

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 1 OCTOBER 1880**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Friday, 1 October, 1880.*

Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment.—Supply.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 10 o'clock.

## FORMAL MOTION.

Mr. AMHURST moved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide a Parliamentary Draughtsman and a Junior Counsel to the Crown.

Question put and passed.

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. WALSH said he wished to call the attention of the Colonial Secretary to the position of the settlers in the vicinity of Cairns. He had just received a telegram from a constituent at Cairns that a settler there had had his stock speared by blacks. It was a strange fact that the blacks in that district were now as bad as they were during the early days of settlement. Although police had been placed there at an enormous cost—and the officers were as good as, if not better than, those in any other part of the colony—yet there seemed to be no hope of getting the blacks pacified and preventing them from committing depredations. It had long been an idea of his that some effort ought to be made to bring them in and explain to them that if they would not molest settlers and their stock they would not be shot down. The only idea the blacks seemed at present to have was, that if they did not kill the white men the white men would kill them at the first opportunity. If it could possibly be explained to them that they would be allowed to live in peace, and that their hunting grounds would not be interfered with if they refrained from killing white men and their stock, it would be a great blessing to all concerned. If that were not done, the necessity for increased police protection was urgent. He moved the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said the subject had been brought to his notice before, and every attention had been given to it. It was simply impossible to provide police protection to every man who happened to have a milking cow.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said that as he had a motion on the paper in connection with the native police question he did not propose to discuss it on the present occasion. But he hoped the Colonial Secretary was really becoming aware of the fact that that question must be met in some way or

other. It was not only attracting attention here, but also in the neighbouring colonies. He had observed lately a very interesting series of papers in the *Sydney Morning Herald* with reference to the natives in the far north. Those letters were most dispassionately written; they gave both the native police and the settlers' side of the question; and he would advise hon. members who took an interest in the subject to read them. They were admirably written, and evidently came from the pen of an impartial observer. The question had to be met, and he should direct the attention of the House to it at some little length on a subsequent occasion.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

### SUPPLY.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) moved that the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. DICKSON said that before the House went into committee there were one or two matters on which he required information. He would first call the attention of the Premier to the very great inconvenience that would be inflicted on the public by the removal of the Savings Bank to the offices in the Treasury square formerly occupied by the Harbours and Rivers Department—premises that were dilapidated and even unsafe for occupation, and which were most inconvenient for the general public, who had transactions at the Savings Bank. The Savings Bank had become a very large institution, and if the Government did not possess suitable offices in a central position they ought to rent a temporary place where the business of the bank could be carried on—more especially as the transactions of the bank were remunerative and increasing. He trusted the Premier would consider the matter, and see that a central site was obtained in the city, instead of the unsafe and highly inconvenient premises in the corner of the Treasury square. There was another matter which had not yet received consideration from the House, though it had been recommended in the Auditor-General's report. Matters of great importance often cropped up in connection with that report which were not considered by the House, owing, most probably, to the pressure of other business. Still, it was desirable to give attention to the recommendation of a responsible officer of Parliament. The question to which he particularly wished to refer was the safe-keeping of Government securities. In the report there was a lengthy correspondence between the Auditor-General and the Acting Colonial Treasurer (the Postmaster-General) on the subject. In a letter dated the 13th January, the Auditor-General wrote:—

"Coming, however, to the real question for consideration, viz., the safe custody of Government securities in the future, I am aware that the iron safe in which the debentures are now deposited is bricked into a partition wall, with the door only exposed. The extra security afforded by this brickwork, however, is very slight indeed, and would offer no obstacle to experts with proper appliances, should any such obtain entrance to the manager's room. This room, I may remark, is on the ground-floor of a building which was not erected for a bank, and which, so far as I am able to judge, is by no means unusually secure.

"With respect to the statement that the debentures lodged in the bank are not negotiable, I beg to draw your attention to the schedule contained in my letter to you of the 7th instant, which clearly indicates which of those debentures are endorsed 'non-transferable,' and which are not so endorsed.

"The debentures held by the bank are as follows:—

Transferable by delivery	...	...	£121,300
Non-transferable	...	...	606,000

£727,300

"Not only, therefore, is the value of the negotiable securities in the hands of the bank very considerable, but I apprehend that the loss of those bearing the

endorsement 'non-transferable' would cause very great anxiety and inconvenience to the Treasury, and bring discredit on all concerned.

"In conclusion, I beg to observe that, having made the representation to the Government which I considered it my duty to make, I should be quite prepared to submit to your judgment in this as it is my wish to do in all other matters, but that your decision is evidently based on the assumption that none of the debentures now with the bank are transferable by delivery, which supposition I have shown to be incorrect.

"I respectfully suggest, therefore, that considering the great importance of the subject, and having regard also to the proviso attached to clause 2 of the Savings Bank Act of 1870, the question be submitted for the consideration and decision of the Governor in Council, as by that Act provided."

He did not intend to read the whole of the correspondence, but he thought he was justified in asking the Premier if he had inspected the safe or depository in which those securities were held. The correspondence concluded with the examination of an expert who had been accustomed to opening fire-proof safes, and that examination was contained in the following letter of the Auditor-General, dated January 22nd, 1880:—

"SIR,—Referring to your letter of the 17th instant, I beg respectfully to observe, in justification of the course suggested by me, but without any desire to re-open a question which you have apparently settled, that the Executive minute to which you doubtless refer in your letter under acknowledgment does not in any way deal with the manner in which Government debentures shall be kept by the bank, but simply directs that certain debentures therein referred to shall be transferred for safe custody from the late bankers of the Government to the Queensland National Bank (Limited), and consequently, in my opinion, to some extent falls short of the requirements of that portion of the Savings Bank Act of 1870, to which, in my letter of the 13th instant, I did myself the honour to invite your attention.

"I have, &c.,

"W. L. G. DREW,  
Auditor-General.

"P.S.—The accompanying questions and answers relative to the opening of fire-proof safes may interest you.

"W. L. G. D."

### QUESTIONS.

Auditor-General:

Your name is Frederick Cooper? Yes.

Do you remember opening a fire-proof safe for me, at the old Treasury, many years ago? No, I do not remember. I have opened several fire-proof safes in Brisbane and other places during the last thirteen years.

How many do you think you have opened? I should say, altogether, about fourteen or fifteen.

Where do you usually open these safes from, and how? I have opened all these safes from the door; usually by drilling.

How long does it take to open a safe? I have opened a Milner's fire-proof safe in half-an-hour. A Tann's safe, belonging to one of the banks, took me, about a year ago, a day and a-half to open.

How do you account for the difference in time taken? Tann's safes have an improved steel drill-proof plate which prevents the drill reaching the rivets.

What do you think a fair time required for opening a safe? I should say about three hours.

Can safes be opened noiselessly? I do not think they can. I have heard that experts can do so, but I doubt it.

Would a safe being bricked into a wall make it more difficult to open? It would depend upon the position of the safe. If a safe were built into a passage wall, the opposite wall would afford a good rest for the drill; but the object of building safes into a wall is usually as a protection in the event of fire.

Have you opened safes in front from choice, or with a view to more readily repairing them? I have always opened safes from the front with a view to repairing them; but, apart altogether from the question of repair, I should still open them from the front from choice.

His object, however, was to direct the Premier's attention to the fact that there was a possible insecurity in the custody of those securities, and although the bank might do everything in its power to protect them, yet it was the duty of the Premier, on the recommendation of the Auditor-General, and in the interests of the colony, to render them additionally secure and quite free from all risk. Those remarks were justified by the fact that securities to the amount of £121,300 were actually transferable, and if any accident occurred through fire or thieves—even if no loss was actually sustained by the Government, yet grave inconvenience would arise through their being out of the proper custody of the Government. It would be as well if those debentures were also made non-negotiable by endorsement.

The PREMIER said the convenience of the Government, as well as that of the public who lived in Queen street and the Valley, ought to be consulted as to the position of the Savings Bank. The hon. gentleman said that in its new position it would be a great public inconvenience; but it had been removed only about 300 yards, and it was close to the Treasury. That was a convenience to the public, and a still greater convenience to the Treasury. It might be slightly more inconvenient to people living in the Valley, but it would be much more convenient for those living in South Brisbane. To say that it was away from the centre of the city was a little too forced altogether. They could not afford a new building at the present time, and he saw no reason why they should erect one, there being plenty of accommodation in the building proposed to be used. As to the question of the security of the deposits in the Queensland National Bank, he had to inform the hon. gentleman that he had not himself made an investigation especially with a view to deciding the question raised between the Treasury Department and the Auditor-General. He knew the place where the securities were deposited, and he quite agreed with the Under Colonial Treasurer and the Acting Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Buzacott) that they were reasonably safely deposited, and that there was no ground whatever for the Auditor-General's complaint. His complaint summed up was that not only should they be deposited in a secure steel safe, but that the safe should also be in a strong-room. That was an additional expense which the Government ought to bear, because there was no obligation on the bank to hold the securities. Mr. Buzacott, who was acting for him, investigated the matter; and he said in a letter to the Auditor-General—

"I find, on inquiry, that a portion of the debentures are not endorsed as previously stated; but, as the present arrangements have already been sanctioned by the Governor in Council, and as in my judgment the debentures as now kept are perfectly safe, I am unable to advise further action."

Mr. Buzacott examined the place, and in his judgment it was perfectly safe for the custody of the securities. He (Mr. McIlwraith) agreed with that opinion, and did not think that the Government would be justified in going to more expense. The securities were safer now than they were before, there being better accommodation in the Queensland National Bank.

The HON. J. DOUGLAS said he was quite sure the change from the present locality of the Savings Bank to the very small building about to be appropriated near the Treasury would not be advantageous to the public. He did not say that the position of the Treasury square would not ultimately be convenient for the Savings Bank, but he did say that the little hovel used by the Harbours and Rivers Department which was to be adopted for the Savings Bank was a

very unsuitable place. On certain occasions a large number of people resorted to the Savings Bank, and it ought to be a matter of special care on the part of the Government to provide suitable buildings. He admitted that the change from the present locality might temporarily cause a little inconvenience, which the public would possibly not be unwilling to put up with, but he hoped it would not be a permanent arrangement. It would be infinitely better for the Government to have rented an ordinary shop in Queen street, as on Saturdays a large number of customers had to be accommodated. The present office would be quite unsuitable, and did not afford the ordinary decent accommodation which the public required. He protested against sufficient accommodation not being provided for the Savings Bank, which was one of the most important branches of the Treasury. The corner of Queen and George streets, at present occupied by the Real Property Office, would be a suitable place, and he held that that office could be accommodated elsewhere, probably in another corner of the Treasury square. He would go further, and say that sufficient and proper accommodation ought to be provided for the custody of our securities. Even admitting that the accommodation now provided by the Queensland National Bank was superior to that afforded by the Union Bank, he would point out that the Auditor-General clearly stated that it was not so good as it ought to be; and the Auditor-General had simply done his duty by drawing the attention of the Government and Parliament to the matter. It appeared that at the time he drew attention to the matter, £727,000 worth of debentures and securities—a considerable proportion of which were negotiable, being transferable on delivery—were held by the bank. No effort should be spared by the Government to provide the very best safe-keeping for the colony's securities. He did not see why they should not hold their own securities. The Premier had said, and he was surprised to hear the statement, that the National Bank did not hold itself responsible for the custody of the documents. If it did not he certainly—

The PREMIER: I beg to correct the hon. gentleman: I made no such statement.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he regretted that he should have misrepresented the hon. gentleman, but he gathered from the correspondence that the bank was not actually responsible, and of course it would be impossible to make it responsible for the custody of the debentures if they were stolen. The Auditor-General drew attention to the fact in a letter dated January 13, 1880. He asserted that the extra security afforded by the brickwork surrounding the iron safe in which the debentures were deposited would offer no obstacle to experts with proper appliances, should any such obtain entry to the manager's room; and he pointed out that the bank held £121,300 worth of debentures, which were transferable by delivery, and £606,000 worth which were non-transferable. Mr. Drew went on to say that not only, therefore, was the value of the negotiable securities in the hands of the bank very considerable, but he apprehended that the loss of those bearing the endorsement "non-transferable" would cause very great anxiety and inconvenience to the Treasury and bring discredit on all concerned. He further observed that, having made the representation to the Government which he considered it his duty to make, he should be quite prepared to submit to the Colonial Treasurer's judgment in this, as it was his wish to do in all other matters; but that the Treasurer's decision was evidently based on the incorrect assumption that none of the debentures now with the bank

were transferable by delivery. He therefore respectfully suggested that, considering the great importance of the subject, and having regard also to the proviso attached to clause 2 of the Savings Bank Act of 1870, the question should be submitted for the consideration and decision of the Governor in Council, as by that Act provided. Then they found that the Government did nothing more in the matter, but took their stand upon an Executive minute of September 24, 1879, for the transfer of the securities to the Queensland National Bank. He looked upon the Savings Bank as, in truth, a national bank of deposit, and he was not certain that it ought not to be made a bank of issue as well. He hoped the Premier would reconsider his statement that it was not necessary to provide for the Savings Bank in a building suitable for the purpose. If they were to go on occupying the miserable hovel referred to it would be not only inconvenient to the public, but insecure even for the money taken daily. He trusted, therefore, that the hon. gentleman would give his attention to the subject, and really come to some decision as to the situation and character of their future savings bank. The buildings should be sufficiently substantial to hold the colony's securities. They should not delegate their responsibility to anyone. If they could not get anybody to make themselves responsible for their securities, then they should undertake the custody themselves, and provide the best means of protection against robbery. Attention had been called to the fact that the safe might be invaded, and they knew that skilful burglars were at times about. He would urge upon the Government even now to take action, and not transfer the Savings Bank to the small rooms occupied by the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, as he understood was proposed. They had better take a shop or building in Queen street readily accessible to the public. They were bound to meet the convenience of the large number of customers that the Savings Bank had, and, besides, it would be good policy to do so. On the whole, the correspondence bore evidence of the Auditor-General's attention to his duties, and there was nothing in it which was offensive to the Government. Mr. Drew merely discharged what he conceived to be his duty, and the mere fact that he was an officer appointed by Parliament ought to justify the Government in going rather to the extreme in the way of meeting his representations even if they did not agree with it. They were bound as the servants of Parliament, and in respect to the position which the Auditor-General filled as an independent officer of Parliament, to act up to his representations as far as they possibly could in the interests of the public.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly not.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the hon. gentleman's view was a mistaken one. In a matter of this kind, when the Auditor-General drew the attention of the Government and Parliament to a matter which he considered was within his province, it would be sound policy to act upon his representation, even if Government did not entirely agree with him. He did not mean to say that in all matters of policy connected with finance they should do so, but in matters of account and matters of the sort under discussion, and such matters as were defined by the Audit Act, it would well become the Government to pay great respect and attention to any representations coming from the Auditor-General, who was the trusted servant of Parliament, and was quite as much entitled to respect as Parliament, even, in its corporate capacity. He therefore regretted that his representations on this particular matter had not been attended to, and thought that the

member for Enoggera had done good service by drawing the attention of the Government to it. It had also been pointed out to him that these transferable debentures still remained in that state. That was a position in which they ought not to stand, and in connection with the subject he might as well draw attention to the fact that the very holding of transferable debentures in this form was particularly unsatisfactory. He observed that correspondence had lately been laid upon the table of the House in reference to the inscription of stock, which persons holding debentures for any length of time were anxious to secure. He did not know whether the Premier's attention had been called to the subject when he was in England, but here clearly was an instance where some form of inscription would be exceedingly desirable. These debentures were held as permanent security on behalf of the Savings Bank, and they ought to be held as in some way inscribed for that purpose. In this way they might well commence—as they should eventually have to do with regard to their stock and debentures in London—to adopt a system which would probably be recognised before long in the United Kingdom. There was something spoken of an Act under which it was possible to secure the transfer of debentures into inscribed stock, and their re-transfer into ordinary stock. On that point it was desirable that some information should be given when the House went into committee. He would, however, take this opportunity of expressing his opinion that there was no necessity for pressing on the voting of Supply as it had been pressed on lately. There were some matters which must be dealt with deliberately and settled before the session closed, and it was not politic for the Premier to force on questions connected with the Estimates. Business would not be facilitated by the adoption of such a course of action. The Estimates would, no doubt, pass without much difficulty when other and infinitely more important business had been satisfactorily disposed of; but until that had been done, and real progress had been made with some other matters, the Estimates would not pass in the satisfactory manner that the Government, no doubt, desired they should. The session was undoubtedly not going to close until those matters had been thoroughly discussed and decided upon. He had no need to refer at any great length to the present position of the Government as affected by the question of the tenure by which both the Premier and the Colonial Secretary held their seats in the House. He extremely regretted that his representations upon the subject had not been taken up by the hon. gentlemen on the Ministerial side. The view he had taken was so decidedly hostile that probably nothing he could suggest could be effectually carried out, but the same thing did not hold good in the case of many hon. members opposite. It would have befitted the honour of Parliament, and very much increased the probability of business being satisfactorily disposed of, if this business had been taken in hand by hon. members known to be not unfriendly to the Government. Nothing the Opposition could do, tainted as their action would be by their unfriendly attitude to the Government, could amount to more than an expression of their opinion. The matter unquestionably affected the position of the Government, and it ought to have been dealt with by Parliament and not altogether relegated to another tribunal. The reason why it had been so relegated was that to a great extent the Opposition were incapacitated by their numerical weakness from dealing with the question as it ought to be dealt with. There might be shades of opinion as to the legal right of the two hon. gentle-

men referred to to retain their seats in the House, but there could be no doubt that there were grounds for an investigation by the Committee of Elections and Qualifications, and the responsibility for the absence of such investigation must devolve upon hon. gentlemen opposite. The facts of the case had been laid bare, and, if hon. members chose to be blind to those facts, they should remember that the public knew that Parliament were well aware of the tenure by which those two hon. gentlemen at present held their seats. It was impossible that those matters could be left surrounded by doubt; they must be settled while Parliament was sitting, or Parliament would have wilfully abdicated the functions attaching to it. Those and other weighty matters would have to be dealt with before the business could be advanced to a sufficient stage to enable hon. members to look forward to the close of the session. It was, therefore, not probable that the Estimates would be proceeded with with any degree of alacrity until the Opposition saw a genuine desire on the part of hon. gentlemen opposite to close with them on the subjects now under their consideration. He hoped it would be clearly understood that, however desirous the Opposition might be that the session should close, they were anxious that the real business should be considered before the Estimates were proceeded with.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said he thought the House was going to be treated to the usual Saturday stew by the hon. gentleman; they had a narrow escape from having it on the black question. The hon. gentleman was not to be baulked; he was determined to waste time, as he had done all this session, and air his opinions on every subject that could be conceived. It struck him that the hon. gentleman must forget that he was not a member of the Ministry just at present; he seemed to think that his view, and his idea, and his conception ought to be carried out by the Ministry in every possible way. Even a savings bank was to be conducted in the way which suited his ideas; nothing would satisfy him short of having all his ideas thoroughly carried out. He could only tell the hon. gentleman that while the present Ministry held their seats—and he was sorry to say it seemed likely, from present appearances, that they would hold them for a considerable time—neither the ideas of the hon. gentleman, nor those of his party, or of any member of his party, would be carried out. If they suggested amendments, the Government would consider them, and adopt any that appeared to them to tend to the benefit of the country, as they would amendments coming from anywhere else; but as to carrying out the hon. gentleman's ideas about savings banks, auditors-general, or any other subject under the sun,—the hon. gentleman might sit down contented with the knowledge that the Government would do nothing of the sort. With regard to the latter part of the hon. gentleman's speech, he thoroughly agreed with the hon. gentleman in some respects. He considered that the question of the tenure of the seats held by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and himself was purely a matter for this House to deal with, and he was glad the hon. gentleman (Mr. Douglas) had come to that conclusion at last. The House ought to have dealt with the matter—hon. members opposite knew that—and the Supreme Court had nothing at all to do with it. He believed the Supreme Court, if it dared to interfere with the tenure of the seats of hon. members in this House, would find out what the majority of Parliament was made of. No party spirit would in such a case be allowed to interfere with the action of Parliament. The Supreme Court no more dared interfere with the tenure

of seats in this Parliament than in the Imperial Parliament. There would be power and vigour enough in this House to prevent any such interference. Why did not hon. members appeal to this House and petition against the Premier and himself being allowed to hold their seats, instead of going to another place? He and his hon. friend were quite ready to meet them at any moment. The hon. gentleman had let the House know the reason why;—he said that if the Opposition had had a majority they would have done so, but being in a minority they rather preferred to take the matter to some other place. Was not that a splendid argument for even the hon. member for Maryborough to wind up a peroration with!—they would have taken the proper course if they had had a majority; being in a minority, they would rather try their luck somewhere else. The action taken by one hon. gentleman opposite, coupled with the speech of the hon. member for Maryborough, was a downright, deliberate, contemplated insult to this House and to the Speaker. The hon. member for Darling Downs, who did not wrap up his sentences—involution within involution—as the hon. member for Maryborough did, had told the House plainly and boldly that he would not trust a committee of this House—that he did not believe in them; and he went further and said he did not believe in the judges. The hon. member for Maryborough, who wrapped up his meaning in mystic phrases, which were probably not understood by himself, and which were certainly not comprehensible by ordinary mortals, said pretty much the same thing, or, at all events, meant it. The assertion that the Ministry were pressing on their Estimates with undue haste was untenable. The House had been nearly three months in session, and they had only got down to the Treasurer's Estimates; and yet the hon. gentleman had the assurance to say that the Government were unduly pressing them on; and he added a caution that until certain matters before the House were settled there would be no chance of the session closing. The Ministry never had any intention of closing the session until all the matters on the notice paper had been dealt with; if they had entertained such an intention they would not have put those matters on the paper. The Opposition had very little business on the paper, every question of the slightest importance having been put on by the Government; and yet the House was told in a fine frenzy by the hon. gentleman that until questions of importance were dealt with there would be no chance of the session closing. This was only another sample of stonewalling—not a single sensible remark had been made by the speakers. The hon. member for Enoggera got up with a petty grievance about the custody of debentures, but he could tell the hon. member that the securities were deposited more safely than they had ever been before. With regard to the Savings Bank questions, it struck him that the hon. member had axes to grind—perhaps there was some convenient building to let in the central part of Queen street. Why the time of the House should be taken up on Fridays in discussing such questions he was at a loss to understand, unless on the supposition that it was for the purpose of stonewalling.

Mr. MILES said he had not the slightest intention of allowing himself to be dragged into a discussion of the question of tenure of seats in the House. He had taken certain action, and he was quite willing to leave the matter where it now was without any comment. The course he had taken appeared to him to be a right one, and he did not care what the Colonial Secretary might say about insults. He considered he had done right, and he would see the matter out to the last. With reference to the removal of the Savings

Bank, he could not agree with the hon. members for Enoggera and Maryborough. It was necessary that the old buildings should be disposed of and pulled down, and he thought a temporary arrangement should be made for conducting the business until other premises could be obtained. The Government would have been acting wrongly had they rented a shop in Queen street while they had premises of their own; especially as the proposed locality was centrally situated and would be suitable. He hoped that when a new building was erected for the Savings Bank the site would be somewhere about Treasury square, so that the South Brisbane Savings Bank could be dispensed with altogether. If hon. members would give more of their attention to the appointment of officers to the savings banks and less to the buildings occupied it would conduce more to the interest of the country. He had a communication from a man named John Anderson, a shepherd, who stated that he paid £47 17s. 6d. by cheque to the officer lately in charge of the South Brisbane branch of the Savings Bank, and who was now under sentence for embezzlement. The man was induced to leave his pass-book with the officer, and when he returned from the bush he found that the money had not been paid in to his account. The cheque was traced to the Bank of New South Wales, the money having been placed to the credit of Mr. Smith, the name of the officer of the bank. The unfortunate man applied to the Government for his money, but they would not listen to him. This was a very hard case, and he should like to ascertain from the Government whether they were not responsible for the actions of the officers of the Savings Bank. If not, he should advise depositors to withdraw their money and place it somewhere else. In the case of a private institution, the bank was responsible for the actions of its officers. The information he had received might not be exactly correct—

The PREMIER: No; it's not.

Mr. MILES said he hoped it was not. With regard to the building he did not think there was much cause for complaint, and he would recommend the Government to pay more attention to the officers. He was inclined to think that the Auditor-General had been a little too officious, and had meddled a great deal more than he ought to. That officer was appointed to do certain things, but he went beyond his duty, and wanted to be Treasurer himself and arrange the finances of the colony. He had, as the Premier informed the House, made the suggestion that money received on railway reserves account, and appropriated to the construction of railways, should be placed to the credit of Consolidated Revenue Account. It was not his business to arrange such matters, and that was not the only time he had meddled with things which did not concern him. In 1866, when he was Under-Secretary in the Treasury, he caused the Treasurer to bring forward a greenback scheme which nearly brought the country to ruin, and might have caused a revolution. He would strongly advise the Auditor-General to attend to the duties of his office, and not to interfere in connection with the duties of the Treasurer. He did not think that the Treasurer would have thought of doing such an illegal act as that of transferring money from the Railway Reserve Account to the Consolidated Revenue if it had not been suggested by the Auditor-General. He denied that he knew anything about stonewalling, and would be no party to it as far as the Estimates were concerned.

The PREMIER said he thought it important in the interests of the public that he should say a few words in reply to the statements of the hon. member for Darling Downs as to the case of a shepherd who alleged that he had de-

posited money in the Savings Bank which had not been returned to him by the Government. Were the facts as stated by the hon. member the money would have been returned to the man, but the facts were not as stated by him. The man had made application for a sum of £47 which he alleged he had deposited in the Savings Bank at South Brisbane. He furnished no evidence whatever to show that he had done so, and the department had searched the books and could find no trace of the transaction. The man never tried to establish the fact that he had paid the money, and the Government could do nothing for him. If the man came forward and did that now, the result would be the same as it was in another case of the same kind. A shoemaker at South Brisbane deposited £100 in the Savings Bank there;—according to the rule he ought to have got a receipt from the Treasury within a week. On the documents drawn out by depositors it was indicated in big type that it was necessary that these receipts should be obtained, otherwise the deposit could not be recognised by the Government, if not accounted for by the Savings Bank officers. The depositor paid no attention to that rule, and it happened that the money was embezzled. The Government knew nothing about the matter until the embezzling officer was on his trial on another charge, when the man came forward and made his case known. The neglect of the man really had the effect of depriving the Government of their remedy. If he had complained that he had not received the receipt, the Government would have found out that some wrong had been committed. He made full inquiries into the matter, and, finding that there was not a question of doubt that the man had deposited the money, the amount was returned to him. In doing that he acted against the rules; the Government lost the money, but he acted on the principle that the Government should in all fairness pay money which had been deposited. In the case mentioned by the hon. member for Darling Downs, if the man could prove that he paid the money into the hands of an officer of the Government it would be refunded to him.

Mr. GRIMES said a remark had fallen from the Colonial Secretary which he could not allow to pass unchallenged. They had heard a great deal about hon. members on the Opposition side attempting to intimidate or prejudice juries, but he thought there could be no clearer case than the Colonial Secretary's of an attempt to intimidate judges of the Supreme Court. They knew very well that with regard to two judges such a remark could have no effect; they were in no way connected with the Parliament; they did not receive their salaries on vote of Parliament; but when they considered that a third judge held his seat at the pleasure of the Government, he thought it very wrong of a Minister of the Crown to say that if the judges of the Supreme Court interfered with the seats of hon. gentlemen they should know of what stuff Parliament was made. Such a remark was highly objectionable; it was worse than anything he had ever heard in the Chamber. He was surprised that the Colonial Secretary, with his large experience, should have made such a statement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Is the hon. member mad?

Mr. GRIMES said he was not mad. The Colonial Secretary must have been very near that state when he made that statement. With reference to the Savings Bank, he thought it desirable that every publicity should be given to the fact that the office had been shifted. A prominent placard should be placed outside the new office, as he believed that large numbers of depositors were attracted to the bank by that means.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was very glad that the Premier had given a different version of the case mentioned by the hon. member for Darling Downs. He believed that there were many persons who were ignorant as to the necessity to get receipts so as to secure their deposits, and it ought to be a positive instruction to officers of savings banks that they should issue receipts for every deposit whether the depositors wanted them or not.

Question put and passed.

In Committee,

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McIlraith) moved that £30,360 be voted for Customs. He pointed out that there was a reduction of nearly £3,000 on the Estimates of last year. Coast tide-waiters, with the exception of one at Moreton Bay, had been abolished, and in that way £1,500 was saved. There was an increase of £100 at Bundaberg, the appointment of a storeman at that place having become absolutely necessary. The second officer at Broadsound was dispensed with. With the exception of these items the Estimates were the same as last year, but the amount which he had proposed was a reduction on the amount which appeared on the Estimates, viz., £30,690. The further reductions were: Landing waiters, Brisbane, from £1,350 to £1,250; gaugers, from £910 to £875; lockers, from £1,330 to £1,140; and the omission of the item, two boatmen, Sweer's Island, £216. These reductions had been brought about through the dismissal of the chief landing waiter at Brisbane. Promotions were made in the service without any increase of salaries. Thus, the chief landing waiter was receiving only the amount paid to him formerly as second waiter. He believed the salaries were amply sufficient, and he embraced the opportunity of making what he considered justifiable reductions. The services of two boatmen at Sweer's Island were not required.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had been accused by the Colonial Secretary of insulting the House and the Speaker. He did not know to what the hon. gentleman referred, and would be glad to hear an explanation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The business to-day is to go on with the Estimates. The hon. member has made his speech; I have made mine; and I am not going to enter into further argument on the subject.

Mr. DOUGLAS: But the hon. member says I have insulted the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; and I repeat it.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that was a deliberate statement to which he could not submit without saying something. He was not aware of being desirous upon any occasion of insulting the House or Mr. Speaker. He admitted that he had taken views of matters which were not in accordance with the views of a majority of the House, and not quite in accordance with those of Mr. Speaker; but he always desired respectfully to submit himself to the ruling of the House and Mr. Speaker. He presumed the Colonial Secretary meant that he had insulted the House and the Speaker by drawing attention to the present position of affairs in connection with the seats of hon. gentlemen opposite. He thought he was justified in doing so. The Speaker had called the attention of the House to his position in reference to certain matters, and the only information of his action which the hon. gentleman possessed was derived from public prints. Mr. Speaker considered it his duty—and he would be the last person to question the exercise of his discretion in this respect—to call attention to facts which he noticed in the newspapers in

connection with him, without attention having been called to the matter by any hon. member in the House. Mr. Speaker took the initiative in the matter, and he now considered that the hon. gentleman, having been made aware through public prints of certain other circumstances which had transpired—especially in connection with a recent ruling of the Supreme Court—he was justified in asking him whether it was his intention, upon the same information which had applied to him (Mr. Douglas), to draw the attention of the House to the position of hon. gentlemen opposite. Neither in the mode of his address to the Speaker, nor in the questions which he put to the hon. gentlemen, was he in any degree insulting; although, when he drew attention to the matter in the House last week, he was told he was tantalising and persecuting hon. gentlemen opposite.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is distinctly out of order in discussing this question upon the motion before the chair.

Mr. DICKSON said he desired to speak upon several matters pertinent to the Customs Estimates, and he hoped he would not, in so doing, be accused of stonewalling. When they were dealing with the Customs Estimates he considered that he was quite in order in asking the Government why they did not conclude matters in Ways and Means relating to the tariff. The action the Government were now pursuing was quite unprecedented.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address himself to the items before the Committee.

Mr. DICKSON presumed he could address himself to the source of revenue by which the establishment was maintained. If the Chairman persisted in restricting the discussion so rigidly, they would be precluded from any debate whatever. The names of the clerks would be about the only thing open for discussion.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have another opportunity of making his remarks when these items are disposed of.

Mr. DICKSON said that if they were going to discuss the estimate intelligently they must not be precluded from considering the extra duties which would be thrown upon the Customs officers by the proposed alterations of the tariff: most probably the duties of the landing waiters would be increased. Surely that increase of duties was pertinent to the question of the reduction of the salaries of the officers who would have to collect the duties in their altered form? A considerable time had elapsed since these alterations were proposed in Committee of Ways and Means, and it was the duty of the Government without delay to embody them in a Bill in the usual way. He approved of economy, but not at the expense of justice. The landing waiters, for instance, had the custody of a large portion of the revenue, and had to attend to other matters beside the collection of duties. Some of the waiters had been in the Service over twenty years, and upon the dismissal of the official who had recently misconducted himself, they naturally looked forward to promotion with increase of salary. If they were going to have a retrenchment, let there be a general retrenchment. It was not to the interests of the Service that these men should be deprived of their great object of ambition for the sake of a paltry hundred guineas. It was unfair to deprive them of the only tangible remuneration they received for many years of faithful service. He felt quite indignant at the proposal of the Government. It must be remembered that the officials concerned occupied positions in which one step, one act of connivance or collusion, would deprive the Treasury of ten times the amount they now proposed to save from their salaries. While severity



of discipline was maintained in the establishment, the men should have a fair prospect of promotion. He was not so conversant with the position of gaugers and lockers; but his remarks with reference to promotion applied equally to them. Hon. members must bear in mind that the landing waiters had been by no means overpaid. They worked on Sundays as well as week-days, and were bound to be at their post whenever a steamer arrived—day or night. Their salaries hitherto had not been by any means fairly proportioned to the severe and onerous character of their duties; and he hoped the Treasurer would reconsider his proposal.

Mr. MILES said he rose to correct an error which occurred in the *Hansard* report of the proceedings on September 10th, during the debate on the estimates in connection with the London office. He was very anxious to take the present opportunity of correcting it, as he had not been able to do so before, and with that view he would move the Chairman out of the chair. Hon. members would remember that when the estimates in connection with the Agent-General's office were under consideration, the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) took exception to the appointment of Mr. Dicken as Secretary to the Agent-General, and suggested that one of the officials in the Treasury—the Under Secretary, for instance, or even the Under Colonial Secretary—would have been a more suitable appointment, as they had more experience. But he (Mr. Miles) disagreed with the hon. gentleman on that occasion, and was reported to have said, in reference to Mr. Cullen, that he failed to see the force of the hon. gentleman's argument, as—

"The Under Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Cullen, was, he thought, one of the worst appointments ever made."

In justice to that gentleman he thought it was right for him (Mr. Miles) to correct that statement. What he really said was this—that however good an Under Secretary Mr. Cullen might be he did not possess sufficient mercantile experience to fit him for the office of Secretary to the Agent-General. He had thoroughly concurred with the appointment of Mr. Cullen as Under Secretary when it was made by the then Treasurer (Mr. Dickson), as that gentleman had been in the Treasury from its establishment down to the time when Mr. Drew left it to become Auditor-General. If ever there was a good appointment it was that of Mr. Cullen, and he only hoped that all other appointments would be made on the same principle. He was not at all alarmed, nor did he feel the same anxiety that was expressed by the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson), about the salaries of the particular officers referred to by that hon. gentleman, as he knew as a rule that Civil servants took pretty good care of themselves. The objection he had was this—that the general run of Civil servants were under the impression that the colony was specially created for their benefit. He hoped his hon. friend would not show any extreme anxiety about those officers, as, if any hardship had been done to them, hon. members would soon hear of it. He begged leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he wished to add a few words to what he had said previous to being ruled out of order by the Chairman. He had heard that he had been taken to task for referring to the matter before it was decided in the Supreme Court, and that he had been accused of referring to it in terms which had not been warranted by the ruling of the Supreme Court: and, also, that he had taken that step with the view of prejudicing the jury which might

have to decide upon the question. That, however, was straining things in a manner which was not quite justifiable, as the matter had been discussed by the Press, not only of this colony, but also of New South Wales and Victoria, previous to his (Mr. Douglas) having spoken upon it in the House; in fact, he had been struck with the attention which it had received from the Press in the neighbouring colonies, and the knowledge shown by them of it. Previous altogether to the remarks made by him in the House he found that the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which was a perfectly dispassionate and independent paper, had referred to the matter, and he would read the article which was published in that paper:—

"Mr. McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland, is part owner of the 'Scottish Hero,' a vessel chartered by the Government for the conveyance of immigrants. Notwithstanding the existence of that contract, he sat and voted as a member of the Assembly; and he has been sued, under the Constitution Act, for the penalties he incurred by so doing. There was a demurrer to the declaration, principally on the grounds that Mr. McIlwraith was owner only as trustee of his marriage settlement, in which he takes no present beneficial interest; and that the Assembly had not declared his seat to be void, which ought to have been done before the fine could have been inflicted. The Supreme Court has set aside both objections. The provisions of the Queensland Constitution, like those of our own statute, are couched in the most comprehensive phraseology, and were evidently designed to prevent all possible chance of evasion. As to the avoidance of the seat by the Assembly being a condition precedent to the infliction of the penalty, the wonder is that such an argument should have been used. The two things are made by the statute distinct from, and independent of, each other. It is as though the framers of the Act foresaw that the Assembly might fall under party influences to do its duty, and, therefore, provided another remedy through the courts of law. The Assembly might shut its eyes to the fact; and if so, the question could be tested in the Supreme Court, where party influences would be excluded, and the law would be interpreted and enforced according to its true meaning. The proceedings in Queensland afford a curious comment upon the arguments of those who contend that Constitution Acts are not as ordinary statutes, and are not to be construed according to the recognised canons of legal interpretation. If the argument were worth anything, the Supreme Court of Queensland had no right to consider, much less decide upon, this demurrer."

That would show that he had exercised no exclusive privilege in referring to the case, as there was a paper published in New South Wales which commented upon it before he (Mr. Douglas) made any remarks on the subject. Yet he had been accused of raking up these matters in order to prejudice the jury.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And so you are.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that the thing was notorious in all the colonies, and the very course that was followed here was referred to in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and approved of.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; in an article written in Brisbane.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that the assumption was, that from whatever source the *Sydney Morning Herald* got their information the article was written in Sydney, as they would not employ people in Brisbane to write leading articles for them. Whilst his reference to the matter was made in the House on September 20, the article he had quoted appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 16th. It was evidently written after the proceedings had taken place in the Supreme Court here. Whereas he had been charged with bringing the matter forward in the House for a specified object, it was well known that the Press in New South Wales and Victoria had already referred to it.

The PREMIER: You're a coward!

Mr. DOUGLAS: I will not allow myself to be called a coward, and I move, Mr. Scott, that the words be taken down.

The PREMIER and the COLONIAL SECRETARY : You're a political coward.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : So you are.

Mr. DOUGLAS : I demand that the words be taken down, Mr. Scott.

Mr. AMHURST : It matters very little to us what the hon. member says. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : And you can have them taken down, and a few more. Slanderer, too, if you like !

The CHAIRMAN : Will the hon. member for Maryborough state the words he wishes to be taken down ?

Mr. DOUGLAS : Whilst I was addressing the Committee, the hon. gentleman, addressing me, I presume, ejaculated the word "coward."

Mr. BAILEY said that another expression had been made use of since then. He had heard a Minister use the word "slanderer."

Mr. DOUGLAS : Mr. Scott, I ask if the word "coward" is Parliamentary ? If it is not, I ask you to take the usual course.

The PREMIER : To refresh your memory, Mr. Scott, and, perhaps, to assist in bringing this matter to a settlement, I might move an amendment. I might perhaps address the hon. member in the same language as that in which he once addressed me, and call him an abandoned hypocrite.

Mr. DICKSON said that whilst what was said in the heat of the moment might be sometimes excusable, when the hon. gentleman rose in the Committee and tried to aggravate matters it was not creditable to him either as a statesman or as the leader of the House. For a Premier to rise up in his place and try to aggravate hon. members was a very unusual thing.

The PREMIER : I do not care in the least what the hon. member thinks of my conduct, and I think much less of what the hon. member's opinion is of me as a Premier. The hon. member may think that I am a fool for doing so, but I shall repeat the words that I have used to the hon. member for Maryborough—that he is a political coward, and I will use the words to him that he used to me—that he is an "abandoned hypocrite."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he well recollected the occasion on which the hon. member for Maryborough used the words "abandoned hypocrite." It was when the present Government were sitting in Opposition. The hon. member repeated the expression, and he (Mr. Macrossan) never saw such a scene as that which followed except on one occasion when one of the hon. member's colleagues called another hon. member a liar.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to make a few remarks in reply to the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson), who stated that the remarks of the Premier were calculated to aggravate. He should like to know what the hon. member for Maryborough did night after night ? Why, it was only on the previous evening that the hon. member called him (Mr. Morehead) the Devil's advocate and an outcast, when he had not alluded to the hon. member in any way. Referring to the question of being an outcast, the hon. member himself was a pariah and an outcast at the present moment.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : And he knows it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member himself knew it. Talking about aggravating language causing unpleasant scenes, there was no one in the House who used such aggravating language as the hon. member.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said there also was no hon. member who set the rules of the House

more at defiance than the hon. member, who was actually in contempt at the present time. The hon. member was too full of beans, and had been feeding too well lately.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was not going to be put down by anything that had taken place. He wished to know whether the words of which he had complained were taken down ?

The CHAIRMAN : The words are now being taken down by the Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN said he understood the question to be this : That whilst the hon. member for Maryborough was addressing the Chamber the hon. member for Mulgrave (Mr. McIlwraith) made use of the word "coward," as applied to him. Those words having been taken down by the Clerk, it was now his (the Chairman's) duty to refer the matter to the House.

Mr. DOUGLAS said if the hon. gentleman would withdraw—

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think the matter admitted of any further discussion.

Mr. DOUGLAS said, speaking to the point of order, if the hon. gentleman withdrew the expression—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : He is not going to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN said there could be no further discussion. It was his duty, under the Standing Orders, to report the matter to the House.

The House having resumed,

The CHAIRMAN reported that the House, being in Committee, the hon. member for Mulgrave had, whilst the hon. member was addressing the Chair, made use of the word "coward" as applied to him.

Mr. DOUGLAS called attention to the 95th Standing Order :—

"Any member having used objectionable words, and not explaining or retracting the same, or offering apologies for the use thereof to the satisfaction of the House, will be censured, or otherwise dealt with, as the House may think fit; and any member called to order shall sit down unless permitted to explain."

While he (Mr. Douglas) was addressing the Committee the hon. member for Mulgrave interjected across the Chamber the term "coward." He (Mr. Douglas) believed the term was unparliamentary, and requested that the words be taken down in order that the hon. member for Mulgrave might have an opportunity of withdrawing them and apologising.

The PREMIER said he used the word "coward," and he used it two or three times after his attention was directed to it. The circumstances were these : The hon. member for Maryborough had not once, but three times, deliberately referred to his (the Premier's) position as having been proved to be that of a Government contractor; that the Supreme Court had decided that, being a Government contractor, he had no right to sit in the House; that, unfortunately, in his opinion the Supreme Court never could decide the matter because it was essentially a matter that lay with Parliament. Now, if that were so, and it were a matter that Parliament should deal with, it was perfectly clear that a member who would hold the strong opinion that hon. member did ought to have brought it before Parliament. It could not be brought before the Elections and Qualifications Committee, unless he or someone else challenged his (the Premier's) seat. He (the Premier) had been waiting all along for his seat to be challenged; and, were he to accept the cowardly proposal of the hon. member, and ask a member sitting on the Government side of the House deliberately to petition against him, it would simply

be a friendly suit; and they would be deliberately told by the other side, and by no one faster than by the hon. member for Maryborough himself, that it was simply done for the purpose of defeating justice. He (the Premier) wanted his enemies to do all they possibly could. He did not want to compromise the matter by a friendly suit. He defied the hon. member to bring the matter before the Elections and Qualifications Committee at once, and if he did not do so he (the Premier) said he was a coward. The hon. member said that, undoubtedly, the House should take some steps to investigate his (the Premier's) position; and he (the Premier) held that the hon. member was the proper person, holding the opinions he did—that he (the Premier) was a contractor—to bring the matter before the House. But he deliberately refrained from taking that action, and all through taunted hon. members on that side of the House constantly for not doing it themselves. If they adopted that course, would not the hon. member be the first man to say that it had been all an arrangement? Again, the hon. member's action was cowardly for the reason that the attack he made was a deliberate attack upon the Speaker of the House. He (Mr. Douglas) questioned the good faith and impartiality of the Elections and Qualifications Committee. They all knew that the House had nothing to do with the appointment of the Elections and Qualifications Committee. That committee was appointed by the Speaker, and yet the hon. member, by innuendo, and even by direct assertion, said the only reason why he himself did not have the matter brought before that Committee was that justice would not be done. It was a right-down insult to the Speaker.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I never said so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A cowardly insult!

The PREMIER said the hon. member stated that he would have brought the matter before the Elections and Qualifications Committee were it not for the unfortunate position in which that side of the House stood—that was of being in a minority. If they had had the appointment of the Elections and Qualifications Committee themselves, then they would have been perfectly prepared to do so—could they have elected their own judges—but they could not refer the matter to the judges appointed by the Speaker because justice would not be done. He asked was not that a deliberate insult to the Speaker? The hon. member knew perfectly well that in common decency his (the Premier's) tongue was tied in talking about his private affairs. The hon. member had deliberately attacked his private affairs—not on constitutional grounds, but simply for the purpose of keeping the public agitated about them. He knew that a committee had been investigating these matters, and a suit was in progress in the Supreme Court, and before judgment could be given he deliberately tried to work up public opinion so as to influence their judgment. He (the Premier) said it was cowardly, again, because these steps had been taken in the House deliberately, knowing that they would have the effect of influencing the jury in the facts brought before them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he wished to call attention to the language that was used commonly in the House by this injured individual, who now appealed to the House for having been called a coward. No later than last night this gentleman who would have them think he was the "glass of fashion and the mould of form," who never used insulting terms or hurt the feelings of anybody, used this language in reference to the hon. member for Mitchell—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who had never spoken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY would read what was said:—

"Mr. DOUGLAS said that in this and other matters the hon. member for Mitchell appeared to be fulfilling that position which at one time was allotted to distinguished persons—that was Devil's advocate."

That was very nice language to use to begin with. He went on to say:—

"He was afraid that the hon. member was looked on to a great extent as one of those unfortunate political outcasts who drew on themselves retribution, which was the inevitable judgment that awaited all evil-doers."

He (the Colonial Secretary) would call attention to the fact that while language, most insulting as it was to the member for Mitchell, was reported in *Hansard*, the hon. member for Mitchell's reply was carefully suppressed: and this was not the first time that had occurred in *Hansard* this session. He did not know who was to blame for it, but he knew it was a melancholy fact that every disgraceful charge brought forward by the other side of the House was fully reported in *Hansard*, but the replies of hon. members on that side were suppressed.

Mr. DOUGLAS rose to a point of order.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. DOUGLAS said he simply made a complaint of unparliamentary language—and the arguments used had no reference to that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is no point of order.

The SPEAKER: I am bound to hear what has to be said on the subject before expressing an opinion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY asked what was the point of order? The hon. member did not know what a point of order was.

Mr. DOUGLAS rose to a point of order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member was in contempt at that moment. He continued to say:—

"Really, he thought the hon. member's condition at the present time was a deplorable one."

This was the thin-skinned individual who, when he himself was attacked, cried like a whipped child, and appealed to have the words taken down.

The SPEAKER: There can be no doubt that the language reported by the Chairman as having been used by the hon. member for Mulgrave was a violation of order and contrary to the Standing Orders of the House. The fact that it may have been provoked in some way does not justify the use of the expression, but the House may consider the provocation in dealing with it. If the hon. member for Maryborough made use of the expression which it is stated he made use of, charging the hon. member for Mulgrave with being a Government contractor, he himself was out of order in so doing, because the hon. member for Mulgrave has repeatedly denied that he is a Government contractor; and any member of the House is bound to accept a denial made by another member. There can be no doubt whatever that the expression by the hon. member for Mulgrave was contrary to the Standing Orders, and therefore out of order; and I hope the hon. member will withdraw the expression, and apologise to the House for having violated its rules.

The PREMIER said he was sorry that the Speaker should have taken that view of the matter, but he (the Premier) had not the slightest intention of going beyond his ruling. He withdrew the expression, but he was quite prepared to repeat it again directly in far stronger terms. In deference to the Speaker he withdrew the expression "coward" he had made use

of to the hon. member, and apologised to the House, but he was inclined to repeat it with a still stronger adjective in front of it. He had not altered his mind in the slightest degree with regard to the dastardly conduct of the hon. member.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if every word used on that side of the House that was supposed to be offensive was asked to be taken down he thought the Speaker should make out a vocabulary of parliamentary expressions. Hon. members opposite were in the habit of using whatever language they pleased, and hon. members on the Government side had simply to sit patiently and listen, but the moment anyone on that—the Government side of the House—got up to speak and used a word which touched the feelings of hon. members opposite, the attention of the Speaker, or of the Chairman, if the House happened to be in Committee, was called to it immediately. Yesterday he (the Minister for Works) said the language the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) used to the hon. member for Mitchell was such that he would not dare use outside the walls of that Chamber; and he held that if it was unparliamentary to use the word "coward" inside the House it was also unparliamentary to use any language inside the Chamber which an hon. member would be afraid to use outside the Chamber, he did not care who the member was; and he was certain that the hon. member for Maryborough, with all his pretensions, would not dare to have used outside the walls of the House, or even probably outside that Chamber, the language he applied to the hon. member for Mitchell. He (the Minister for Works) had been the subject of vituperation on many occasions by the hon. member for Maryborough—more frequently, he was certain, than he (Mr. Douglas) had been by any member on the Government side of the House. When he (the Minister for Works) sat on the opposite side of the House, that hon. member on one occasion called him and those who were acting with him "abandoned hypocrites." Now, if there was anything in life that he detested it was being called a hypocrite. He believed he always spoke his mind, and he acted up to that speech sincerely. A man who did that could not be a hypocrite. The hon. gentleman, who was Premier at the time, had applied that term to him and others.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that if anything he had said had unduly irritated hon. gentlemen opposite he regretted it. He feared they very often transgressed in that respect, and he at once admitted he himself had sometimes transgressed the bounds of Parliamentary usage, but he could not forego noticing the word the hon. gentleman opposite had used, because it was so insolently offered; and, in consequence of that, he took exception to it. He himself had no hesitation in regretting, at times, having made use of expressions which he ought not to have made use of, and he should always be ready, not only to express his regret but to apologise whenever he felt he had done so, and whenever called upon to do so by the proper authorities. If he had unduly irritated the hon. member he regretted it, but he was satisfied it was desirable to call attention to the term he made use of, and, as far as he was concerned, he was satisfied the hon. member had withdrawn the expression.

Mr. PERSSE suggested that the Government should propose another sitting day and let the hon. member for Maryborough have it all to himself.

Mr. DICKSON rose to address the House, when—

The PREMIER pointed out that the hon. member was out of order. The Chairman had

left the chair for the purpose of referring a matter to the Speaker. That matter had been settled, and, having been settled, he held that the Speaker ought to leave the chair and the Chairman resume his seat.

The SPEAKER said the hon. the Premier was quite right; but before leaving the chair he wished to say a few words. Any expressions made use of and objected to should be drawn attention to by hon. members themselves, because it was an invidious task for the Chairman or Speaker to interfere. Sometimes the most offensive speeches were couched in language carefully guarded; and the impartiality of the Chairman or himself might come to be questioned if, after allowing these offensive speeches, expressed in carefully chosen language, to pass, they should have to call to order members for expressions which might possibly be less objectionable though their words might be worse chosen.

The Committee having resumed,

The PREMIER moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again on Monday next.

Mr. MILES was understood to say that there was no reason why they should adjourn till 1 o'clock.

Mr. DICKSON quite approved of what the Minister for Works said in regard to hon. members being more careful as to the expressions they used. They ought to speak as if the same responsibility attached to their utterances in Parliament as if spoken outside. He should be glad to see that rule carried out, because not only would the language of hon. members be better selected so as to avoid unnecessary offence, but they would be much more careful of the reputation and character of individuals outside who were frequently attacked by hon. members under their powers of privilege, and who had no power or opportunity of defending themselves.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fifty minutes past 12 o'clock.