee having resumed, and the question having been put,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that as it had been ruled that the question could be put, the Government submitted as a matter of course. Had it been a matter of very serious importance he should be inclined to move that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed to, as he was certain that the Chairman's ruling was right; but although a matter of moment, it was not of sufficient moment to induce him to take so extreme a course. At the same time, he disliked to see the practice of the House departed from. He would now proceed, as far as he could, to throw some little light on the subject that had been debated, in a very desultory sort of way, from yesterday afternoon till now. He should first endeavour to reply, in a few words, to some of the arguments advanced by the hon. member for North Brisbane. To begin at the beginning of the hon. member's speech, he doubted whether the hon. member was correct in saying that every man was prepared to pay his share of extra taxation. He did not believe that any member of the Assembly of even ordinary intelligence believed that anything of the sort should be done. No person watching the countenances of hon. gentlemen opposite, when the Treasurer submitted his proposals, would believe they were prepared to make up their minds to pay their share of the taxation. Judging from their countenances, they felt not only astonishment but relief. The proposals of his hon. colleague came before them like a clap

of thunder, and they felt considerably relieved when they found that those proposals were so different from what they had anticipated. Anyone passing down Queen street that evening could see that people appeared to be congratulating each other on the relief from a burden which they expected to have to bear, and their countenances also bore traces of astonishment and relief. They had not the appearance of men who had made up their minds to endure extra taxation and were very much disappointed at not having to pay it. He had not heard of one man in the colony who was not very much relieved to find that he had not to pay his share in extra taxation. The hon. member for North Brisbane talked about the Colonial Treasurer's inconsistency, quoting an extract from the Speech read by the Administrator of the Government at the commencement of the session to the effect that there would be some extra taxation. But he forgot what followed a few lines further on—that that taxation would be made with the least possible inconvenience to the people of the colony. The promise of the Governor's Speech had been carried out to the fullest extent: there had been extra taxation, and it had been made with the least possible inconvenience to the people of the colony. The hon. gentleman went on to tell the Committee that there would be no objection on either side to any extra taxation that it might be thought necessary to impose, provided that extra taxation was fairly distributed. Anyone who had watched the career of that hon. gentleman since he had been in the House could not for a moment doubt as to what he meant by the fair distribution of taxation. Every one of the hon. member's actions since he had been in the House led to the unavoidable conclusion that when he talked about the fair distribution of taxation he meant that as much as possible of the tax should be put upon the pastoral tenants of the Crown.

MR. GRIFFITH: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman's only idea of fairly distributing the taxation of the colony was to put additional imposts on the pastoral tenants of the Crown. He might say "no" as long as he liked; it would not alter the circumstance at all. The hon. member's whole speech, from beginning to end, pointed in that direction, and the motion with which he finished his speech showed that he (Mr. Palmer) was perfectly right in foreseeing that that was the point he was about to arrive at. The hon. gentleman had drawn a picture of the pastoral tenants of the Crown which would lead those who knew nothing about the matter to suppose that squatting was an El Dorado; that squatters had nothing to do but sit down and pick up gold and silver; that it was a delightful state of pastoral happiness; and that they had nothing else to do but to make money. He thought a little experience in the interior of the country would do that hon. gentleman, as well as a great many others on the Opposition side of the House, a great deal of good. It was the habit, in speaking of the small proportion of revenue that the pastoral tenants in the outside districts paid for the use of the land they occupied, to represent that as the only contribution they made to the Consolidated Revenue; but he need hardly point out that a greater absurdity than that could not be entertained. They contributed a great deal more. The pastoral tenant had to purchase the whole of the supplies for the men whom he employed; he had to pay heavy duties upon them; and he had in almost every instance to make his own roads. Nothing was done by the general Government for him, except perhaps a few little patches on the main road going out due west.

With that exception, he (Mr. Palmer) would like to know how much was spent in roads and bridges in the outside districts for the benefit of the pastoral tenant. The hon. gentleman drew attention to what he called the very small proportion paid by the pastoral tenants of Queensland compared with the neighbouring colonies. Taking New South Wales, it had a good deal of land held by pastoral tenants under lease, 133,233,280 acres returning a rental of £158,838, or an average of 15s. 3d. per square mile. It would be remembered, he hoped, by hon. members while he was reading this statement, that in almost every case the pastoral tenants of New South Wales were much more happily situated with respect to carriage to the sea than the pastoral tenants of Queensland. They were at no great distance from port; they had access to Victoria and to South Australia by water, and a great many facilities for getting their produce to market and their supplies sent back, which the pastoral tenants of Queensland had not. They paid, as he had stated, an average of 15s. 3d. per square mile. In South Australia the average was 5s. per square mile, there being 115,200,000 acres under rent there, yielding £45,000 to the revenue. In Queensland in the settled districts the average was £2 6½d., and in the unsettled districts 10s. 7d. per mile, with many drawbacks from extensive land carriage, great difficulty of approach to the sea, and in many instances of procuring proper labour. Victoria was of course almost entirely out of the question. This statement, he might state, had been prepared by the Under Secretary for Lands from the very latest statistics on the subject, and could be depended upon. The hon. member for North Brisbane also went into a disquisition on the Divisional Boards, to show, again, how very little the pastoral tenant was taxed under the Divisional Boards Act. He stated that the only assessment upon him under that Act was 5 per cent. on the amount of his rent. The hon. member was wrong again there. The pastoral tenant was rated not only on the rent he paid, but also on the improvements he had made on the property. That the hon. gentleman seemed to forget altogether; and whether that rating was light or heavy, the pastoral tenant would only get commensurate advantage. If he only paid £1 he would get £2; in fact, he was on exactly the same conditions as rateable property in the inside districts—he would get double the amount raised by rating, so that if he only paid 5 per cent. on his rent the advantage he gained was just in equal proportion. Then they were told by the hon. gentleman—following out some of the extraordinary prognostications of the hon. member for Enoggera, who entertained them last night with a very stupid sermon—of the great want of prosperity in the colony and of the enormous amount of want in the inside districts. He (Mr. Palmer) had heard that repeated until he was sick of it. He felt sure that anyone looking at the attendance at the last Exhibition, at the way in which Chiarini's circus was crowded both here and at the northern ports, and the way the playhouse and every place of entertainment about Brisbane was filled, would be very much inclined to be sceptical about the great want and poverty that was said to exist. He knew that there was poverty in individual cases, but that it existed to the extent that had been represented he took leave to doubt until he had some stronger evidence than the statements of hon. members opposite—used to throw doubt upon the Financial Statement of the Treasurer. Then the hon. gentleman told them that the proposals of the Government were not as satisfactory as they might have been. Well, he (Mr. Palmer) would be very much astounded if any pro-

posals of the Government were satisfactory to the Opposition. If the proposals of the Treasurer had been found acceptable to the Opposition he should immediately have imagined that there was something wrong in the state of Denmark, that the Treasurer had gone far beyond the views of hon. members on his own side of the House, and that he must be utterly mistaken in everything he had advanced. In fact, they would not be carrying on their system of Government properly if the financial proposals of the Government were satisfactory to the Opposition, or, rather, if they expressed themselves as satisfied with them; and he had no doubt whatever that a great many members of the Opposition felt as much relieved as the outside public, that the Treasurer did not propose the enormous taxation which every man in the colony had braced himself up to bear with fortitude. He had listened to the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) with pleasure sometimes, when he talked about matters he understood something about, but when he got into the finances of the colony, this afternoon, he (Mr. Palmer) was perfectly amazed. It reminded him of the description of a metaphysician given by a countryman of his, who said that a metaphysician, meaning the hon. member for North Brisbane, was a gentleman who tried to explain something of which he knew nothing whatever to some people who could not by any possibility understand his statement. He almost thought the hon. gentleman was trying to qualify himself to fill the position of Treasurer, and, if he was, he (Mr. Palmer) would recommend him to go to school again, for a greater mistake than he had made in dealing with the Financial Statement that afternoon he (Mr. Palmer) could not conceive. The hon. member grounded the whole of his arguments, not on the Treasurer's statement of the possible receipts and expenditure of the colony, but upon a system that he had drawn up for himself, in which, by one stroke of his pen, or, rather, of his tongue, he cut off some very small figures in the Treasurer's estimate, but which were really very important figures, considering the position they occupied in that Statement, amounting, in fact, to about £100,000. That he struck off at one fell swoop. He (Mr. Griffith) then went on to give them his idea of what the revenue would be, cutting it down wherever he thought fit. He (Mr. Palmer) almost imagined he (Mr. Griffith) was the Treasurer presenting his financial statement to the House, and a very pretty financial statement he made of it! His argument was not based upon the statement of the Treasurer in any one way, but upon the state to which he had reduced that Statement—on that he argued.

MR. GRIFFITH: I took facts instead of the estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he should like to know how the hon. gentleman could ascertain as facts things which had not yet occurred. Why, if he was a prophet in Israel he could not do that. It was all of a piece with his facts; it was one of Mr. Griffith's facts, and they knew what they were. Facts! Did ever mortal man hear such nonsense! The hon. gentleman said he took as facts things which could not possibly be known for twelve months.

MR. GRIFFITH: I took the actual receipts. Do not the Treasurer's tables represent facts? I assumed that they represented facts.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman assumed too much. The Treasurer's Statement did not represent facts; it represented what the Treasurer assumed would be facts at the end of the year, which was a very different thing from being facts. He certainly thought that a gentleman of the legal experience

and acumen of the hon. member for North Brisbane ought to understand the difference between these two things, but it was very evident he did not; and whatever sort of a Minister for Works he made, he would make a very bad Treasurer if, when the new Government came into office, he chose to play that rôle instead of that of Attorney-General, for which he was very much better suited. The hon. gentleman need not interrupt him by laughing with the hon. gentlemen on each side of him. He (Mr. Palmer) was delighted. He always knew when he had touched the hon. gentleman on the raw, because when he did so he (Mr. Griffith) immediately turned round to hon. members on each side of him and put on a very forced smile, indeed. He hoped the hon. gentleman would listen to him as carefully as he (Mr. Palmer) had done when he (Mr. Griffith) was addressing the House; and if he did so he would certainly see that in playing the rôle of Treasurer he had made a very great mistake. He (Mr. Griffith) told the House that the Government had made forced sales of land. Now, what were forced sales? He would like very much to hear the hon. gentleman describe the meaning which he attached to the Government making forced sales. What he understood to be a forced sale was where the party in possession was forced by circumstances to sell; but that was not the meaning which he understood the hon. member put upon it, at all. The meaning which he (Mr. Griffith) attached to it, as far as he (Mr. Palmer) could gather, was, that sales were made by which they forced people into buying land by auction. He was sure a greater absurdity than that could not be stated. The hon. gentleman further stated that they had disposed of the mortgaged land which was absolute security for the payment of the sum due upon the Brisbane Bridge. Did the hon. gentleman forget that they had an Act of Parliament enabling them to do that, and to give a title to that land; and did he imagine for one moment that the fact of the Government of Queensland having sold that land could possibly lessen the security of the mortgage? If he would look at the prices at which the bridge debentures had been selling in London recently he would see that the confidence of the holders of these debentures in their security had not been shaken in the slightest degree. He (Mr. Griffith) also informed them, in the course of his speech, that he did not think it was the duty of the Opposition at all to frame a tariff. How he reconciled that assertion with the motion with which he concluded his speech he (Mr. Palmer) was at a loss to imagine. That it was not the duty of the Opposition to frame a tariff he quite agreed: he would go further, and say that they had not the power to frame a tariff. If they had power to frame a tariff they were no longer an Opposition, but should occupy the Treasury benches. But they could not possibly frame a tariff unless they were able to carry it through the House, and if they did that they should take the place of the Government. The view of the position of the colony which the hon. member, in common with the hon. members for Enoggera and Maryborough, who were the only leading members who had really favoured them with an opinion, was an exceedingly gloomy one—that they were almost on the verge of insolvency and utter destitution! They heard the moans of hon. members opposite about a deficiency of £270,000 or £300,000; but any person knowing the resources of the colony, who would take that view of such a ridiculously small deficit, was not worthy of the name of a statesman. He did not believe that hon. members opposite believed it themselves, but they took this gloomy view of affairs and disseminated it, so far as they possibly could, purely for party purposes of which they

ought to be ashamed. What was a deficit of £300,000 to a colony like this, with its almost illimitable expanse of land upon which they could always fall back? It was a mere bagatelle; there were men in this and the neighbouring colonies who could take that deficit and clear it off within a couple of years out of their own estates; and if that could not be done in Queensland, there must certainly be something wrong in the management of its affairs. He took a very different view. He believed that, with even two good seasons and a return of prosperity, they could make good the whole of the deficit without the slightest extra taxation.

Mr. DICKSON: Why borrow from the public creditor to pay the deficiency?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said really the hon. member for Enoggera quite alarmed him when he spoke in that tone. Why borrow from the public creditor! He did not know why they should borrow from the public creditor except that they wanted money to carry on public works. They did not borrow money to put it in their own pockets. What did the hon. member mean by "borrowing from the public creditor?" He appeared to have caught up the fallacy of that precious article in the *Courier* on the finances of the colony, which he (Mr. Palmer) would have believed, if the hon. member had not denied it, had been written by the hon. member for Maryborough, because that hon. member always got into a state of fog on financial matters. However, the hon. member had declared that he did not write it, and he (Mr. Palmer) was at a loss to understand who had, unless it was the hon. member for Enoggera. He was sure there were no other two such financiers in the colony who would have fallen into such frightful mistakes in regard to the present financial position of the colony as those hon. gentlemen. The proposition of his hon. friend the Treasurer had been put forward by himself in such plain language that those who run might read, and it was only those who were wilfully blind, and who for party and political purposes wilfully misrepresented the Statement of the Treasurer, that could believe for one moment that the Government had tried to borrow money in the manner in which they were supposed to have done so by the article on financial matters in the *Brisbane Courier* and the speeches of the hon. members for Maryborough and Enoggera. Among the items that the hon. gentleman had alluded to was what he was pleased to call "abnormal sales of land." He (the Colonial Secretary) hardly understood what the hon. gentleman meant.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I was quoting from the Treasurer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said as far as he understood, the hon. gentleman endeavoured to show from the speech made by the Premier that he was opposed to abnormal sales of land. He (the Colonial Secretary) took it that the hon. gentleman was as much opposed as ever he was, but the circumstances under which he proposed to sell land, and the circumstances under which the late Government sold land, were very different. In the former case it was truly forced sales of land, because the late Government forced the occupants to buy at whatever price they chose to put upon them. The occupants could either buy them to save themselves from destruction or be ruined. Those were the forced sales of land that were objected to, and those were the sales that his hon. friend alluded to when he spoke of abnormal sales of land. But the circumstances under which the Government proposed to sell land were entirely different. They did not propose to sell land for the construction of railways as was proposed and done, so far as they

would do it, by the late Government. The Bill that they brought in on that subject, the Railway Reserves Bill, was opposed tooth and nail by every member on his (the Colonial Secretary's) side, and they always said that the only purpose for which land should be sold was to pay the interest on the construction of railways, and not to construct them. The Ministry of the day took an entirely different view, and, having then a majority, they succeeded in passing what he and many others considered one of the very worst laws that ever disgraced their statute-book. Last session, having a majority in the House at their back, the present Government threw that Bill overboard, and took authority, also, for the appropriating and putting back to the place from which it should never have gone, to its proper position, the Consolidated Revenue of the colony, the proceeds of the sales of these lands. What his hon. friend, the Colonial Treasurer, proposed to do now was to take the balance of the proceeds of the land sold within these railway reserves, and which went very improperly, as they always considered, for the construction of railways, back to its proper place—the Consolidated Revenue. That was a very different thing from the abnormal sales of land alluded to by the Colonial Treasurer and quoted by the hon. member for North Brisbane. The £300,000, they considered, properly belonged to the Consolidated Revenue of the colony, and with the Act they passed last session repealing the Railway Reserves Bill they were perfectly justified in taking the proceeds of the lands which had been sold, and which, as he had said before, ought to have gone into Consolidated Revenue, and was most improperly applied by the Government for the construction of public works. The money was put to the purpose for which it was intended. That was a very different way of treating the matter from that adopted by the late Government. The statement so improperly and falsely made in the *Courier* that the Government wished to impose on the public creditor, and intended to take money for that purpose from the parties who were now lending money to the colony, was utterly untrue. On the contrary, the Premier most distinctly stated that it was his intention to add the sum to the next loan, and in the meantime to issue Treasury bills to cover any possible deficiency. The hon. gentleman also stated that the bills might possibly not be sold, but that if the necessity arose he considered he should be perfectly justified in selling them. Then the leader of the Opposition went on to inform the Premier that if he had brought down such a scheme of taxation as he would propose the hon. gentleman would win back some of the support he had lost. But what support had the hon. gentleman lost, and what support should he be likely to get from the Opposition side of the House on account of any proposal he might make? If the Premier brought down the most heavenly-devised tariff that ever was heard of, there would be just the same howl of execration by the Opposition as had been raised on the Premier proposing to impose very little taxation indeed. During the whole of the hon. gentleman's speech there had been no doubt as to the taxation he was about to propose. He (Mr. Palmer) found no difficulty in divining at once where the taxation was to come in, and he made a note of it at the time. When the hon. gentleman concluded his speech the motion made by him showed that his (Mr. Palmer's) anticipations had been correct. The House had also been favoured with some statistics with regard to the available land in the colony, and the proportion occupied by every head of sheep and cattle; and in those statistics the hon. gentleman had exhibited in a remarkable degree what he had recently

attributed to the Attorney-General—deplorable ignorance. If the hon. gentleman knew anything at all about the interior of the colony he would know that there were enormous tracts of country utterly unavailable for any practical purpose whatever—country which would not feed a bandicoot—all of which was reckoned in in the hon. gentleman's statistics. The unavailable country of that kind bore a considerable proportion to the available, and it had all been brought in to tot up the total amount of country in the statistics which had been presented to the House by the prospective Treasurer of some future administration. The hon. gentleman would do well to further remember that rent was not the only tax which pastoral tenants had to pay for their lands. There were assessments upon both sheep and cattle for different purposes, and also in many districts a marsupial tax which told pretty heavily; so that the rent which a pastoral tenant paid to the Crown was often a very small proportion of the sum which he actually paid for the occupation of his run. The hon. gentleman fell into another error when he went on to speak about railways, and argued that the principal recommendation of railway communication to the inhabitants of the interior was cheapness. The hon. gentleman had been told in the House many times by those who knew more about the matter than he did that the extension of railways had very little, if at all, lowered the price of carriage to port—and if at all, only within the last year or two—the cost of carriage between the stations, and the terminus of the railways being in many cases heavier than it had been in former years. The benefits derived from railways had been facility and quickness of transport, and not cheapness. Another remark of the hon. gentleman, in speaking of the transfer of proceeds of land sales from Railway Reserves Fund to Consolidated Revenue, was that the Government might as well take back a million of money which had been expended on public works over a series of years; but hon. members would see that there was not the least parallel between the two cases. The money proposed to be transferred was money for land which had been absolutely applied to a specific purpose—namely, the construction of those railways. The idea of going back and singling out items of general public expenditure as the hon. member suggested was simply absurd. The Government never had any such intention, and he hoped they never would have. Hon. members and the public should never forget that the present Government party had consistently opposed, from the beginning to the end, the Railway Reserves Act, and that they had stated more than once that as soon as they got into power those Acts should be repealed, and the money raised under them devoted to its proper purpose—namely, to paying interest on the debt of the colony. For construction purposes the Government were entitled, by every precedent, to raise money on loan; and he could not too often repeat that the statement of the present case had been most improperly represented by the Press and by members of the House. The case was utterly—and he believed wilfully—misrepresented; and members of the House and gentlemen connected with the Press ought to remember that in writing as they did they were not only endeavouring to injure the Ministry—they might do their level best in that respect; the Government didn't care three straws—but they were also doing their best to injure the credit of the colony, because if those speeches and representations went home uncontradicted they would materially injure the best interests of the colony. No amount of party spirit or political opposition could justify any man in making statements so utterly un-

true, and so calculated to injure the credit of the colony in the English market. The Government had been twitted last night with not having remained in the House to listen to the speech of the hon. member for Knoggera; but, as the Premier had said, it was not only members of the Ministerial side of the House who deserted, but also the hon. gentleman's own supporters. The commencement of the hon. member's speech sounded so much like a dirge that it seemed as though he thought the colony was getting too near the sun, and soon there would be nothing left of it. He (Mr. Palmer) tried to stand it as long as he could, but when the hon. member began to tell the House that the skies were like brass, and the clouds refused to weep, and advanced that as a reason for resorting to extra taxation, he bolted; and on his return he found, as he expected, the hon. member still deploring that the Colonial Treasurer would not take his advice instead of following his own counsel. Was such a speech worth reading? The hon. member travelled through an array of figures enough to puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, but probably he did not understand them a bit more than he (Mr. Palmer) did when he tried to read the speech next morning. Of all the reasons given for advocating increased taxation, that one of the hon. member about the skies of brass and the sufferings of the people was about the most extraordinary. The real sin the Treasurer had committed was in disappointing the expectations of the Opposition. The Government were not always asleep—they took a little when they could get it, but generally kept their eyes open to the signs of the times. When they heard of the hon. member for Northern Downs flying about Brisbane giving the straight tip that Mr. Macrossan's constituents in the North had heard that flour was going to be taxed and salt was going to be taxed, the Government were behind the scenes laughing and enjoying the situation enormously, especially the straight tip of the hon. member for Northern Downs. Supposing the Colonial Treasurer had fallen into that trap and had taxed flour and salt—and beer, as was recommended by the hon. member for Ipswich—what a denunciation there would have been against the Government for taxing the poor man's beer, starving the children of the struggling population, preventing the denizens of the bush from even salting the meat they were obliged to kill! There would have been a howl from the Opposition almost enough to blow the roof off the House. The eyes of the Government, however, were not shut; their action had been decided upon long ago, and he was happy to say their decision had never leaked out, although the Treasurer had a cask of whisky out of bond, which appeared to have put a great many gentlemen in Brisbane on the wrong tack. The secrets of the tariff had probably never been better kept than on this occasion. The Opposition were disappointed because instead of the colony being ground down by taxation which would enable them to raise a howl and talk from to-day to to-morrow, a very simple remedy had been found for the little difficulty of the colony, which principally consisted in selling land, of which there was an enormous amount, and which the Government were perfectly justified in selling on an occasion of this sort. No doubt the protectionists were awfully disappointed, also. It was supposed that the Colonial Treasurer had protectionist proclivities—he believed the hon. gentleman had said so before now—but they had not come out on this occasion, and he did not think they would to the extent which the Opposition desired. It had also been said—and the hon. member for North Brisbane referred to the report—that the present was a very unpopular Ministry. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to make capital out of

a remark of the Premier, last night, that the Ministry were unpopular; but he did not go so far as the Premier, who said the Government was unpopular with the Civil servants. That was the extent of the admission of the Colonial Treasurer—

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said any Government who did their duty in dismissing useless public servants would be unpopular with a considerable section of the community. The Government had long known that, and knew it when the dismissals were made; but, so far from having become unpopular with the colony generally, quite the opposite was the fact. That the Government was unpopular with those who had been dismissed they had evidence every day. What were the hole-and-corner meetings? Who spoke at them? Who got them up?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They are got up by contract.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Government knew the name of every man; they spoke now just as they did three years ago; they had always been the opponents of the Government, and therefore the Government had not lost one friend in them. They had always opposed the Government, and it was nothing new for them to do so now. No matter what the Government proposed they would oppose it; and at the present time there was coming behind them a solid phalanx of disappointed applicants for office—he could name them by the score. The Government had dismissed a number of Civil servants, and they were the very men who figured most at those meetings. As was remarked by the hon. member for Stanley, they could get up as many of those meetings by contract as they chose to pay for. The Government did not want supporters of that kind. They knew what was going on just as well as the gentlemen who got up the meetings did. When he saw the stormy petrel of the *Evangelical Standard* skimming from wave to wave telling them what they were to get, he knew what was coming. And what did the Government get? He could leave the answer for the hon. member for North Brisbane, who received the address of the so-called monster meeting held in Brisbane. From information which he had obtained he knew that there was not one man out of ten at that meeting who cared three straws about it. The meeting was got up by a clique. If the hon. member for North Brisbane thought that by getting up such meetings he would influence the actions of the Government, he and his friends were dreadfully mistaken. That was not the way to carry on parliamentary government. It might have the effect of binding the Government party together like a band of steel, and make them stick closer together than they otherwise would do; but it was a frightful mistake to encourage such meetings—to encourage a tumultuous crowd to come to the House with resolutions. That was contrary to all the usages of Parliament. The hon. member for North Brisbane ought to be ashamed of himself for encouraging such demonstrations by going down to receive any address. It was not constitutional government of any sort or degree; but the Government cared very little about it; they would care more for a cold blast of westerly wind, for that would annoy them.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Go to the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Government would do so at the proper time, and were not afraid to do so. He believed that at heart the people were thoroughly with them. Let the hon. gentleman not imagine that he was afraid to meet him in Brisbane as he did before. He was quite prepared to go to the electors at

the proper time, but he should not do so on the strength of such a ridiculous and silly challenge as he once received from the hon. member for Enoggera. Of all the child's-play which he had ever heard that was the worst. He should be ashamed of himself to accept such a challenge. The hon. member evidently did not know his duty as a representative of the people or he never would have made such a proposal. The hon. member, if he understood the Constitution aright, was sent there to represent the electors of his constituency in particular and the colony in general. What did the hon. member propose to do? Like another Don Quixote he would throw away the substantial place he had on the chance of being returned again, and the hon. member thought, perhaps, that there was another fool in the House as bad as himself. The idea was utterly absurd. The longer the Government lived the more of the sympathy of the outside public they would have. What with the agitations of political mountebanks in the colony, and Opposition members who misrepresented almost everything which came before them, how was it possible for the people to form a just opinion now? He had not the slightest doubt that the reasoning portion of the public—the great majority of the people—the more they understood the Government measures, and saw that it was their wish to benefit the whole colony, would join with them, and that eventually the Government would become a great deal more popular than any Government which had preceded them had been. What could the people think of Ministers who proposed to do this, that, and the other thing—men like the hon. member for Enoggera who, when he was Treasurer, actually proposed to do what the Government were doing now—that was to sell the land and make it contribute to the revenue—but was afraid to do so. The present Ministry was a Ministry of action: their predecessors were only a Ministry of proposals which they dared not carry out. The speech of the hon. member for Maryborough last night was refreshing; he imparted the only life which was noticeable in the debate. The hon. member was quite frank, and his language was terribly profound. He actually appealed to God to put this wretched Ministry out. "Would to God that we could put this wretched Ministry out!" he ejaculated. That was the truest speech of the evening. The hon. member stated exactly what the Opposition wanted to do, but the hon. member would not have been so straightforward and frank had he not got into a passion. The Opposition simply wanted to put the Ministry out; they wanted to occupy the Treasury benches, and they did not care how they got there—be it by misrepresentation or by injuring the colony; they would wade through their tarnished reputations to the Treasury benches. However, they would find that they would have some heavy wading, as before they got there they would get into very deep water. The hon. member for Enoggera talked about the extravagance of the Government in purchasing rails. Did the hon. member forget that the Government of which he was a member introduced the vicious system of bunching six railways? Rather than see the country put about the opponents of that Government submitted to the system without any stonewalling; but they did what they considered their duty in warning the Government what would be the effect on any Ministry who succeeded them. They were told that any succeeding Ministry would have to go on with other public works, as the hundreds of men employed on the railways could not be got rid of in a day without serious injury to the colony. For that reason the system of bunching railways was vicious. Then the hon. member for Enoggera said he would not

frame a tariff. Who asked him to do so, or who would take his tariff? The hon. member need not be alarmed; the Government would not accept any tariff he might propose, because it would be such a conglomeration of absurdities as had never been heard of in any tariff in the world, and would never be heard of again. He did not often allude to the speeches of the junior member for Knoggera; they were generally so rabid that it was not worth while to take any notice of them; but the hon. member put his foot into it last night. He alluded to the matter more because the hon. member was misrepresented in *Hansard* than for any other reason. *Hansard* was supposed to be a correct record of what was said, but a false report of what the hon. member said, and of the Premier's reply to him, never appeared in any journal. The hon. member was criticising the action of the Government in making the tariff; he was showing the Treasurer what he ought to have done and what he ought to have left undone, and he went on to inform the House that the Treasurer ought to have put a duty on cedar—

Mr. RUTLEDGE: I did nothing of the sort.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member did, but he was reported in *Hansard* to have said—

"There was no doubt the Treasurer had done a good thing in imposing an export duty on cedar. As had often been pointed out, they had been allowing their cedar to go away in large quantities without deriving any profit whatever from it."

The Premier, in his reply, alluded to the mistake which had been made by the hon. member, but not a word of what the Premier said was reported. Instead of the words of the Premier being given, he was reported to have said—

"The hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) was rather severe, in criticising the Financial Statement, when he said that the merest tyro in finance could have made such a speech; but the hon. member could not have read the speech, and must have drawn his conclusions from the leading article in the *Courier*."

The Premier specially pointed out that the hon. member could not have read the Financial Statement, as otherwise the hon. member would not have said that a duty ought to be imposed on cedar. He had listened to a good many financial debates in the House, but he had never heard a debate so dry and devoid of life as was that of last night. There had been a little more life in the debate to-night brought about by the amusing way in which the hon. member for North Brisbane endeavoured to explain his method of financing. He believed that the Opposition were so thoroughly disgusted and astonished at finding that the Treasurer did not fall into traps which were laid for him that they had no life in them to go on. He did not think he could conclude what was for him a lengthy speech better than by quoting an extract from a speech made by General Grant, which he came across the other day. General Grant remarked—

"The most troublesome men in public life are those over-righteous people who see no motives in other people's actions but evil motives, who believe all public life is corrupt, and nothing is well done unless they do it themselves. They are narrow-headed people; their two eyes are so close together that they can look out of the same gilet hole without winking."

Mr. GRIFFITH said that since he had moved his amendment he had found that if it were put in the way in which he had submitted it it might have a different effect to what he intended. If it were carried in the affirmative there would, of course, be nothing left for discussion; and if it was negatived, the details of the tariff would not be open to amendment. He desired to alter his amendment to the form that the words of the

amendment be added after the word "that," instead of moving to omit all the words of the resolution.

The PREMIER said that the hon. member ought to have considered the amendment before he submitted it to the House in the form he had done.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that if his amendment were put in the form in which he now desired it to be put, hon. members would be at liberty to discuss the items of the tariff, whereas if it were carried in the form in which it was first proposed the tariff proposals would be disposed of. Some hon. members might desire to see the duties imposed on some articles agreed to, and he was sure no one wished that they should not have an opportunity of agreeing to or rejecting them. He could not understand how there could be any objection to the course he proposed. It was usual when motions were made in a complicated form to allow several amendments to be made. That was done by the Minister for Works on his (Mr. Griffith's) motion for a Royal commission. It did not matter so far as he himself was concerned, but there were other members of the Committee who wished to discuss the details of the tariff; and the amendment, if negatived, as now put, would close all discussion on the question.

Mr. AMHURST said the proposition of the hon. member was not an amendment at all, but a direct vote of want of confidence. Under those circumstances he (Mr. Amhurst) distinctly refused to allow the proposition to be altered until he knew what position they would occupy afterwards. Was it a vote against the Ministry or not?

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wished hon. members to be allowed to discuss the tariff.

Mr. AMHURST said he took the amendment as a vote of want of confidence, and should be happy to deal with it as such.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. member who last spoke would yield to whatever the Government desired. Some hon. members did not wish that the tariff should be discussed in detail; but there were some who did. The mistake in his (Mr. Griffith's) amendment was simply an accident, and only required an alteration in form, and not in substance. By the rules of procedure in Committee, if the amendment were negatived as now put, that would prevent any amendment being made in the tariff.

Mr. AMHURST said that when the leader of the Opposition moved his amendment he (Mr. Amhurst) looked upon it as a direct vote of want of confidence. Since that, the hon. member said he had found out that the amendment in its present form would prevent debate in all directions on the tariff. Would the hon. member, if he were allowed to withdraw the amendment, pledge himself to bring forward a direct vote of want of confidence in the Government. He would make the hon. member stick to that.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wanted to stick to it. What he wanted was to alter his motion so that instead of the question being put from the chair, "that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question," it should be put "that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted after the word 'that.'" He did not recede in the slightest degree from the position he had taken up.

Mr. KINGSFORD deprecated the practice of moving amendments on amendments. There was one amendment before the Committee, and he hoped they would stick to that till it was disposed of. It would be confusion worse confounded if any further alteration were made.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he would make one more attempt —

Mr. HILL : Get a crosscut saw and pickaxe.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he really did think it would take a crosscut saw or a pickaxe to let light into the brains of some hon. members. However, he would make one more attempt to induce hon. members to understand what it was he proposed to do. He had moved a resolution, which an hon. member had called a vote of want of confidence, and he wished that motion to be discussed and disposed of. But he did not desire that a mere accident in form should prevent discussion on the tariff in case the Committee should go against the motion. As the amendment stood at present, the question would be put that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—that was, that the words in the Treasurer's resolution stand part of the question; and if that were put and carried no amendment could afterwards be received. What he proposed was to put the question in this form whether the words should be inserted; and if that was negatived, that question was disposed of. It was usual when a member moved a resolution, the result of which might be to prevent any other member moving an amendment, that he should be allowed to put his resolution in another form. That had been done over and over again, and was what he proposed to do now.

Mr. FRASER would like to deal with some of the items of the tariff in detail, and should therefore like to see the Committee allow the hon. member to alter the form of his amendment. He did not think the Government desired to prevent any hon. member proposing alterations in detail, or that they were, for party purposes, trying to take advantage of what appeared to be purely an accident, so as to prevent discussion on the tariff in detail.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the observations addressed to the Committee a little while ago by the hon. member for North Brisbane were unnecessary, as well as the violent and offensive terms in which he addressed hon. members on the Government side: one was as unnecessary as the other. Hon. members knew very well that the effect of negativing "that the words be omitted" would be that the resolution would have to stand as it was. Let the hon. member take the responsibility of the form of his amendment. It was for him to frame his motion properly before he brought it forward. He had had a long experience in the House, and should be able to frame his motion properly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said a number of hon. members were well known to be protectionists of more or less extreme views. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition was known not to be a protectionist. No one doubted the astuteness of the leader of the Opposition—he got credit for being one of the cleverest lawyers in the colony, and he took a sufficient length of time to draw up the resolution which he now wished to amend.

Mr. GRIFFITH : I don't wish to amend it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman now professed, in the interests of those members who held protectionist views, to wish to alter his amendment in such a way as to allow the discussion of the tariff, and the introduction of any amendments they thought fit to make. He had great reason to doubt the hon. gentleman's sincerity, and he thought almost every member of the House occupied a similar position. The hon. gentleman knew very well that if a single member objected to the proposed alteration of the form of the amendment that that alteration could not be made.

Knowing that, the hon. member deliberately rose and insulted those hon. members upon whose consent the alteration depended. In irritating hon. members on the Government side of the House by telling them that it required a pickaxe to put an idea into their minds or a crosscut saw to open their heads to allow an idea to get in, the hon. member was manifestly insincere to his protectionist friends, because by raising opposition to any alteration of the form of the amendment he balked them of their opportunity to discuss the tariff.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the hypothesis of the Minister for Works was perfectly absurd. It was quite as reasonable to suppose that that hon. gentleman prompted the supporters of the Ministry to interject "pickaxe" and "crosscut saw" with a view to irritate the leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member drew upon his imagination when he supposed anything of the kind. It could not be denied that the leader of the Opposition used the words attributed to him.

Mr. GRIFFITH : After they had been used on the other side.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said other hon. members might have used the words, but they were not used by himself.

Mr. DICKSON said he would not prolong the discussion upon crosscut saws and pickaxes. He desired to know if the Government intended to burk discussion upon their tariff, or whether they would—as he considered they were in duty bound to do—facilitate the discussion by allowing the hon. member for North Brisbane to correct his oversight? Whatever might be the effect of the amendment it would, if put in its present form, preclude a discussion of the tariff. He could not conceive what the Government would gain by encouraging this irrelevant debate. Similar irregularity was noticeable on the preceding evening when, instead of the debate being continued, as was usual in such cases, by alternate speakers, it was confined to one side of the House.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there seemed to be some doubt as to who had used the words "pickaxe" and "crosscut saw." He used the words himself. He knew that the hon. member for North Brisbane was in search of abusive epithets, and he therefore handed him over some which he immediately served out. He was not such an idiot as to fail to perceive the hon. member's motive in promptly using the words suggested to him. Hon. members of the Government side of the House knew perfectly well what the hon. member was driving at. When the hon. member first introduced his amendment he thought it would have the effect of prolonging the debate; but immediately he saw that it was likely to abbreviate the discussion he asked permission to remodel it. He for one would object to give the permission which the hon. member sought; and he took that stand quite independently of any consideration for the Ministry. With regard to the speech delivered last night by the hon. member for Enoggera, and the hon. member's complaint that it had not been replied to, it was patent to everyone, immediately the hon. member commenced to speak, that the speech would be intolerable. It was almost unbearable in its reading, and it would have been a physical and moral impossibility for anyone to reply to it upon the spur of the moment. The hon. member left the House in a perfect wilderness of words and figures. True, the hon. member for the Northern Downs thought it the most able speech he had ever heard, and he appeared to be the only man capable of replying to it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Attorney-General had remarked that the leader of the Opposition had had considerable experience in the House, but that was the first time during the whole of that experience that he had known objection to be raised to a proposition that a question should be put from the chair in one form instead of another. The Minister for Works had endeavoured to throw some blame upon him—as he invariably did, whenever an opportunity occurred—and accused him of an attempt to irritate hon. members behind the Government benches. He knew that the hon. members for Gregory and Mackay desired to hear the epithets alluded to served out, as it had been termed, and he had served them out accordingly; but as to endeavouring to induce hon. members opposite to persist in their objections to an alteration in the form of the amendment, he entertained a different opinion of them than to suppose that they were likely to be influenced in the manner suggested by the Minister for Works. So much for the attempt of the Minister for Works to throw vinegar into the discussion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would like to ask the hon. member for North Brisbane whether, in his long experience, he had heard a leader of the Opposition ask leave no less than three times to amend an amendment upon a financial proposal of a Government? It was surely the hon. member's duty to have studied his amendment in all its bearings, and to have considered among other things what effect it would have if agreed to. If the hon. member had succeeded in blocking the discussion on the tariff the Government had nothing to do with it. The hon. member had to thank himself for that, no less than for the bad temper he had produced in the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the first alteration of his amendment was made to meet an objection of the Chairman's. The alteration was made out of deference to, and to meet the views of, the Chairman.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But you did not meet them.

Mr. GRIFFITH said his second and only remaining request included no alteration whatever. He merely asked that the Chairman might be allowed to put the amendment in a different form.

The PREMIER said that if hon. members considered the course the debate had taken last night and to-night they must inevitably come to the conclusion that the leader of the Opposition had little ground for asking the House for further permission to amend his amendment, nor was there any reason for the strictures which had fallen from the hon. member for Enoggera. Upon previous occasions he had known debates upon financial proposals sustained upon the Opposition side of the House for two whole nights before a Minister rose to speak. One feature of the present debate was quite unprecedented, and it was this—that in order to back up the debate, and to have the greatest possible light thrown upon the matter under consideration, the Treasurer should have been compelled upon the first night to speak three times. He had risen no less than three times on the previous evening with a view to confine the debate to its legitimate channels. That was a position, he believed, which the hon. member for Enoggera had never occupied. He had invited the fullest discussion of the tariff, and when allusion was made to amendments—although he could not say that he would be prepared to meet them—he distinctly intimated that the Government were quite prepared to discuss them. No amendments, however, were brought forward. The hon. member for North Brisbane, cognizant of the exact

position of matters, now came down and superimposed an amendment which baulked the whole of the amendments to which reference had previously been made. The hon. member pursued that course coolly and deliberately. He thoroughly believed that his object was to supersede all action in the Committee by a direct motion of want of confidence, especially as the motion was followed by the "hear, hears" of the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas). Such a motion should take precedence over every other business. The hon. member said he did not know of a single instance in which a motion had not been allowed to be amended in the way asked. He (the Premier) did not remember a case in which such a thing had been asked. If he had had the acquiescence of his own side he would have made the motion in a more conciliatory spirit, but he found that it was not possible to get that. The hon. gentleman said he had no amendments to propose; his followers said they had none. Who had any to propose? He (the Premier) had placed a certain tariff before the House, and the hon. member sought to complicate the debate with matter which was altogether outside it. The Government intended to meet the propositions of the protectionists with denial; they meant to stand by their tariff. Why should they be asked by the leader of the Opposition to give facilities for prolonging the debate with something that had nothing whatever to do with it? The concession, if asked for at all, should have been asked for, not by the leader of the Opposition, but by some other hon. member who intended to meet it with a motion; and they had not heard of such a member yet.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he understood it would be moved—he did not know by whom—to omit the proposal to put an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. on leather. It had always been the practice, if anybody wished to move a subsequent amendment, to bring the first one in such a way as to leave room open for the subsequent one. The hon. gentleman insisted that he wanted to amend a motion of want of confidence. He did not want to do anything of the kind. He wanted to insist upon it exactly as it stood, but he thought it would suit the Treasurer best to have the whole discussion in Committee of Ways and Means. The motion might be put in either of two ways: he asked for it to be put in one way, but in any case the result would be the same. He could not conceive that any objection would be taken to it. If the motion he made was carried, it would of course supersede the tariff. He was anxious that it should be disposed of this evening, having no desire to protract business.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) was, he believed, only carrying out what he was instructed to do at the Opposition caucus meeting held that morning, and that was to obstruct public business. It was no doubt decided there that the best way to obstruct would be to move the present motion first, and another afterwards, and so get a sort of double obstruction on. The hon. gentleman might as well begin now, for they on his side of the House had, he hoped, made up their minds that the want of confidence motion should not be withdrawn. It had better be discussed on its merits at once. The hon. gentleman knew very well what he was doing, and that his move was nothing else than obstruction.

Mr. AMHURST said that although personally he should like to see an alteration in the tariff, yet the leader of the Opposition had prevented him from taking steps in that direction by making it a party question. At present there was a motion of want of confidence hanging over the

Government, and it ought to be decided before anything else was done. He believed he was correct in saying that when the Bill for carrying out the intentions of the Colonial Treasurer got into Committee, opportunity would be given to discuss and alter the several items. He was glad the hon. gentleman had brought his motion forward in so straightforward a manner, and it was their intention that he should not withdraw it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that if any hon. member objected, it was no use discussing the matter, for it could not be put. He had never seen such a thing done before. If the Government, by an unfair and unusual use of the forms of the House, prevented further discussion, they would only provoke it elsewhere. He was perfectly sincere in the matter, and would once more ask the Committee to allow a thing to be done which had never before, in his experience, been refused.

Mr. FRASER said that although he had had no communication with the leader of the Opposition on the matter, yet he might state that he intended to move an amendment that the item of leather be allowed to stand unaltered.

The PREMIER said the hon. member would have an opportunity of doing so when the Bill went into Committee. It would then be competent for him to move that the item be struck out.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he thought it was of no use to continue the discussion. For his part, he wished to say a few words in connection with the Financial Statement, and on a topic which had not yet been touched upon. In order that he might understand whither he was going, he would ask the Chairman to read the amendment now before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN having read the amendment,

Mr. DOUGLAS said the amendment really brought them to the heart of the discussion in connection with the whole Financial Statement. The point upon which it turned was the questions raised by the hon. gentleman when he justified the application to the public creditor for such a large loan as that which was last year authorised. The justification for that loan and for the making of railways in a westerly direction was to obtain access to that western country which had been described over and over again as the great resource to which they must look in the future for building up the prosperity of the colony. The hon. gentleman (the Premier) staked his position as a politician and a statesman upon the necessity of as speedily as possible getting to that country and making it worth what it really was by giving access to it in the form of railways. Being legitimately asked to explain how he proposed to obtain the means to pay the interest on that indebtedness, the hon. gentleman replied that he intended to secure what he designated at the time as close settlement in the western district. Whatever interpretation might be applied to that term he did not pretend to say; at any rate, it might fairly be assumed that the hon. gentleman intended to get out of that country the means of paying for the outlay which he justified as the policy which at the time he considered was the one to save the country and to lead it on to prosperity. Throughout the whole argument in connection with those public works for which they now had to pay the interest they had been led to understand that they were to obtain the means of paying interest on that increased indebtedness, in some way or other, from the proceeds of those lands which were in that way to be made accessible. He assumed that according to the hon. gentleman's Statement there was now going to be an approach towards that, and that

he proposed during the current year to sell a larger amount of land than he had done during the past. That, he supposed, was the commencement of an attempt to carry out his idea of what he had designated as close settlement. As an alternative which might still be brought under their notice this session, it had been proposed to run a railway, not to be constructed by funds borrowed by the Government, but under the auspices of a company to be floated under the inducement of land grants. He had on two or three occasions during the debate appealed to the hon. gentleman to tell them something more about this, because their view of the future must be to a great extent influenced by their knowledge of his views on this question. But the hon. gentleman had not vouchsafed to enlighten them upon that point, and he (Mr. Douglas) therefore assumed that they were not going to hear any more about it, and that the hon. gentleman intended to fall back upon his original proposal which was authorised last year—namely, the construction of these trunk lines of railway. If that were so, then they were entitled to come to the conclusion that they must derive the means to pay for their increased indebtedness in some respects from this source. In reply to that, the hon. gentleman said he was going to increase their sales of land. He thought that was a subject upon which they might be enlightened by the Minister for Lands as to his views of their future land policy. In fact, upon an occasion of this kind they were entitled to an explicit statement upon all the leading lines of policy that the Government were about to adopt. He therefore thought they might very well be supplied with some information by the Minister for Lands as to where they were going to sell this land. They had been told that large surveys had been made in the Western Railway Reserve. Were these sales of land up to £170,000, or a portion of them, to be made there or elsewhere? That was information they were perfectly entitled to have, and he must say that on such an occasion and at such a time as this it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the Government might have come forward with something like a new policy upon the whole land question. He was quite convinced that it was time that that question was looked in the face. As he had previously said, there had not been a stronger Government in power, so far as numbers were concerned, than the present Government, for years, and they were competent to introduce a Bill dealing with the whole question. The indications that were pointed out in the report laid on the table of the House from the Under Secretary for Lands led him to the conclusion that some alteration in the land laws of the colony was inevitable. Already they had seen during the administration of this Government that the system of conditions as applied to land laws had completely broken down. Land grants had been issued right and left to people who were not entitled to have them in equity—people who had set aside the conditions of their land laws; and to such an extent had this been carried that he believed the present position of the question was such that the Government could not resist any man who chose to set aside the law in connection with those conditions—that the man who was willing to comply with them would do so, but the man who did not comply with them could defy the Government; and yet, so far as they could judge by the action of the Government during the last eighteen months, in due time he would get his deeds without having complied with the conditions imposed by law. As they had arrived at that stage they certainly had arrived at a time when they must amend and radically revise their whole land system. There, at any rate, would have been an opening

for the hon. gentleman which he might justifiably have availed himself of. The hon. gentleman had a strong following and a clear way for legislating in that direction, and therefore he should have brought under their notice the reconsideration of the whole land question. He found in connection with that, one of the indications of the failing prosperity during the present year. He found that there had been less selection going on this year than there had ever been since 1868. According to Mr. Tully's report, the land taken up under the Act of 1868 was for last year only 278,000 acres, which was the smallest amount since the year 1868. He did not know whether to ascribe that to failing enterprise, or whether it was to be ascribed to any defect in the existing law; but there was the fact before them that unsatisfactory results in connection with the lands had accrued during the last twelve months. The hon. gentleman had told them that they had a territorial area not exceeded in extent and pastoral capabilities by any other part of Australia, and he (Mr. Douglas) found that Mr. Tully, in his report, said—

"Judging by the accounts I have received from persons who have visited and inspected the Great Western Downs country, in the districts of Mitchell, Gregory, and Burke, which stretch away with scarcely a break to the South Australian boundary, I am satisfied that in no other part of Australia is there an extent of country of such superior quality in one continuous tract. All who have seen it speak in admiration of its wonderful grasses and herbage, and the general expression of opinion is, that it requires to be seen to be able to realise what it is like. This country will be a great source of wealth to the colony when fully utilised. At present the holders are storing water and fitting their runs for keeping stock on a scale commensurate with the extent and character of the country they hold."

That was the country which had had such an effect on the imagination of the hon. gentleman, and he (Mr. Douglas) presumed not only on his imagination, but also on his reason. It was a knowledge of the capabilities of that country which had induced the hon. gentleman to justify a large expenditure on public works; but it would have been a bolder, truer, and more honest policy if he had attempted to show hon. members the way, either by making use of the country by direct sales or by the application of some new system of tenure, by throwing open some portion of it to selection and by securing other parts under pastoral leasehold; how they might have seen their way clear to steer through the difficulties that were staring them in the face. Whatever advantage there might be in assisting to develop native industries—and there were no doubt advantages, it must be remembered that the small population of the colony prevented them from hoping to obtain any large increase of revenue from such a source. Even supposing they put on a heavy protective duty and attempted to raise their revenue from that source, the population was so small at present that they could not expect to raise sufficient to meet their engagements in future years. Therefore, what they must look to was their territory. In that respect they were in an entirely different position from the great colony of Victoria. In that colony they had disposed of most of their territory, and had to look to the industry of the inhabitants for a revenue. There they had a small territory and a comparatively large population, whilst here there was an enormous territory and a small population, and therefore they could not look to the people for a revenue. Then, again, they had an enormous public debt, incurred in carrying out large public works: and although it said a great deal for their credit that they had been able to obtain money whenever they wanted it, they must bear in mind that they could not go on borrowing for ever, and must show how they would be

able to pay the interest out of revenue. But the groove they were going in now was not only borrowing money for public works but actually paying interest out of borrowed money—that was the principle on which the hon. member was going, and the sooner it was brought to an end the better. It was manifestly one of the failures of the system which the hon. gentleman had fathered—to first induce Parliament to authorise large public works and then to borrow money to carry on those works without seeing how it was to be repaid. The hon. gentleman had made a charge against him of inducing Parliament to pass the Railway Reserves Act. He was not going now to defend that Act, but, at any rate, his Government showed the House the means by which what they proposed could be carried out—they set apart certain Crown lands and did not ask Parliament to let them go beyond their tether. It was altogether different now, and there was a danger of their going on with large public works without first seeing how the interest of the money borrowed for their construction was to be paid. He did not wish it to be supposed that he objected to carrying on those great works, but his contention was that they should first show from what source they were going to get money to meet the interest on their liabilities. If it bore seriously upon the industry of the country, they were doing themselves a great deal more injury than if they abstained from borrowing. They had better be without money than make up their minds not to find the means of paying the interest. As a people they could not afford to be speculators, and that was the serious objection he had against the present Government. Personally he had no feeling against the Government, and when he said, last evening, that he wished they were turned out of office he was simply honestly expressing his feeling. He had no expectation of taking part in any future Government, but he had an earnest desire to see honest men at the head of affairs, who would not commit the colony to the sort of speculative processes of Government which he feared were at present in vogue. It were better to carry on on a small scale based upon an honest and enduring foundation, but he could not feel that that was the case at present. He felt that the Government was in the hands of a set of men who were speculators on the prospects of the future, who did not put the real facts before their followers, and did not put them to the point. The position that an honest Government ought to assume before the House should be: Will you find the means of paying the interest on the borrowed money; if you do not, we will not borrow. He had no intention of making a set speech on the finances, but he felt the gravity of the position. He did not care a fig who was in office, but he did desire that those in office should recognise the gravity of the present juncture of affairs. They were approaching a time of great difficulty with regard to the finances, unless they dealt with financial affairs differently to what had been the rule in the past. He regretted that the Government, possessing as they did the power, had not taken better means to meet the exigencies of the case. The Premier had shirked his position on the very poor pretence that it would not suit his book so far as popularity was concerned. He had said several times that he was not going to take upon himself the responsibility of taxing the people, because he did not wish to attach the obloquy of doing so to his Government. It was no obloquy. It was simple justice and right; and if the Government had looked at it from that point of view, they would have recognised that it was infinitely better they should risk

their tenure of office and make themselves unpopular, than incur the odium of having adopted a line of policy which tended to lower the credit of the colony. Upon the merits of the case the House might ask for further information, both as to the transcontinental scheme of the Government, as set against the trunk railway policy, and as to the mode in which the increased territorial revenue was to be raised. They were entitled to ask how they proposed to obtain the amount. He would prefer to sell outright to the highest bidder, provided they could set their House in order and secure a sufficient territorial revenue to justify borrowing. Anything was better than the hand-to-mouth system now prevailing. There was a great opening now for the announcement of a different policy with regard to the sale and leasing of the Crown lands. At the end of last session the member for Blackall brought forward a resolution in connection with indefeasible leases. He did not believe in such leases; still the hon. member was supported by a considerable number of gentlemen sitting opposite, and it was generally admitted that it was to this source the colony must look eventually for additional resources to carry on public works. Such being the case, the proposal before the Committee entirely shirked the great question, and in that respect the leader of the Opposition was justified in taking up the position that he had. He hoped that in the course of further discussion a little more light would be thrown upon the position of the Crown lands, and the means in which they were to obtain the augmented revenue in the shape of sales of land.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not compliment the member for Maryborough upon the speech he had just delivered beyond saying that it was consistent. He had given the Committee no information, but, as usual, had gone right round the subject under discussion. He had endeavoured to find some substantial reason against the tariff in the different speeches delivered by the Opposition, but had not been successful. He believed, however, that they were quite sincere in expressing their disappointment with the Financial Statement, and their disappointment consisted in this—that there had not been a general increase in the taxation of the people. It was a very rare experience—he believed it was the first time in the history of the colony that an Opposition had been known to complain or find fault because an increase of taxation was not imposed on the people. And he hoped that the people would make a note of the fact, and not fail, the first time they had the opportunity, in calling to account the representatives who had made those complaints. From the course of obstruction that had been offered to the transaction of business this session, he was quite prepared to hear anything. Whatever was proposed from the Ministerial side would be opposed by members opposite. The Opposition was of such a blindly party character, that he believed if the Government proposed to build a church hon. members opposite would propose to build a brothel. He believed the gap between the two parties was so wide, and the hankering of the Opposition after office was so strong, that they would make use of any means to attain their desires. The speech of the member for Maryborough had mainly consisted of croakings and forebodings as to the gloomy times which were ahead. He would only say that if the calamities which had been pictured by hon. members opposite did not overtake the colony, it would not be owing to the lack of efforts on the part of the Opposition. During last session and the present they had tried their best to bring as much discredit and distrust upon the colony as they could, and

had not been particular as to the means they had employed. He need not refer to the institution, about which all sorts of intrigues had been entered into, and to the want of patriotism that had been displayed in obstructing the Premier in the floating of the loan, no effort being spared to raise distrust in the minds of the people at home, as well as in the minds of investors in Victoria and New South Wales. The Committee had heard a sermon about the great necessity there was for maintaining the credit and honour of the colony; but if the Opposition were as anxious as they professed they would not be so ready to sow the seeds of distrust and suspicion in the minds of the people with whom the colony had dealings. He did not intend to travel over the ground taken up by the leader of the Opposition, his speech having been completely answered by the Colonial Secretary. He never heard a more complete answer given to a speech; but there some remarks made by the hon. member in reference to the Lands Department which he would notice, and with regard to which he would give the Committee a few facts. The hon. member had alluded to forced sales of land. He did not know where the hon. member got his information from. He would only say that if there had been any forced land sales he should know about them. Any land that had been sold had not been forced, but on the contrary they were asked to submit it to auction, and in most cases the land sold was surveyed by the previous Government; they had put the country to the expense of surveying the land, but had left it lying. He believed there were 1,500,000 acres surveyed for auction purposes by the Douglas Government, but the Minister for Lands for the time being stayed his hand and the land was not submitted. And the surveys were made in such a way that if the land had been thrown open to selection the survey fees would have been lost to the colony in most cases. He did not know what could have induced the last Government to invest the public money in such a fashion. They must have had some intention of proceeding further, but apparently lacked the determination to do so. He could go further and show the Committee that, if there had been any necessity for arranging the finances through the sale of lands, not £75,000 or £79,000, but treble the amount could easily have been obtained. A great desire had been shown by persons in this and the other colonies to get land at a reasonable price, and they in many cases preferred to buy the land outright, when they became at once able to deal with it, or mortgage it as they chose, rather than select it and be hampered with conditions and put to the cruel expense of 10s. an acre for improvements. So that the statement of the hon. gentleman that the estimate of land sales would not be realised was an idle and groundless one. The estimate had been framed with his (Mr. Perkins') full approbation and consent, and he should not have assented if he had not fully believed that the estimate would be realised. A good deal had been said about forced land sales and sales of land in particular places, but in no case had land been sold which was suitable for agricultural settlement, except in the case of some isolated selections on the Darling Downs, which had been forfeited. In these cases the selections were in the midst of estates, and the majority of them consisted of that kind of prairie which selectors had complained of, and with regard to which a petition was some time ago presented to the House. He would, however, reserve his own opinion of the capabilities of this country for another time. Upon investigation it would be found that in all the cases of land sales, from 10s. to 15s. per acre had been realised in excess of the amount paid by selector in ten

years for a similar quality of country. To hear the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough, it might be imagined that the land when sold was packed up and sent away to the South Sea Islands or somewhere else, and a vacuum created in its place. Hon. members should bear in mind that a man who bought land could not afford to allow it to lie idle—he had to fence it and do a score of other things to make his investment profitable; and if the land did not suit him he would sell it to someone else. If a feeling of distrust were created there would be less inducement to invest, and the state of depression depicted by the hon. member for Maryborough would be indefinitely prolonged. He (Mr. Perkins) liked speculation, and he encouraged it; and he also encouraged settlement. During the time the Government had been in office he had been most anxious to keep the present selectors in the colony, in preference to searching for new comers; and in no case had a selection been forfeited no matter what the status of the selector might be, except where the selector had abandoned his holding and could not be found, or where the consent of the selector had been obtained. No matter what the circumstances might be, wherever the selector expressed an intention of paying, his selection was left untouched, and a promise was made to him that the conditions of forfeiture should be reversed if he carried out his undertaking to pay. If the Government had been generous in the way indicated by the hon. gentleman—though he denied that—at least they had been equally generous towards the selectors from the homestead man upwards. The Government had never been backward in offering encouragement to those who were already here or induced others to come into the country. Some fourteen months ago a deputation waited upon the Treasurer, urging the desirability of withdrawing the leases of runs in the settled districts from sale by auction, and stating that if they were all put up in one day combinations would be entered into, and there would be found some rings of which the hon. member for North Brisbane knew so much. The deputation further requested that the runs should be divided into sixteen and twenty-five mile blocks, in order that investors in New South Wales and Victoria might be induced to come here and compete for them. That took place in the month of June when he (Mr. Perkins) was away at Roma. Now why had the Government not been altogether successful in the sale of those runs? Under the 3rd clause of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1876 it was provided that the upset price of the leases of those runs should be £2 per square mile. The hon. member for Logan who formed one of the deputation was the Minister for Lands at the time when that Act came into force—namely, on the 30th September.

Mr. McLEAN: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Government was in office of which the hon. member was at one time a member. Had that Government been sincere in desiring to do what they wished their successors to do, they would have put that Act into force, anticipated the maturing of these leases, and advertised the sales in the papers; but they took no action whatever. They allowed the Act to remain a dead-letter, and a month after he (Mr. Perkins) entered upon office he found that the leases were expiring, and he was confronted with this Act, which required that the upset price should be £2 per square mile. The hon. member for North Brisbane would no doubt do him the justice to say that he left nothing undone to secure the full value of those runs to the State. They were offered on a certain day, and some were sold; the balance were

offered, and some more were sold, but complaints were from the first made about the excessive price. The country was then inspected by the most competent judges in the Department, and the runs were reduced to the smallest areas available and offered again. At the present time about sixty-three of the runs were unsold. There was a good deal of selection going on on them, and the present occupants enjoyed the grasses without paying any rent. Most of them were runs of very little value, and no one from the Southern colonies would think of coming up to buy them. They were a long way from being worth £2 per square mile, and any one who promised to pay that sum would do well to get someone else to find the money. The plan of cutting up into sixteen and twenty-five mile blocks had been tried at the last sale, and proved unsuccessful. It was, indeed, highly improbable that anyone would come from the other colonies for the sake of purchasing a five years' lease of a twenty-five mile block under great disadvantages and difficulties. All that was done in this colony was perfectly well known in Melbourne and Sydney, and, what militated against us, there was the belief in people's minds that when a change of Government took place certain people might get into the Lands Office, and then the first thing would be to wreak vengeance, and persons who went to solicitors who hadn't the right "stripe" would not be able to get their deeds. Selectors in that way were put to enormous expense, and if the banks did not assist them they could not stand it, whilst others who had the cunning to go to certain solicitors in Brisbane got their deeds without any difficulty whatever. Without going further into that matter now, he could assure hon. members that he was not afraid of any discussion or of any disclosures. At any time he should be ready to give the fullest information about any deeds issued, and the reasons for issuing them; and when the explanation was heard, hon. members who put themselves in his place would say that he had done what was right. There was another matter which he should not have referred to if he had not heard people who ought to know better doing so—and that was the cry that they should raise revenue from the waste lands of the colony, or, as it was popularly called, tax the squatters. He dare say that the majority of the people in the colony did not know the actual facts of the case. The squatters in the unsettled districts held their leases under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, under which their leases extended over a term of twenty-one years. At the time that Act was passed the colony was in a very gloomy state, everything was at its lowest ebb, speculation was at an end, there was very little trade, and people were wondering what was going to happen next. Prior to that Act being passed very little land was settled on, but after it was passed representations were made by people who knew the country which induced persons to come from other colonies to take up runs, and at the present time there was very little unoccupied territory in the colony. He was surprised to hear hon. members talking as loosely and as carelessly as persons who were in the habit of attending public meetings did. He was anxious and determined that settlement and selection should go on; but, whilst having that determination, he held that it was not desirable to interfere with the pastoral lessees until the land was actually wanted; he did not believe in interfering with them vexatiously, but immediately there was a *bona fide* demand for the land by selectors the pastoral lessees must move on. If it were within the power of the Government to blot out the Pastoral Leases Act or to terminate the leases, he had no hesitation in

saying—knowing as he did the trying ordeals which the lessees had passed through during recent years—that he would be no party to the act. The lessees had had great difficulties to surmount during the last three years, and he hoped that all of them, or the majority of them, would survive. The only way in which the land could be secured from the lessees was by their giving it up or by the Government resuming it; but if the Government resumed it, it would have to be thrown open for selection afterwards—they could not sell the lease to someone else, as that would be an act of repudiation such as he hoped no Government would ever countenance. One of the misfortunes of the country, and one of the things which prevented settlement and the investment of capital which was lying idle in other colonies, was the distrust raised in the minds of the people by the brawling speeches made and croaking indulged in in the colony—both inside and outside of the House. If he had travelled off the beaten track, if he had swerved to the right or left, it was in the direction of restoring confidence in the minds of people who were inclined to become permanent settlers and investors in the colony. The hon. member for North Brisbane talked about making an assessment of 2d. a head on sheep, which he said would produce a revenue of £150,000. He thought that six months' life on a station would do the hon. member good. The hon. member would then know the difficulties which the squatters had to contend with, and he would then in all probability come to the conclusion that men who exiled themselves and lived on the roughest fare for years were deserving of more consideration than he and his followers seemed inclined to extend to them at present. He did not believe in the contrivances which were used by the hon. member for Enoggera and his friends to bring a few idlers together to denounce the squatters. He denied that the honest hard-working men would attend such meetings, notwithstanding all the machines which the hon. member and his friends used to endeavour to run them in. The same class of men appeared at every meeting; the most of them were noisy demagogues who would not work. He believed that hon. members on the Opposition side of the House were never so disappointed in anything as they were in what had been served up for them by the Government. Knowing that there was a deficiency, they thought that the Government would impose a tax on flour, and that they would have piled on the taxes in many other directions. If the Government had done so there would have been some substantial excuse for Opposition members to raise a howl, and possibly there might be some of those spontaneous meetings which the hon. member for Enoggera talked about. Much fault had been found with the mode in which the Treasurer proposed to recoup the revenue from the Loan Fund, but if hon. members would look at the Railway Reserves Act they would see that the intention of it was very plain. The late Government surveyed a large amount of territory, and left as an inheritance about a million and half acres which had been surveyed. They managed to force sales of land particularly in the neighbourhood of Roma. People there were forced in self-defence to buy the land, and he was sure that many of them would rather have the money in their pockets now. It was said that the Railway Reserves Act was passed as a guarantee for the payment of loans on the assumption that when the land was sold it was lost for ever to the Crown. Surely, that assumption would not hold water for a moment. Was the land not as good a guarantee if not set apart as it was if set apart? Would it run away, or would it be washed away? Was the

security any better after the passing of the Act than it was before?

Mr. DOUGLAS: It made the land available for sale.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the land would be available for sale without the Act. To show that there was authority for the transfer of the £300,000, as proposed by the Treasurer, he would quote section 12 of the Railway Reserves Act, which said—

"All moneys derived from the alienation of Crown lands within the said several reserves shall be placed to the credit of the said accounts, and shall be applied in manner following, that is to say—

"Firstly. In payment of interest at the rate of £5 per centum per annum upon the moneys advanced by the Colonial Treasurer under the authority of the last preceding section to such accounts respectively.

"Secondly. In the construction of railways within the said reserves respectively, in such manner and in such proportions as shall from time to time be authorised by Parliament.

"Thirdly. In the repayment of the moneys so advanced by the Colonial Treasurer to such accounts respectively.

"And any surplus remaining after such repayment shall remain at the credit of the said accounts, and shall be appropriated in such manner as shall from time to time be authorised by Parliament."

Surely, that clause was explicit enough. What had happened? Railways had been constructed in the reserves out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and the Treasurer now proposed to recoup the amount as provided for by the section he had quoted. Could anything be simpler than that? Was it not a transaction which the merest tyro in finance would understand? Hon. members on the Opposition side had served up a conglomeration of figures, and one hon. member had gone so far as to estimate that there would be a deficiency of £600,000. That estimate was simply a creation of the hon. member's mind. He could not understand the hon. member for Maryborough, who might be considered the parent of the Railway Reserves Act, talking as he did before a body of reasoning men. The hon. member might have talked as he did to the people of Maryborough or Toowoomba if he wanted to lead them off the scent. He could not understand the hon. member for North Brisbane trying to mislead the public as he did. In a statement which he made last night about the state of things in New Zealand, the hon. member for Rosewood was rather disingenuous. The hon. member's statements would lead the House to believe that there were a number of distilleries in New Zealand when Sir George Grey brought down his tariff. The fact was that there were only two distilleries in the colony, one of which was in Dunedin. The distillery struggled for years, but it produced spirits which no one would drink. That distillery got £20,000, and the other received £7,000, compensation. The closing of them resulted in great gain to the revenue. They were like some institutions here—not good for the health of the community. One of them made a very good bargain by selling out, and was anxious to get rid of the affair some time before. Great expectations were entertained before when the distilleries were started. There was a differential duty—that on colonial spirits being 6s. a-gallon, and on imported spirits 10s. or 11s. a-gallon. But in the face of 4s. a-gallon protection those distilleries failed to remunerate their owners, who were only saved from total loss by the Government buying their property. The hon. member for Rosewood, instead of saying there were sixteen distilleries, might at any rate have stated the exact number. He (Mr. Perkins) knew one of these distillers, and his establishment had been turned into a brewery in Dunedin. There was another matter, about

which the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) had lost his temper. In answer to a question, the hon. member said, "If he understood the question;" thereupon he (Mr. Perkins) interjected that he did not understand it. Then the hon. member turned round and asked why beer was not taxed? He could tell the hon. member that beer was taxed—colonial beer was very heavily taxed; and he was surprised that a total-abstainer like him should not make himself better acquainted with the fact. Hops and malt were taxed, and sugar was taxed £5 a-ton. He had paid £1,300 duty on sugar last year because he was not able to get it sufficiently fine in the colony. As soon as it could be got in the colony as good as the imported article he would be ready to take it. In addition to the taxes on beer, the very cases in which hops were packed were taxed at the rate of 8s. each. The hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) told a story about malt, and said that the tax was taken off at home and consequently the price would be less here; but the fact was otherwise. The hon. member had read somewhere that a tax had been taken off, but that was the tax on malt required for home consumption. Exported malt was never taxed. If the Committee saw fit to impose a tax of 2s. 6d. or even 10s. 6d. on malt he (Mr. Perkins) should resign himself to his fate. He could get on as well as other people if a tax were put on malt, and if it were to be made a testing ground he was ready to discuss the matter. He would remind the hon. member that there were subjects which the hon. member for Ipswich knew more about than malt; and he had better preach temperance sermons, or talk about something he was acquainted with. There were many interesting things the hon. member could lecture about—such as the Sawbath or shoddy; but when he talked about malt he (Mr. Perkins) disagreed with him, but was quite ready to discuss the question when the proper time came. In the meantime, when it did not suit him to stop in the colony he could shake the dust off his boots and go. If hon. members were sincere and desired that the country should prosper, and that immigration should continue without any effort on the part of the State—if they desired that the country should become the paradise they thought the Government ought to make it, they would give up holding those idle meetings, and those letter writings, wire-pullings, getting up of disturbances, and putting distrust in the minds of the people, and discuss everything on a broader and general basis, and ask themselves what would they expect were they in a similar position. The hon. member for North Brisbane did not believe in what he was doing at the present time—his countenance showed it; but he was the unwilling bearer of the burden which unhappily fell on his shoulders. It was quite time to leave off playing at politics, and give attention to the best interests of the country, and recognise the situation that the Government had a majority and were not going to get out of the way. They had been told that they had a compact majority and the sooner the hon. gentleman came to recognise the fact that they on the Government side were the majority, and had the interests and destinies of the country in their hands, and were determined not to surrender the trust confided to them to the minority, the sooner would they get to business, and the sooner would the prosperity of the country return.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had no wish to intrude matters relating to himself on the Committee, nor would he have risen but for some observations made by the Colonial Secretary at an earlier period of the evening. He supposed he ought to feel complimented at his

observations being noticed by the Colonial Secretary; but he was not prepared for an indiscretion on the hon. gentleman's part like that to which he had committed himself when he went so far as to impeach the veracity of *Hansard*. It came with a very bad grace from those who were the custodians of the honour of the reporting staff to be the first to hold up their reports to the contempt of the public, by giving expression to the conviction that the reports were either deliberately falsified, or so carelessly taken as to misrepresent what was said. The hon. gentleman said *Hansard* misrepresented him when it credited him (Mr. Rutledge) with making reference to the fact that the Treasurer had taken a step in the right direction in imposing a duty of 2s. a hundred feet on log cedar. There were hon. gentlemen sitting near him, particularly the hon. member for Logan, who would bear him out when he said he was speaking in approbation of the impost of 2s. a hundred feet on cedar, but was proceeding to say that, notwithstanding the Treasurer had done that, it would be possible to evade the impost, inasmuch as exports of cedar could be made by cutting the logs into sections. The hon. member for Logan called his attention to the fact that the duty was 2s. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick. Unless the Government gave a definition of log cedar, seeing the tax was to be collected on log cedar alone—unless they defined that it should mean one inch thickness of cedar, the impost would be evaded. So far from the *Hansard* report being incorrect, it was correct in all particulars. He felt exceedingly mortified that the Colonial Secretary should stoop to the use of terms and the employment of a manner, when replying to arguments from the Opposition, which could not be otherwise than highly offensive, and would be regarded out of doors as highly indecorous. The language of the stable and the sty was language never heard on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. KINGSFORD said he sat near the hon. member, who most assuredly and emphatically found fault with the Treasurer because there was no duty placed on export cedar.

Mr. McLEAN said he interrupted the junior member for Enoggera when he was speaking on the previous evening; but, prior to the interruption, the hon. member distinctly complimented the Treasurer upon having imposed a duty upon cedar. The hon. member, as he understood him, was about to explain the possibility of the duty being evaded by the cutting of the cedar into planks, when he assured him that there was in the tariff a statement that the cedar was to be one inch thick.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for the Logan was endeavouring to get his friend, the hon. member for Enoggera, out of a difficulty at the expense of his own intelligence. The hon. member wanted the House to understand that he had read the tariff as though the duty were to be imposed on cedar one inch thick. The duty was upon log cedar. How could that be one inch thick? As he understood the hon. member for Enoggera, he commenced to censure the Treasurer for neglecting to impose a duty upon cedar, whereupon a member on the Government side of the House interjected, "Why, it's in the tariff," and someone on the other side also reminded the hon. member that he had committed an error. The hon. member blushed.

Mr. RUTLEDGE: I said the duty would be evaded.

The PREMIER said that the resolution before the Committee would be followed by a Bill which would distinctly define how the duty was to be exacted, and which would include provisions cal-

culated as far as possible to prevent an evasion of the tax. He did not wish to take the duty upon sawn timber, because he thought that some encouragement should be given in that direction; but measures would certainly be taken to prevent any evasion of the proposed duty by sawing logs into pieces.

Mr. PATERSON said he claimed to be a good listener, and he hoped hon. members would pay some attention to his version of what was said on the previous evening by the hon. member for Enoggera. The hon. member distinctly used certain words, indicating that he understood a duty was to be levied upon log cedar. The hon. member then proceeded to say that he thought the duty would be evaded, and at that point someone interrupted, and the hon. member became a little confused.

Mr. FRASER said he could confirm the statements that had been made by other hon. members sitting near the hon. member for Enoggera when he was talking on the previous evening.

Mr. PERSSE said he was also of opinion that the hon. member for Enoggera believed a duty was to be levied upon log timber. When it was pointed out to the hon. member that he was wrong in his supposition that the duty would be evaded he became confused, and was for once "nonplussed."

Mr. THORN said the Colonial Secretary had accused him of going about Queen street offering to give the tip as to the approaching alterations in the tariff. If he had cared to know what the Government intended to do, he would not have gone to Townsville to learn. He would not tell hon. members where he would go, but he would go much nearer home than that. He knew a long time since that the Treasurer intended to impose new taxation upon the people. Had not the hon. member been known to talk of a property tax and other taxation? He found that the weekly edition of the only Government organ in the colony—the *Capricornian*—referred to the subject in its issue of the previous Saturday. It was well known that the paper was owned by the Postmaster-General, and it was also known that the Government had squared that gentleman—who was, at the time, a defeated candidate—by offering him the office he now held. The fact that the Postmaster-General issued a newspaper would account—and he could account for it in no other way—for the insult which the Government had offered to members of that House by giving the Postmaster-Generalship to a defeated candidate. The leader of Saturday's *Capricornian* was evidently written by the Postmaster-General. He knew that gentleman's writing only too well. He wrote—

"It is well known that additional taxation is about to be proposed, and no one doubts that any fresh impost could be made the excuse for stonewalling measures."

It was never intended that the tariff which the Treasurer had now put forward should be the proposal of the Government. It was put forward at the last moment, when the Treasurer discovered his unpopularity, and it showed only too plainly, in conjunction with other matters, that the Ministry, instead of being a Ministry of action as the Colonial Secretary had styled it, was a most notorious Ministry of inaction. He had been a member of the House for many years, but he had never before heard the right of a member denied to withdraw or amend a motion. He was astonished to find that the Government were anxious to stifle discussion—he had given them credit for more common-sense. There would be other opportunities of raising the question, and he was only

sorry for the credit of the House that members on the other side would not allow the leader of the Opposition to withdraw or amend his motion. He had not been able to find anything about Financial Separation in the Statement. What did the Government intend to do with regard to it? For many years it had been a prominent question, and the present Minister for Works was one of the loudest in his demands for it. Why was nothing heard of it now? If the Government thought the North were satisfied with them he could assure them that they were mistaken. There were many people in the North as anxious as ever for financial separation, and yet, when the Government had an opportunity of bringing it about, not a trace of it could be found in the Opening Speech, the Financial Statement, or on the business paper. The only conclusion he could come to was that they were deceiving the people of the North. The people in the North would shortly look upon themselves as being deceived by the Government, and he would take care to show the people outside, who were interested in his speeches, how they were being humbugged by the present Government. It was evident that the Government did not intend to make any branch lines; and the propertied classes were finding to their sorrow that the Government were bringing the colony to grief—their mal-administration having driven both population and trade to New South Wales. He wished to see settlement attracted to the colony, but was afraid that so long as the present Government remained in office, so long the steady exodus over the border would continue.

Mr. FEEZ said the hon. member for Northern Downs presumed a great deal upon his popularity in the House, and no hon. member had obstructed public business to the same extent. When the session opened he announced that he should do so, and he had most conscientiously stuck to it ever since. If he thought that hon. members who had come long distances wished to waste their time in hearing a lot of arrant rot, he was mistaken. While he was not sorry to see the proceedings occasionally enlivened, he thought that a continuation of such speeches as that delivered by the hon. member for Northern Downs was nothing else than a continuation of stonewalling, of which they had already had quite enough. If such proceedings were continued, he trusted the House would sit till a much later hour of the night in order that work of some kind might be done.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that in his remarks last night on the Financial Statement, he took the liberty of suggesting a few articles on which additional taxation might be raised. In doing so he had used no ungentlemanly words towards any person; and yet for his trouble he had been severely lectured by the Minister for Lands. He had pointed out that imported beer would stand considerable additional taxation; but that, instead of being against the hon. gentleman, was in his favour. He also suggested a duty on colonial beer, but he did so without any personal ill-feeling. The language of the Minister for Lands was not only disrespectful to him, but to the House, and to the Opposition in particular. In short, the hon. gentleman's language was gross, insolently gross—language such as had never been heard in the House before. He was glad that *Hansard* had such a judicious chief reporter, for if the words spoken by the hon. gentleman were reported and sent forth to the country, his name would be branded not in Queensland only, but in all the colonies of Australia, and in England itself. The hon. gentleman pointed scornfully at the Opposition, and said that if the Ministry were to bring in a mea-

sure for the purpose of building a church, the Opposition would—well, he would not soil his tongue in repeating the words. It was shameful, in an assembly of gentlemen, placed here to represent their constituents, to hear language of that description coming from a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. SIMPSON said he had listened attentively to two or three speeches, but he was at a loss to understand what was really before the Committee.

Mr. GRIFFITH said hon. members on the Government side of the House seemed determined to meet every proposition that was made from the Opposition side during this session in the same manner. They did not attempt to meet it by fair discussion or fair argument. They were endeavouring so far as they possibly could to render parliamentary government impossible, for no matter what proposition was made on that side of the House, there were a number of members who came in and brought the proceedings of the House into contempt. He had heard them described as “larrikins,” and “larrikins” they had well been called. That was not the way to facilitate the business of the country, or to raise their own reputation, or the reputation of that House. It had been his duty in previous sessions to speak plainly when the proceedings of the House were disgraced by the conduct of hon. members opposite who behaved in the same way that they showed an inclination to behave this evening. Whatever attempt was made to discuss matters fairly it was met with the cry, “It is only another piece of obstruction.” He would like to know what sign of obstruction there had been this evening, except on the Government side of the House. There had been deliberate obstruction and prevention of fair debate on that side of the House. He (Mr. Griffith) moved a resolution that evening of very considerable importance, rightly called a motion of want of confidence in the Government; he was met first with an objection in point of form, then by the speech of the Colonial Secretary. Then he made a reasonable request—one that was never before refused in Parliament—and it was refused, the Government thereby thinking to gain some point; but he could assure them, as he had assured them before, that they would gain more by carrying on business in the ordinary way, by fair discussion between the two sides of the House, than by taking points of that kind. They would not prevent the discussion of the merits of their tariff any more than they could prevent the discussion of anything else. He was quite content for his own part to let the Government carry on business in their own way, to let them disgrace themselves as much as they could, to let them show their incompetency in every possible way, to let them show their determination that matters of the gravest public importance proposed by that side of the House should not receive that fair discussion they were entitled to. There was an impartial tribunal outside that judged of all these things—the tribunal of public opinion—of the constituencies. Hon. members on that side of the House could afford to wait. There had not been the least attempt by members of the Government side to discuss the question with the exception of the Colonial Secretary and Minister for Lands, who made fair speeches on the subject—speeches characterised by considerable ability. Beyond that there had been no attempt to debate the question on the Government side. If the Government were determined to adopt that course, by all means let them do it, but he (Mr. Griffith) was not going to allow the debate to close, amidst the shouts and jeers and noisy ejaculations of some

members on the Government side of the House, without saying what he thought of them, and he was certain that the public outside, and the Press of the colony, would be quite prepared to say what they thought about them. He almost wished he could show some excuse for hon. members opposite. Was it that they were ashamed of themselves and the Government they were supporting that they conducted themselves in this manner? Was it that they were all members who would be affected by the proposition he had made? Was it that they were nearly all pastoral tenants of the Crown, and did not like to see any of the incidence of taxation placed upon themselves, or were those bands of steel that the Colonial Secretary spoke of converted into bands of another metal? What were the reasons? He could only say that the obstruction would fall upon the heads of the Government. Really, the conduct of some members opposite was beneath contempt! He was ashamed that members of that House—that constituencies should be found in the colony returning members to the House who conducted themselves like some members opposite. He was not only ashamed but angry. He had been in the House for a number of years, and, until the advent of these men, he had never seen such conduct before. He was never afraid to speak plainly when occasion required it. Now, what reply had been made to the arguments he had adduced that afternoon? The Colonial Secretary, who was the only member who attempted to answer him, said he (Mr. Griffith) did not know all about the interior. Well, perhaps, he did not; he did not profess omniscience, but this he did profess to know—that £140,000 a-year was very poor remuneration to the country for the advantages the pastoral tenants derived from the State; and that they would have to contribute more there was no doubt. In previous years they professed that they would gladly bear additional taxation, and this year there was not a single member who would get up to attempt to advance an argument in opposition to his (Mr. Griffith's). He (Mr. Griffith) could not answer the Colonial Secretary, because he said nothing to answer. With regard to Customs, he (the Colonial Secretary) did not attempt to show that there were signs of increasing prosperity, or that the purchasing power of the people with respect to dutiable articles was likely to increase, or that there was any probability of a large increase of population. He believed there never had been a better opportunity than the present for the Government, by means of good legislation, to bring a large number of people to the colony from other colonies, and especially Victoria. A number of attacks had been made by the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Lands upon the public meetings that had been held in different parts of the colony, and the men attending them had been described as loafers and not working men in any sense. Well, all he could say was that, as far as he knew the names of the speakers at those meetings, they were all either hard-working respectable artisans, or mechanics, or men occupying an important position in the commercial world of this community. These meetings had been held at other places besides Brisbane, and he had a considerable heap of letters and resolutions in his chambers, not all in the same words but all to the same effect; and it was notorious that men who were the warmest supporters of the Colonial Secretary at the last election for Brisbane, and who were his (Mr. Griffith's) strongest opponents, had been continually pressing him to do all he possibly could to defeat the disastrous policy of the present Government. The hon. gentleman need not shake his head: it was a fact, and he (Mr. Griffith) had laughed to see

how the wheel of time changed things, that those who were the strongest supporters of the Colonial Secretary, and put him into the House, should now be a great deal more anxious than he (Mr. Griffith) was to see the Government defeated. It was nonsense for the Government to say that they possessed the confidence of the country. But that was neither here nor there with respect to the motion before the Committee. He had moved it because he thought it was right to place on record the opinion of the Committee as to where part of the money should be obtained. Upon the Opposition did not rest the responsibility of finding the money. He had brought forward the motion with the full concurrence of his party, and was quite content to let it go to a division now. It was not the first time that he had pointed out to the House one of the directions in which increased taxation must fall. When he said last year that the pastoral tenants would have to contribute a considerable share of the additional revenue that would be rendered necessary by the loan then passing through the House, the Premier did not dissent, but said it would be a reasonable proposition when the time came for it, and that both sides would probably be found working together. It seemed that the time had not come, in the opinion of the Government. Possibly it had not come in the opinion of the members of the House, but he was quite certain that it had in the opinion of the country at large. He did not desire to protract the debate. If the Government thought two speeches from their side sufficient, let it be so. If they thought the matter had been sufficiently discussed, and were satisfied to take a division and dispose of as much of their proposals regarding the tariff as was possible, he was perfectly contented. He was satisfied the Opposition had done their duty. He did not know whether all his friends were here or whether all the Government supporters were present, no arrangements having been made to secure a full division. He should not ask for an adjournment if Government thought the subject had been properly debated. He did not think that it had been—not that there had not been ample time, but because the Government had conducted the business in such an extraordinary manner that they had not allowed fair debate. He was curious to see how members would vote. They had seen members speaking outside the House in favour of the proposition that he had moved—he wondered whether they would vote in accordance with their utterances. He had not proposed to place upon the shoulders of one class all the additional taxation that he considered necessary—that would be unfair; the incidence of taxation should be equitably distributed, but he held that the pastoral tenants ought certainly to bear more than they did at present. He did not intend to speak again unless it was necessary to do so.

Mr. HILL said he should like to say a few words with regard to a remark made by the leader of the Opposition that there were some members on the Government side who were a disgrace to the House. He (Mr. Hill) was quite certain that no member on his side would ever disgrace the House so much as members on the Opposition side had done, or would show so much contempt for the Standing Orders and the ruling of the Speaker as one of the leading members of the Opposition had exhibited. The debate had been listened to with the utmost attention as long as intelligent speaking was indulged in. He was perfectly certain the leader of the Opposition had no cause to complain of the hearing that he obtained. The Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Lands were also patiently listened to, but when the member for Northern Downs, who had already spoken several times on the previous evening, went

in for lavish tomfoolery, which he said he expected would not be listened to inside the House but would be outside, how could members be asked to endure it patiently? In the House of Commons all sorts of measures were adopted to put down such members. He was very much annoyed that such an exhibition should be made by the hon. member after the intelligent debating that had taken place. There was nothing in his speech, and it had diverted the whole tone of the debate, and protracted the work of the evening. He (Mr. Hill) was prepared to speak upon the financial question, but after the desultory discussion of the previous evening it seemed to him that members did not intend to debate the tariff at all. The Colonial Secretary and Minister for Lands had already taken the salient points and dispelled the objections that had been raised by the Opposition, who, he could see, were annoyed at the absence of new taxation. He was perfectly satisfied that if any new taxes were brought in there would be some popular demonstration, and he was surprised that the Opposition had not got a spontaneous demonstration from the people to complain that they were not taxed. He thought the Financial Statement made by the Premier was a clear, sound, good, and wise one, and should imagine that after the way in which the Opposition hurled the Auditor-General at the head of the Premier last session, they must have been astonished to see his letter in yesterday's *Hansard* agreeing entirely with the Premier's proposal. If the position of affairs were as the Opposition had represented, and money had been taken from loan to pay off the deficit, it would have been the wisest thing to do in the present state of depression—it would have been wiser than to inflict additional taxation. It had been a year of great distress. The cry of the Opposition had been, "Put more taxes on the squatter." Why should not some of the taxes come upon the lawyers? They always raised the cry, whether it was because they had a grudge against squatters or because of political spite, or because a majority of the squatters sat on the Government side, he could not say. At all events, they were safe themselves—one could not say "tax the lawyers" because the people would have to sweat for it, law being quite dear enough as it was. As to the immense imaginary profits that had been made by the squatters out west during the past few years, he could assure the Committee they existed only in the minds of the Opposition and the outside public of Brisbane whom they deluded with these visionary schemes. Every shilling of profit that had been derived by the western squatters had been re-invested in improving the value of the Crown lands and in increasing stock. Not only that, many had been heavily in debt from the first start, and their debts had never been diminished, for as fast as they could extend their credit so had they extended their operations. He could assure hon. members that those squatters who were in the most embarrassed circumstances were hardly able to make both ends meet. Was this the time, then, to impose extra taxation upon them? He knew from experience that not only could they not make interest upon their investment or pay interest upon the debts they had incurred, but some pastoral lessees would have more than they could manage to meet working expenses and the annual rental. This applied more especially to the owners of cattle stations, cattle being an unknown quantity at present, there being no sale for them. He could not follow the statements of the leader of the Opposition relative to the number of sheep in the western districts, but he had seen an article in the *Courier* stating the squatters ought to have twenty-eight millions. There ought to

be that number, and if there were there would be no necessity to cry out for taxation. There would be money coming in every year for wool, &c., which would filter through every man's pocket in the colony. Was it to deter these sheep from coming into the colony, and this money which would be devoted to improving the Crown lands, that they were to begin taxing the pastoral industry at a time like the present when it most needed support? It was ridiculous. As to their taking any objection to the disposal of land by sales, the Government ought to sell as much land as they possibly could, so as not to interfere with legitimate settlement. There could be no fear from the growth of large estates, seeing that there were no laws of primogeniture or entail in the colony to perpetuate them; and the man who put a large amount of money into loan showed his trust in the integrity of future Governments of this colony. He was not a land owner, and did not propose to be one. One of the principal reasons which would deter him from acquiring land would be the fear of what some future Government might do, because he held that a man who invested a large amount of money in land put himself in the hands of the Government, bound almost hand and foot. The people could not be expected to give time and money and pay interest as well for works which were being made for posterity. So long as the colony got value for the money expended he had no objection to an extension of the system of public works. It was only through bad administration in the past that the finances had become embarrassed. There was, however, a hope that the present Government would have future loans intelligently expended, and on that account he should support them. As to the steel rivets referred to by the leader of the Opposition, it was the course of tactics adopted by him which had riveted the followers of the Ministry to them in a way which they had not been riveted before. He had every confidence in their integrity and their ability to carry out the works contemplated, and he therefore supported them.

Mr. FEEZ said, before the discussion closed he desired to enter his protest against the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. He had a high respect for the great ability displayed by the hon. gentleman, but he could not allow his charge against hon. members on the Ministerial side of the House, of obstructing business, to go unchallenged. The hon. gentleman should look on his own side, and read in *Hansard* the senseless repetitions which had emanated from his own followers, and he would then see that the charge of obstructing business could more fairly be made against his own party. He (Mr. Feez) had found on the Ministerial side men as earnest in their desire to promote the prosperity of their country as any he had seen in any House of Parliament, and the hon. gentleman was not justified in bringing a charge against them of obstructing. The hon. gentleman had moved an amendment which was entirely diverse from the views which hon. members on that side had expressed their intention to support. The hon. gentleman proposed a tax upon the lessees of pastoral holdings in the interior, and he had been distinctly told in the able and well-considered speech of the Minister for Lands that those tenants held terminable leases, and that until the leases expired the House had no right to impose additional taxation upon the holders. Under their present leases, the Crown tenants could not be expected to make improvements on their runs, or to increase their stock, because they were always liable to be interfered with in the occupation of their runs. The hon. gentleman's motion could not properly be called an amendment,

because it was entirely different in spirit from the original proposition, and hon. members who had expressed themselves in favour of the original proposition would be doing an injustice to a large portion of the country if they voted for it. They acted upon their convictions, and the hon. member was not justified in insinuating that they were less sincere than hon. members of the Opposition. The House had now been sitting thirty-six days, and during the whole time they had done nothing—they were still at the first act and had finished nothing.

Mr. DAVENPORT, who was very imperfectly heard in the gallery, was understood to say that he was very glad the Premier had adjourned the debate from Thursday night in order that hon. members might have an opportunity of thinking over the tariff proposals. Since then he had considered the matter and talked it over with several business men, and he could not but congratulate the Premier on the Financial Statement and on the means he had proposed by which to tide the country over the present deficiency. The alterations of the tariff were not of very great importance, but if passed through committee they would no doubt realise the expectation of the Premier. With regard to the larger deficiency, the House would probably agree with him that the Premier appeared to have only two courses open to him, either to increase taxation or to raise the rentals of the alienated land. The minds of the community were greatly relieved when the Statement of the Premier was made; and the proposals of the hon. gentleman had met the approval of the great majority of the thinking people of the colony. He had listened to the speeches made on the other side of the House, or at least such of them as were worth hearing, and had not heard any valid arguments against the proposals of the Premier. The leader of the Opposition proposed an assessment on sheep; but had the hon. gentleman been more intimately acquainted with the interior of the colony, he would have known that a stock assessment was likely to have the effect of preventing the country from being stocked. It was especially desirable that fifteen, twenty, or thirty millions of sheep should be depastured on the great western plains of the colony; and until that was done the country would never rest upon a sound financial basis.

Mr. DICKSON said the hon. member for the Leichhardt, and other hon. members, seemed to be labouring under a strange misconception. The Opposition did not ask them to support a resolution of this sort, but to discuss it, and that was the object of the present debate. Upon such an important resolution there should be a full discussion. The House had also a right to expect that the Premier would express his opinions at length on the subject, but the hon. gentleman had not risen. The resolution was an important one, not only as implying a vote of no confidence, but also as dealing with a fresh basis of taxation which the Premier and Treasurer of the colony should carefully consider. What would have been the position of this debate now if the leader of the Opposition had not introduced this amendment? The Premier was anxious that the debate should terminate to-night; but at a late hour last night the only Minister who had spoken was the Premier himself, and he pointed out with great propriety that his function was not to deal *seriatim* with objections and criticisms, but to reserve himself for the concluding reply, when he would deal with all objections that had been raised. The financial position of the colony at the present time was paramount to all other questions, and demanded not only the ablest consideration and attention, but also a loyal and hearty co-operation on the

part of the hon. gentleman's colleagues. A debate of such importance was not expected to be terminated without some other exponent of views of the Government than the Treasurer himself addressing himself to the question. He (Mr. Dickson) did not intend to enter into the merits of the question; but inferring that taxation would ultimately go in the direction indicated by the leader of the Opposition, he considered it incumbent upon the Treasurer of the colony to explain his views concerning it. He did not intend to delay the verdict of the country, but he would suggest to the Premier the advisability of adjourning the debate and allowing it to be continued to-morrow night, so that hon. members might address themselves fully on the important question which had been raised. The Premier must know that the amendment would be negative, but as a distinct change in the basis of taxation had been proposed—which if not assented to now would be assented to at no distant date—every facility should be given to discuss it, and possibly thereby the Government might collect a good deal of valuable information.

Mr. SIMPSON said he should not like the question to go to a division without saying a few words. He understood that the leader of the Opposition had moved what was virtually a motion of want of confidence, and he would say that he was not prepared to support it. The effect of the amendment would be to stifle discussion.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. SIMPSON said he was at a loss to understand what position they were in. While prepared to discuss the Financial Statement, and to disagree with the Government on several points, he was not prepared to vote against them on a want of confidence motion. He agreed to some extent with the Opposition with reference to the mode by which the Government proposed to get rid of the deficit. He would much sooner have seen taxes imposed. He did not think it was his duty to indicate what taxes should be imposed, but he should support anything which he considered fair. If an assessment on stock were proposed he should support it, on condition that in conjunction with it it was proposed to put on taxes in other directions. An assessment on stock would not only affect the squatter, but also a great number of other people. He might suggest many other taxes which could be imposed, and some of them he knew would be very unpopular. It struck him that the necessity for increased taxation might be obviated, to a considerable extent, by a reduction of the expenditure, and he hoped the time would soon come when retrenchment would be made. He should like to see a considerable reduction in the education vote, and he hoped that would be done when the Estimates were before the Committee. In the present state of the country he did not see why they should support schools to educate the children of parents who could afford to send their children elsewhere. He was quite willing that the State should support schools in which elementary education would be imparted to every child in the country, but he did not see why the State should maintain the grammar schools. He should not be sorry to see the State support withdrawn from them to-morrow. He knew that the maintenance of these schools by the State was believed in by the leader of the Opposition, who would be one of the last to consent to the withdrawal of the State assistance. To his mind there was no reason why those schools should not be kept by private individuals. A good deal of money might be made out of the postal service. Tons of newspapers were carried all over the country

free—the heaviest part of the postal business was the carriage of newspapers—and why should they be free from postage? Penny postage on newspapers could not be objected to as being unreasonable. In bad times like these they ought to go all round and see that everyone contributed a little to the revenue. He had every confidence in the Ministry: although they might do some things which he did not approve of, he believed their intentions were good.

Mr. GROOM said that he was not disappointed at the Financial Statement. In point of fact, he might tell the Treasurer that he had predicted that the hon. member would do exactly as he had done. He did not pretend to know the thoughts of the Treasurer, but from the course pursued by the hon. member last year he naturally concluded the same course would be followed this year. When he came to Brisbane last week and saw the storekeepers running about in every possible direction to buy tea and sugar for fear of additional duties being imposed, he thought to himself that they would be disappointed when they heard the Financial Statement. He agreed with the hon. member for Dalby that it was advisable that fresh taxes should be imposed. By neglecting to impose fresh taxes now they were only postponing the evil day. As sure as they were sitting there the Treasurer would have to come down next year with a comprehensive scheme of taxation. It was useless to talk about the turning point of the prosperity of the colony having commenced. He would say advisedly that the colony had not yet seen its worst days. He knew that in the Darling Downs district the farming industry was in a deplorable condition; hon. members could have no conception of the state which the unfortunate farmers were in. Many of them could hardly call the bedding they used their own; it was mortgaged to someone for the supply of food. There was a disastrous season staring the country in the face. Thousands of acres of land in the Darling Downs district had been sown with wheat in May, and there was yet no sign of the crops above ground, and they would not appear if the present dry weather continued. It was well known that the pastoral interest was likely to suffer in a similar way. In the present state of affairs he thought it impossible to form any idea of what the revenue would be. He had been in the colony for twenty-five years, and had seen it in a state of prosperity and in adversity. In 1866 there was a commercial crisis, when even the Government cheques were dishonoured, but during the whole time he had been in the colony he had never seen the farming community in the state of positive distress it now occupied. He was not altogether ashamed to say there was not an unmixed evil in the proposals of the Treasurer at the present time. The Treasurer had simply put off the evil, but they would have to face taxation to increase the revenue. Sales of land by auction he had always been opposed to, considering that it was a vicious system. He denied that the practice tended to settle the country or raise the revenue. In New South Wales there was at the present moment a large section of the community opposed to the sales of land by auction. When it was intended to sell 120,000 acres there lately a deputation waited on the Minister to prevent the sale; and the course originally intended was not pursued. Members on both sides were opposed to the system, and the Minister receded from the course of action he was about to take, and he was satisfied the next election in New South Wales would result in the return of a majority of candidates unfavourable to the sales of land by auction. He was sorry the Treasurer depended on land sales by auction to raise the revenue, for he had not advanced any reasons

which justified him in believing that the required amount of revenue would be raised by that means. He had no wish to prolong the debate, but should consider it his duty to vote for the amendment of the hon. member for North Brisbane as an affirmation of a principle, for the western districts could well bear a tax in the way proposed. If at the end of 1879-80 the revenue receipts as against the budget estimate showed a decrease of £175,607, he felt sure in his mind that unless there was speedy change of weather the deficiency would be very nearly doubled at the end of 1881, and the Treasurer of the day would have to face the deficiency. The proposal of the leader of the Opposition was a very fair way out of the difficulty which would have to be met. One word more. The Minister for Works had stated he was prepared to follow the valuation of the Divisional Boards. From his knowledge he could say that at the present time there were some Divisional Boards who were endeavouring to reduce the system to a perfect farce. Taxes had been laid in the most ridiculous manner. Of course there was an excuse. They said that in the present depressed state of the farming industry it was unjust to levy taxes, even with the certainty of getting £2 from the Government for every £1 raised. He would give an illustration which came within his own knowledge. There was an allotment of land at Cambooya assessed at £3. A twopenny stamp was involved in sending the notice to the owner. Yesterday morning he received another notice to say that the allotment was assessed at an annual payment of threepence, and that involved another twopenny stamp; so that fourpence was spent in order to recover threepence from the owner of the allotment. That showed the ridiculous way in which many persons endeavoured to administer the Divisional Boards. Although he opposed the Bill when it passed through the House, it was now the law of the land and it was their duty to accept the situation in the best spirit they could. At the same time, if one of those wet seasons should come—and which would, no doubt, be very acceptable—there would not be a shilling spent on roads in the large divisions. They would be able to collect £175, of which the clerk would receive £150, and £25 would be left for other expenses, to which, of course, would have to be added the amount received by way of subsidy. If the Minister for Works expected to arrive at a valuation of the land in such a district through the Divisional Board the idea was absurd. There were other matters he should like to refer to in connection with the Estimates. While the hon. member for Dalby talked about wiping out the grammar schools of the colony, he (Mr. Groom) would like to see one in every town of the colony that could afford to have one. The education vote was increasing, and it would have to be met sooner or later by an education tax upon the districts enjoying schools. He thought that was an undoubted fact, because the amount was assuming very large proportions for such a small population. With regard to the grammar schools themselves, the amount was small, and before a grammar school could be erected in a district, the inhabitants of that district must subscribe £2,000. Now, when they were liberal enough to subscribe that sum—in many cases at great personal sacrifice, it was surely only an act of justice on the part of the Parliament to give them a subsidy. At present, the charge for day scholars was £12 a-year, but supposing it was £60 a-year, there were people willing enough to pay it at the sacrifice of many personal comforts in order to give their children a liberal education, and those people should be encouraged as much as possible.

As the best mode of meeting the deficiency, which there was certain to be at the end of the year 1880-81, he should support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member who had just spoken had said a great many things he (Mr. O'Sullivan) strongly approved of. The hon. member had also echoed the opinions of the leader of the Opposition, and had told them that he should have preferred going in for a general and comprehensive scheme of taxation at the present moment; but he had given at the same time a very good reason why that should not be done when he stated that the agricultural and farming interests of the colony were in a worse position now than they were in during the crisis of 1866. If that was not a reason for not going in for what the hon. member called a comprehensive scheme of taxation he did not know what was. He had been a member of the House off and on ever since Separation, and he had read a great deal of what was done in the Parliaments in the colonies and at home, and this was the first time in his life that he had ever known a Minister to be censured for not taxing the people, especially when they were admitted to be in a worse position than they had ever been in before. He himself was suffering from the expenses of a very large family, and had never been in a worse position to pay extra taxation than at present, and he was quite sure there were a great many others like him. He thought with the small deficit they now had, if they let it stand over they might possibly in a year or two be able to pay it, for surely there was not going to be a continuation of the bad seasons they had had for the last three years. Such bad seasons had never been known to follow each other during his experience of thirty years, and certainly it was not a time to go in for a general and comprehensive system of taxation. He was not one of those who would wish to prevent the leader of the Opposition from introducing his amendment, and whether the hon. member did it purposely to prolong the discussion was no matter of his; but the hon. member had been rather more lavish of his censure of hon. members on the Government side of the House than he should have been when he said that some of them were a disgrace to the House. He supposed that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) came in for a share of that censure, but he knew he did not deserve it, as he had always tried to transact the business of the House in the same friendly spirit as the hon. member for Rockhampton said he had done. He was always a very attentive listener, and never interrupted any hon. member: at the same time, the censure had reached him, and he, whilst sitting on that side of the House, was willing to accept his part of it. But whilst faithful to that side of the House on which he sat, he should always be charitable to those hon. members opposite who differed from him. There was one hon. member, the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson), to whom he had listened for an hour or more, who blamed the Government for not putting on additional taxation, and there were other hon. members who spoke because they liked to see themselves in *Hansard*; but he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was one of those blundering fellows who tried to say what he wanted in as plain language as he could, and who did not care whether it was printed—in fact, he never read his speeches. The hon. member at the head of the Opposition seemed to get very hot, as he was disappointed in not being able to lay additional taxation on the people. The hon. gentleman only went in for taxing one class of the community at present, as he was under the impression that he could not carry a vote for general taxation. There was as usual a great deal of sense in the

speech of the hon. member for Dalby, Mr. Simpson. Some articles, perhaps, might be lightly taxed through the Custom House; but in the present state of the colony he preferred that there should be no additional taxation whatever. He believed that the Treasurer's plan for increasing his present difficulties was an agreeable surprise to the colony. He was not very much in love with the Premier; but he questioned whether they could have found another man in the colony who would have managed our finances, in their present condition, so ably as he had done. He was sure that the hon. member for Enoggera did not refer to him when he spoke of the empty benches which confronted him during the delivery of his speech. He always listened to the hon. member with infinite pleasure, and he knew of no man who could knock more sound out of nothing.

Mr. HORWITZ said the present state of the country was not at all favourable for the imposition of new taxation. When the three-million loan was assented to last session, however, he told the Premier that we should eventually have nothing to fall back upon but a tax on the squatters. He claimed to be an independent member of the House, and upon the present occasion he voted against the Ministry, because he disagreed with their proposals as a whole. Apparently the policy of the Government was to tax the farmer and selector, and to relieve the squatter who only paid about £5 for the lease of 100 square miles; and as an independent member—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Are you?

Mr. HORWITZ said it could not be said of him that he falsified his promises; and as far as the taxation of the squatters was concerned the longer it was deferred the heavier it would be. He objected to be dictated to by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. PRICE said he could not give a silent vote. He believed the intentions of the Government were honest; but he, nevertheless, sympathised with the leader of the Opposition upon the question before the Committee. While pursuing this course, however, he could not refrain from congratulating the Premier upon the sagacity he had displayed in refraining from the imposition of new taxation. In voting with the Opposition he had no desire to turn the Government out of office, because he believed that they might yet be made into a good Ministry.

Mr. GRIFFITH wished to ask the Chairman whether he would again put the question as to whether the amendment should be allowed to be altered?

The PREMIER said that on the question being put to the Committee previously, the hon. members for Mackay and Normanby objected to it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he simply wished to have it placed on record that the question had been asked and objected to.

The CHAIRMAN said the question had been put once, and objected to by one or two members on the Government side, and he could not fairly put it again.

Mr. AMHURST said he still objected to the amendment being altered or withdrawn.

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

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 27,

Messrs. Mellwraith, Macrossan, Palmer, Perkins, Beor, Feez, Norton, King, Amhurst, Stevenson, Hill, Perse, Kellett, Simpson, Baynes, Low, Weld-Blundell, Stevens, H. W. Palmer, Hamilton, O'Sullivan, Cooper, Archer, Davenport, Lalor, Swanwick, and Kingsford,

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Griffith, Garrick, Dickson, McLean, Thorn, Rutledge, Meston, Paterson, Fraser, Price, Horwitz, Groom, Macfarlane, Grimes, Bentic, Kates, Miles, and Douglas.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. KING said that before the question was put he wished to say a few words. Owing to the manner in which the amendment was put, no opportunity had been given for debating any of the items proposed; and as some hon. members, he believed, wished to propose amendments, he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not consider these resolutions in precisely the same position as if they had been carried in the House after proper discussion upon them. An attempt would be made, he understood, to alter the duty on leather, and he trusted the Colonial Treasurer would not look upon the matter as finally settled by the division that had taken place.

The PREMIER said he should like to have every item thoroughly discussed, and that could be done when the Bill was brought in. He might say that he did not believe in taking back leather into fixed duty, but of course it would be open to any hon. member to move a motion to that effect.

Mr. SIMPSON said he wished to draw the attention of the Chairman to what had just taken place. One member of the Opposition (Mr. Kingsford) had dared to vote according to his conscience, and in consequence was hissed by every member on that side of the House when he crossed over.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the OPPOSITION: No, no!

Mr. SIMPSON said the hon. member was hissed by nearly every member on that side, and a more disgraceful exhibition he had never witnessed. He himself was prepared to vote against the Government on certain matters; and was he to be hissed for doing so? He would again assert, on his word of honour, that nearly every member of that side hissed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the OPPOSITION: No, no!

Mr. SIMPSON said that not only was that so, but the strangers in the gallery hissed too. He did not intend to sit in the House and allow strangers to hiss, and he would call the Chairman's attention to the fact that there were strangers in the gallery.

By order of the CHAIRMAN, the gallery was at once cleared.

Mr. KINGSFORD said he regretted very much that the hon. member for Dalby had called attention to the fact that there were strangers in the House. He (Mr. Kingsford) should have been very glad if the whole of Brisbane had been present. He could not help expressing his regret that his old colleagues, with whom he had worked in that House for years, should have so far forgotten themselves as to hiss because he voted in such a way as to carry out what he conscientiously believed to be right. He stood there as a man, and he cared for no one living as to the consequences that might occur from what he was about to say. He said that after thirty years' of colonial life, in which no one ever brought a charge against him, he had been, under the auspices of the hon. the leader of the Opposition, treated in a most dastardly, cowardly manner. He said that there was no man in Brisbane nor in Queensland that had suffered as he had done during the last month—not that he cared for it; but it had been thought that it would wear him out. He had had men shake their fists in his

face in the street; he had been sworn at; he had been insulted up and down Queen street, and all under the auspices of the hon. the leader of the Opposition. And he said this—that although he knew he had, through carrying out the convictions of his conscience, placed himself in a position which was undesirable, and which he would have avoided if he could, yet he cared not for any consequence, and could still carry his head as he had always done as a colonist of Queensland; and he could stand in that House, or walk down Queen street, or any other street, with the consciousness that he had acted uprightly and conscientiously. From the first day he entered that House he had been thoroughly and firmly under the conviction that what he did was right, and why should he be hissed? But it was all of a piece. The present session was begun in a way that was a disgrace to humanity. The real business of the session was scarcely touched upon by the leader of the Opposition before he took it in hand to blast and blight and wither two men's reputation. He (Mr. Griffith) did not care what mischief he did so long as he carried out his nefarious ends, one of which was to supplant the present Ministry and take their places himself; and he (Mr. Kingsford) said that that hon. member's conduct, both to the Premier and to himself (Mr. Kingsford), had been not only unworthy of a gentleman, but utterly unworthy of a man. He (Mr. Kingsford) felt warmly on the matter, and spoke warmly, but he meant what he said, and he said this—that he could afford to wait, and should wait patiently and quietly until the tide turned. Nothing was ever further from his intention than to bring about the storm that had beat about him for the last month. When he went to South Brisbane a few weeks ago to meet his constituents, it was the farthest from his thoughts that he should meet the opposition he did. He stood high in their estimation from the first time he represented them, and he went there with a clear conscience, without a charge of bribery or corruption upon him or any statement that he had been bought by the Government. These falsehoods, and utter falsehoods they were, had been promulgated, and the result had been that to-night some of his constituents whom he recognised in the gallery, led off by the leader of the Opposition and those who were his toadies, hissed him because he did what he believed to be right. He was ashamed of it. It grieved him to the very heart to be obliged to separate his connection with the Opposition side of the House, or rather he should say from those gentlemen with whom he had acted so long. He from the first had been a faithful and true member of the Opposition side of the House. He had not sought his own interest. He could challenge both sides of the House whether he for a moment had sought in the slightest degree his own aggrandisement. He challenged the House, and now called upon the Ministry, faithfully and truly as in the sight of God, to say whether he had ever asked for anything for himself. So far from any bribery or corruption, not a word had passed between the Ministry and himself, collectively or singly, but what he had stated publicly before the world; and why should he be scouted in the streets and pointed at. The Premier had also been pointed at as the man who had robbed the colony of £60,000? and he (Mr. Kingsford) did not at all regret that he was now in very good company, and he believed that the time would come when both the Premier and himself would be clear of all these fogs and mists that had been brought round them—he said again—by the hon. the leader of the Opposition. He did not think it necessary to say more; but if the

Premier would make a three-legged stool and place in the middle of the floor he (Mr. Kingsford) would sit there; but they might depend upon it that, whatever the consequences might be, after to-night's transactions he should not sit on the opposite side of the House in the future.

Mr. HAMILTON said they had heard a good deal about disgraceful conduct, but certainly the conduct emanating from the Opposition side was the most disgraceful he had ever witnessed in that House. He recollected, too, that during last session the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) was guilty of such disgraceful conduct that it could not be reported in *Hansard*, and who was it that sat behind sniggering and encouraging him all the time but the hon. gentleman who now lectured them upon proper conduct? That hon. member even went so far as to insult members of the House by telling them that it would require a crosscut saw and pickaxe to knock sense into their brains. The hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith) had done that, and tried by means of the tongue of slander to damn the character of men on that side of the House, and walk over their blasted reputations into office. And who lifted up his mellifluous voice and echoed his leader's yelp, but the hon. member who sat behind him? Certainly those who lived in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he would like to know what the hon. member for South Brisbane, whom he (Mr. Griffith) was glad at last to see on the other side of the House, meant by first saying he had been hissed under his (Mr. Griffith's) auspices; secondly, what he meant by saying he had been insulted in the streets under his auspices; and thirdly, by referring to his (Mr. Griffith's) conduct towards him? He (Mr. Griffith) had not the slightest idea what he meant by these statements. He could not say he was guilty or innocent, for he knew nothing whatever about them, and if the hon. member was labouring under some delusion on the subject it was high time it was dispelled from his brain.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had intended to reply to the leader of the Opposition, whose remarks that night he considered only worthy of Billingsgate; but he excused him, as he knew the hon. member did not like to be beaten, and he let it pass; but things had now gone too far. He quite sympathised with the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Kingsford), although he was sure that hon. member did not require much sympathy.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that he believed the member for South Brisbane had acted conscientiously, and that he should not be received with signs of disapprobation by either side of the House. It was not creditable to hon. members, especially to the member for Gympie, to talk of the utterances of the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) as a yelp. Was that gentlemanly or was it grateful for the assistance that the hon. member had rendered last session in respect of several Government measures?

After further discussion,

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he would appeal to the good sense of the Committee as to whether they had not gone far enough. Would it not be better now to drop this personal discussion and go on with business?

Mr. FRASER endorsed the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley. With regard to the expression of feeling which had been made against the hon. member for South Brisbane, he wished to say that it had not the slightest sympathy from him. It was the first time in his remembrance that the galleries had been

cleared, and he regretted that the occasion should have arisen to make such a course of action necessary.

Mr. SIMPSON said it was the hisses from the gallery which principally influenced him in taking the action he had taken. It was bad enough to have mobs coming to the outside of the House without having them hissing inside.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he understood last night that the debate on the general financial question would be concluded to-night, and then the matter would be left in such a way that further amendments might be proposed. The debate upon what had amounted to a vote of want of confidence had been initiated and concluded in one night; he now wished to say something on the subject of the tariff which as yet had been hardly touched upon.

The PREMIER said the Committee had affirmed that the words proposed to be omitted should stand part of the question. The rest was merely a formal matter, and when the resolution was carried a Bill would be brought in to carry that resolution into effect. If the hon. member had any objection to any duty under consideration, it would then be quite competent for him to move an amendment.

Mr. KING said he would point out that the Colonial Treasurer was correct as far as this resolution went, yet the House being now in Committee of Ways and Means, it was competent for any hon. member to move an addition or another resolution, which he could not do after the resolution had passed this stage. As the hon. gentleman was aware, some hon. members were prepared to test the opinion of this Committee by moving certain resolutions affecting duties upon articles not mentioned in the resolution before the House now. The fact that this resolution could not now be amended did not affect the right of hon. members to move other resolutions not yet submitted to the Committee. He would therefore ask the Treasurer, if this resolution were carried, not to consider the Committee of Way and Means closed, but to allow it to sit again to further consider the tariff before a Customs Duties Bill was brought in. Otherwise, if there were any resolutions to be proposed they would have to be moved now.

The PREMIER said he had no intention of allowing the Committee of Ways and Means to drop. When this resolution was carried he should move that progress be reported. He could not, however, promise to give up another Government day to consider the alteration of the tariff: he was bound to get on with the Government business.

Mr. KING said unless the Premier gave hon. members an opportunity to introduce the amendments they desired in Committee of Ways and Means in time to have them incorporated in the Customs Bill, there would be no chance of making any alterations. Therefore, if no arrangement were come to hon. members would have to move their amendments to-night.

The PREMIER said if hon. members liked to go on with Committee of Ways and Means to-morrow, after the private business was disposed of, he should have no objection.

Mr. GRIFFITH said if he had understood that the debate was to close to-night he should have taken the opportunity of going into matters of detail. The question of equalising the excise duties was a very serious matter, and he had not yet had any opportunity of stating his opinion upon that. He should also like to say something about the leather duty. Those were the only items he desired to speak about. The Government, it appeared, had attempted to steal a march upon the Opposition by getting hon.

members to object to the question being put in the usual way. What he was addressing himself to now, however, was only a matter of the conduct of business.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for North Brisbane was in error in saying that the Government had put up a member to object to the form of his amendment being altered. The business of the House would be facilitated considerably if the hon. member would not insist on making unwarrantable insinuations.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he should like to know whether the Committee had not already affirmed the resolution?

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee have so far affirmed the resolution that it cannot be altered; but it is not yet carried.

After some further discussion on the order of procedure,

Original Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-day.

The House adjourned at a quarter-past 1 o'clock a.m.