

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 7 JULY 1885

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

QUEENSLAND

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THIRD SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1885.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 7 July, 1885.

Vacancies during the Recess.—Members Sworn.—Ministerial Statement.—Motion for Adjournment.—Question without Notice.—Petition.—Elections and Qualifications Committee.—Auditor-General's Report for 1883-84.—Bill *pro forma*.—The Opening Speech.—Address in Reply.

THE House met at 12 o'clock, a few minutes after which hour a message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod that His Excellency the Governor requested the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly in the Council Chamber.

The SPEAKER, accompanied by hon. members of the Assembly, accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council, and, having heard the Address of His Excellency, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past 3 o'clock.

VACANCIES DURING THE RECESS.

The SPEAKER said : I have the honour to report that since the termination of the last session the following vacancies have occurred in the recess, namely :—

1. By the resignation of the Hon. Richard Bingham Sheridan, Esquire, one of the members for the electoral district of Maryborough.

2. By the resignation of the Hon. Berkeley Basil Moreton, member for the electoral district of Burnett.

3. By the resignation of Thomas Macdonald-Paterson, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Moreton.

That upon the occurrence of each of the said vacancies I issued my writ for the election of a member to fill the same, and such writs were
1885—B

duly returned to me, with certificates respectively indorsed thereon of the election of the following gentlemen, namely :—

1. Richard Bingham Sheridan, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Maryborough.

2. The Hon. Berkeley Basil Moreton, as member for the electoral district of Burnett ; and

3. Hiram Wakefield, Esquire, as member for the electoral district of Moreton.

MEMBERS SWORN.

Mr. Richard Bingham Sheridan was sworn in, and took his seat as member for the electoral district of Maryborough.

The Hon. Berkeley Basil Moreton was sworn in, and took his seat as member for the electoral district of Burnett ; and

Mr. Hiram Wakefield was sworn in, and took his seat as member for the electoral district of Moreton.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said : In accordance with practice, I have to inform the House that since the adjournment of the House in December last some changes have taken place in the constitution of the Government. An additional Minister having been appointed by an Act passed last session, the new office created—that of Minister for Public Instruction—was offered to the then Postmaster-General, Mr. Mein, who accepted it, while still retaining his seat in the Legislative Council ; and the office of Postmaster-General was offered to Mr. Sheridan, the member for Maryborough, and then a member of the Executive Council. Some time shortly after his re-election for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan informed me that he wished to retire from the Government, and the office was then

offered to Mr. Moreton, member for Burnett. Subsequently Mr. Mein accepted office as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland, and the office of Minister for Public Instruction was filled by Mr. Moreton, and the transposition of his office of Postmaster-General to Mr. Macdonald-Paterson with a seat in the Upper House.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Most of the facts just intimated by the Premier are now matters of history. We know them pretty well; but what we would like to have known, for instance, is why, if the Premier considered the hon. member for Maryborough not good enough to be a colleague of his, he should still consider him good enough to be member for Maryborough. I believe it is the only instance on record in this House where a man fell in public opinion, tumbled through the sheer weight of his own innate—well, I will not say incapacity, because that does not explain sufficiently what I mean—but fell simply without any opposition, and only through the sheer weight of his own want of political morality. He went to Maryborough and had virtually no opposition. He betrayed every party there—the town he represented, the Government of which he was a member; he betrayed the country, and then he not only betrayed the friends with whom he was dealing but the enemies with whom he was dealing also. He betrayed every party, and the man fell through the sheer weight of his own incapacity and political immorality. Why, therefore, the hon. Premier could not have gone a little further and explained how that man could be good enough to be member for Maryborough, and still not good enough to be a member of the Ministry, I cannot understand. I would like to have had some information upon the matter. At all events, I believe the people of Maryborough consider they have been completely sold, and it is the first illustration of what we shall have a long series of in the next few months, of the effect of the ten-million loan. If the Maryborough people had talked out their mind they would have scouted their present member just as the Ministers were compelled to scout him.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MR. MOREHEAD said: I will put myself in order by concluding with the usual motion. I am perfectly certain that the hon. member for Maryborough will be only too glad—in fact, I can see he will be only too anxious—to explain to the House the reasons which led to his departure from the Ministry. We have had a very unsatisfactory explanation from the Premier; but I am perfectly certain we shall get such an explanation from the hon. member for Maryborough as will clear away all doubts as to the reasons which led him to abandon his position as a Minister. It was due to this House that we should have had a further explanation from the Premier. How many Postmasters-General he has had I do not know; several people have tried to calculate them and have failed. I myself feel a particular interest in that office, and would like to know the gentleman to succeed me. The gentleman who was known generally as the “Fifth Wheel” will now, I suppose, be referred to as the “ex-Postmaster-General.” No doubt we shall be favoured with a full explanation from the hon. member as to the reasons which led him to abandon the position, and, in order that he may do so, I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Question of adjournment put.

MR. MOREHEAD: As the hon. member is dumb, I will withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I think the Premier has made an omission from the Ministerial Statement he has just given us. I should like to have some information—and I think it ought to have formed part of the Ministerial Statement—as to the amount of money that has been paid to the hon. member for Bulimba for his work as a Pacific Islanders' Commissioner?

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman will give notice of his question I will answer it. The matter does not form part of the Ministerial Statement.

PETITION.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN presented a petition from certain miners of the Palmer Gold Field, having reference to the question of deep sinking, and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On motion of the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, the petition was received.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER, in pursuance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly Act, laid on the table his warrant appointing the Committee of Elections and Qualifications for the present session.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT FOR 1883-84.

The SPEAKER said: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter, dated this day, from the Auditor-General, transmitting, for presentation to the Legislative Assembly, the Treasury Statements of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Consolidated Revenue, the Loan, and the several Trust Funds for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1884, together with his report thereon.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the paper was ordered to be printed.

BILL PRO FORMA.

The PREMIER presented “A Bill to amend the law relating to Wild Animals,” and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

THE OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER reported that the House had, in the earlier part of the day, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chambers, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament; of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, which he would now read to the House:—

“HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“I am glad to have recourse once more to your advice and assistance in administering the affairs of the colony.

“Since I last had the opportunity of consulting you, events have occurred which appeared to indicate the necessity of immediate preparation for the defence of our coasts against invasion by a power hostile to the British Empire. Prompt measures were taken by my advisers to meet this emergency, and it is with great pleasure that I record the satisfaction with which I observed the loyalty and alacrity displayed by

the inhabitants of all parts of this colony in coming forward for the defence of their country. I am confident that under similar circumstances the same willingness to perform their duty will always characterise the people of Queensland. Your sanction will be asked for the expenditure necessarily incurred in connection with this subject.

"I trust that the attention which has thus been drawn to the necessity of putting our defences on a proper footing may prove of lasting benefit. My Ministers are now in communication with the Governments of the other colonies upon the important subject of maintaining an adequate naval force in Australian waters. Papers on these questions will be laid before you.

"The offer of men and arms made to the mother-country by the colony of New South Wales was followed by many offers from men willing to volunteer from Queensland in aid of the British arms in Africa. There can be no doubt that the action of the Australian colonies in this matter has had the effect of bringing them conspicuously into notice throughout the civilised world, and of drawing closer the bond of union between them and Great Britain.

"I have been informed of Her Majesty's determination to substitute direct and complete jurisdiction over a portion of New Guinea for the Protectorate originally contemplated. I am not yet, however, in possession of full particulars as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government.

"I anticipate that the Draft Bill for the establishment of a Federal Council, of which, during the last session of Parliament, you expressed your approval, will shortly, with some modifications, become part of the law of the Empire. I trust that advantage will be taken of its provisions by all the Australian Colonies.

"I have caused full inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which natives of New Guinea and the adjacent islands were introduced into Queensland. The result of the inquiry having shown that these men were brought here without understanding the nature of the engagements into which they were supposed to have entered, my Ministers have caused such of them as desired to return to be taken back to their native islands at the expense of the colony.

"Although the men by whom these islanders were recruited were formally the agents of the persons by whom the islanders were employed in the colony, my Ministers do not think it fair, having regard to the fact that an agent of the Government accompanied each ship engaged in recruiting, that the employers should be called upon to bear all the loss consequent upon being deprived of the services of the islanders. A Bill will, therefore, be introduced at an early date to make provision for giving them compensation upon a fair and equitable basis.

"I regret that little advantage has hitherto been taken of the Act passed by you during last session to facilitate the introduction of indentured labourers from Europe. There is strong reason,

however, to anticipate that employers of labour will shortly avail themselves of the provisions of this Act to a considerable extent.

"Immigration has been maintained at a moderate but steady rate; and I am glad to know that the immigrants introduced have been of a class well suited for the requirements of the colony, and have readily found engagement.

"The necessary steps have been taken to bring into operation the Crown Lands Act of 1884, so far as has been practicable in the short time that has elapsed since the commencement of the Act. It has been found that in some of the older settled districts in which selection has been going on for many years the provisions of the Act requiring survey before selection are not well adapted to secure the occupation of the land still remaining unselected. You will, therefore, be invited to confer upon me further suspensory powers with respect to these provisions.

"Your early consideration will be asked for a measure to give additional representation in the Legislative Assembly to certain parts of the colony which are now inadequately represented.

"The danger threatening the colony of an invasion of rabbits has attracted the anxious attention of my Ministers. You will be immediately asked to deal with this subject.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The Estimates for the present year will be laid before you forthwith. It is gratifying to note that, notwithstanding the effects of a drought of unprecedented severity and duration, the Revenue has continued steadily to advance. The price which, notwithstanding many adverse influences, was obtained in London for the Queensland stock recently offered, to the extent of two and a-half millions, affords gratifying proof of the unshaken credit of the colony.

"The Bill to provide for the Payment of the Expenses of Members of the Legislative Assembly, of which you have already recorded your approval, will be at once submitted for further consideration.

"You will also be asked to make further provision for developing the mining wealth of the colony by the encouragement of deep sinking.

"The various public works sanctioned by you have been pushed forward with all practicable expedition.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The present laws for regulating elections are admittedly unsatisfactory. I have to ask your careful attention to a measure dealing with this subject, and making better provision for the prevention and punishment of corrupt practices.

"A Bill to amend the laws relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors by Retail, and to provide for the exercise of Local Option, has been prepared, and will be submitted to you as soon as possible.

"Amongst other measures which will be submitted to you as opportunity arises, are—

"A Bill to make better provision for the management of Public Charitable Institutions ;

"A Bill to continue the operation of the Marsupials Destruction Act of 1881 ;

"A Bill for facilitating Sales, Leases, and other Dispositions of Settled Land, and for promoting the Execution of Improvements thereon ;

"A Bill to shorten the Duration of Parliaments ;

"A Bill to amend and put a limit to the operation of the Pacific Islanders Act of 1880 ;

"A Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the Jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace ;

"A Bill to amend the Local Government Act of 1878 with respect to Loans for Water-works, and in other respects ;

"A Bill to make provision for Regulating the Width of Streets and Lanes, and to prevent the Subdivision of Land in such a manner as to be injurious to the public health.

"You will also be invited to consider the advisability of remodelling the Native Police Force, and of making better provision for the welfare of the aboriginal inhabitants of the colony.

"I trust, also, that time may allow of your dealing with the important question of the supply and conservation of water, upon which much valuable information has been and is still being obtained by my Government.

"For these, together with such other matters as may be brought before you, I confidently ask your most earnest and careful consideration, and I trust that under the blessing of Providence your labours may tend to the permanent welfare of this portion of Her Majesty's Dominions."

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. ANNEAR moved—

1. That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, in opening this the third session of the ninth Parliament of Queensland.

2. That the said Committee consist of Mr. Griffith, Mr. Aland, Mr. Mellor, Mr. Foxton, Mr. Wakefield, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

The Committee thereupon retired, and having returned brought up the following Address, which was read by the Clerk :—

"To His Excellency Sir ANTHONY MUSGRAVE, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Throne and Person of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and we

thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session.

"We will give our most careful and earnest attention to all such matters as may be brought before us, and it will be our anxious endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may be conducive to the permanent prosperity of this portion of the Empire."

Mr. ANNEAR: Mr. Speaker,—It has been entrusted to me to move that the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of his Excellency the Governor, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by this House. I am very sorry that this motion has not fallen into the hands of a gentleman more able to do justice to such an important motion than I am. I may say that I am suffering from a very severe cold, such as most of the people of Brisbane are suffering from at the present time, and I hope any defects in my speaking on this occasion will be excused. I wish to say also that, in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, I do so reserving to myself the right during this session, and during every session that I may occupy a seat in this House, to vote for all measures which I consider beneficial for the colony and especially for the district of which I have the honour to be one of the members. The first portion of the Speech refers to the crisis through which we have just passed—that is, the expected war between Great Britain and Russia. That war has happily been frustrated, but I think that if the men now at the head of affairs in Great Britain had been at the head of affairs when the crisis arose it would never have occurred. It is very pleasing to us as Britishers to notice what has been the action of Russia during the last week or two since the Marquis of Salisbury and those who follow him came into power. War, as I have remarked, has been averted, but it has been averted by means which the gentleman who at present holds the reins of the British Government would not have adopted. The most degraded means were resorted to, and I think it is a relief to every Australian—and all Australians are Britishers—that the Government which adopted those means has come to an end. It was very gratifying, Mr. Speaker, to see the efforts put forth by the colonies when they were called on to defend their coasts. It is also gratifying to know that we have at the head of our military and naval affairs in this colony men who came forward in the most magnanimous manner to defend our coasts when it was feared that the colony might be invaded by Russia. The military affairs of this colony—I am very glad to have this opportunity of saying this, as last session I was of a different opinion—are, I believe, in such a condition that we need have no fear but that in the event of an invasion our defences will be properly attended to, and the force properly handled, while such able gentlemen as Colonel French, Colonel Mein, Colonel Drury, and Colonel Blaxland in the North, hold the positions they occupy at the present time. There is no doubt that the naval defence of the colony demands the serious attention of the Government, and I am glad to find that it is embodied in the Speech. I now come to that portion of the Address referring to the offer made by New South Wales to send troops to the Soudan. I do not know whether I am to approve of everything in this Address, but I must say that I hope the colony of Queensland will never show itself to the eyes of the civilised world as the colony of New South Wales exhibited itself on that occasion, by sending men to Africa. It is the greatest farce of modern times. If the British Empire is driven to such straits that we

have to supply men for her protection, it has come to such a pass that we believe and know it never will come to. It may have done good to New South Wales—it has made one man conspicuous—but I hope this colony will never play such a part in public affairs as has been played by the Government of that colony in picking up men in the streets of Sydney, giving them such pay as they never got before, and sending them to defend the British Empire. I will pass over the Federal Council Bill, as I am not very conversant with its provisions. There is no doubt that if it becomes law it will prevent many legal cases going to England. I now come to that portion of the Speech which refers to the islanders supposed to have been illegally brought from New Guinea. I have read carefully the evidence taken before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the various cases, and to ascertain whether the islanders were legally recruited or not, and I must say that no men could have been appointed on that Commission who would have done their duty more straightforwardly and more honourably than the gentlemen entrusted with the duty have done. I am glad, as I have already said, to observe that it is the intention of the Government to reimburse the planters, because I cannot see how any planter can be blamed for the islanders being illegally obtained. The planters have nothing whatever to do with the recruiting. I suppose the Government will fully compensate them for the great loss which they must have been put to in this, their harvest season, by the return of those men to their homes. Little advantage, it is said, has been taken of the Immigration Act recently passed. I am glad, however, to notice that the planters are at the present time taking more advantage of its provisions, and that large orders have been sent in to have men introduced into the colony under that Act. The next matter referred to in the Speech is the Land Act. I notice that the Government intend to ask for extended powers. I suppose that if the Land Act had been a perfect measure it would have been the first measure introduced by any Government, not only in the Australian colonies but in the civilised world, that was perfect. The Government, as I have pointed out, ask for extended powers, and I feel confident that this House will, in its wisdom, grant their request. I observe also that it is the intention of the Ministry to provide additional representation for electorates which are not sufficiently represented in the House at the present time. No doubt there are several which are not now sufficiently represented in the House. I am not in the secrets of the Government, and of course cannot say which electorates will receive additional representation; but, from the reading of the Premier's speech at Townsville, I presume that Townsville will be one, Mitchell another, Fortitude Valley another, and probably several other places in similar circumstances. Next, there is the question of the introduction of rabbits. Now, many years ago this question was brought under the notice of this House by the hon. member for Logan, Mr. Stevens. I know that outside the House it was thought a very small matter indeed, and Mr. Stevens was thought a very small man to introduce such a little question; but in my opinion there is no more important question in the colony, and that hon. gentleman deserves the thanks of the whole community. I believe it is by his energy and the way he has kept this matter before the public that the Government have been led to the determination to at once try and meet this evil, which has been such a source of danger in New South Wales and Victoria, where it has almost got beyond eradication altogether. Now I come to

that paragraph addressed to "Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly," stating with reference to the Estimates for the present year that they come almost up to the expectations of the Treasurer. That is something remarkable, and considering the very severe drought through which the colony—and, in fact, the whole of the colonies—have passed, it is very satisfactory indeed to see that we are not going beyond our means. I now come to that clause relating to the payment of members' expenses during the session. That is a clause I agree with very much indeed. I hope and thoroughly believe that it is the intention of the Premier to do in this colony the same as is done in other colonies. This Assembly is the embodiment of the views of the people of the colony, and should not be subservient to the other House in everything. If the expenses of members during the session are included in the Estimates-in-Chief, it will rest with the other Chamber, I presume, to throw out the whole Appropriation Bill. I sincerely voted for the measure, and I hope it will become law. I may say that I cannot afford to live in Brisbane and represent the people of Maryborough—to pass the whole of my time here—without any recompense whatever, though while I do represent that constituency I want no more than the actual expenses incurred during the time I attend the House. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not think I can say much more. I know that I myself and the gentleman who will follow me, as the hon. member for Balonne would say, are just mere dummies, the means by which the political ball is set rolling and the business of the session commenced. We are told in the Press that this is to be a very short session and a very pleasant and quiet one. I hope so indeed, because when things are pleasant and harmonious they are much more pleasant to deal with than when they are of a different character. I beg to move that the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of his Excellency the Governor, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by this House.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to second the adoption of the Address in Reply, and in doing so I am glad to point out that this colony is in a prosperous condition, notwithstanding the recent drought we have gone through, and also the war scare which has been upon us lately, and the blow which one of our leading industries—the sugar industry—has received in having its labour somewhat interfered with, and in the low price of the commodity produced by that industry. Notwithstanding all this, and notwithstanding also that we have had a Liberal Government in power, the colony is in a prosperous condition, and I hope we shall continue in the same routine. One thing in the Speech I cannot overlook—the expense we have been put to in providing against any possible invasion. There is an old maxim that the best way to avoid war is to prepare for it; and I think we have been wise in looking to our defences and preparing to repel any invasion which might be attempted. We have also a new measure only lately put in operation, and I suppose it would be impossible to have a perfect Land Act. We find that there is one clause in it which requires remedying, and no doubt when that is remedied others will crop up. The lands of the colony require very careful consideration, for upon them depends the wealth of Queensland. The city residents look to their town allotments for their wealth, and the colony should look to its lands for its wealth, and legislate for them so that by them the revenue may be very much increased and supplemented. Another part of the Speech relates to the South Sea Island labour, about which there has been such a great outcry lately. The present Government have, I consider, taken a very wise step; they have advanced the interests

of the colony and elevated it in the eyes of the world to a large extent by putting somewhat of a check on this labour traffic, which has not been carried on according to the Act of Parliament which provided for it. I am glad to see that the Government are going to pay compensation to the planters for the loss they have sustained, and that the planters are turning their attention to European labour for this class of industry, which I think will succeed well. I see in the Speech that there is to be an amended Electoral Act. I think this is a very wise step. Anyone who is honest will not care how strictly the Electoral Act is hedged in; and I think that, considering the practices which have been carried on of late years, no provisions put into that Act can be too stringent. I see that additional members are to be provided, and I hope that the Moreton electorate will not be forgotten. There is another very important question—the water supply of the colony. Queensland is very much at a disadvantage for want of water, and I hope hon. members will see the necessity of assisting local bodies, and scattered population, in obtaining this very necessary article. I think some assistance, irrespective of loans, should be given to municipalities for this purpose. I have much pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad to be able to congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. The mover of the motion is not unknown to us; and I was glad to hear the modest and quiet way in which his colleague put his views before the House. Judging, however, from the kind of criticism that the Ministerial Statement has received, from the mover especially, I do not think that the Government can expect their followers to give them the support they have received up to the present time. There is one point upon which I unhappily have to differ from the Speech delivered by His Excellency. It is that first mentioned:—

“Since I last had the opportunity of consulting you, events have occurred which appeared to indicate the necessity of immediate preparation for the defence of our coasts against invasion by a power hostile to the British Empire. Prompt measures were taken by my advisers to meet this emergency, and it is with great pleasure that I record the satisfaction with which I observed the loyalty and alacrity displayed by the inhabitants of all parts of this colony in coming forward for the defence of their country. I am confident that under similar circumstances the same willingness to perform their duty will always characterise the people of Queensland.”

That I very much doubt. I do not mean to raise an argument upon that, but I would direct the attention of the House to the peculiar position held by Queensland with regard to this matter. We have taken the credit throughout the world of having volunteered a contingent from Queensland. Our Agent-General has interviewed the Colonial Minister, and we have seen it repeatedly in all the papers of the world, that we have volunteered to send a body of men to the assistance of the British arms in the Soudan. We have actually taken credit for it, but we have never done it. I have never seen that it has been done; but still we have actually taken credit throughout the world and with the British Government of having made such an offer. I do not believe myself that the Government would have made an offer, and I think it is cowardly upon their part, not having made that offer, to assume before the world the position of having actually made it. I did not believe myself in making it. I would have condemned it had it been made; but I say it is cowardly, not having made it, to pose before the world as if we had followed the example of New

South Wales. I do not admire the conduct of New South Wales, and I am prepared to take up the cudgels whenever the matter comes forward. It is before the House at the present time as if the Government had made an offer. They never did make the offer to the English Government to assist them in the Soudan; yet they led the British public to believe that they had made it—they never contradicted it. I notice that there has been very little said either by the mover or seconder of the Address as to the result of the legislation which has taken place during the last twelve months. We have a Liberal Government in power who said before they came into power that, give them the reins of power long enough, and they would make laws so fixed and so immutable that it would matter afterwards very little what kind of members were returned to Parliament. What do we see now? We have had that party in power for two years, and, judging by the programme they have now put before us, we do not expect very much this session; we may presume that we have seen the great legislation that was to take place, and it consists of a Loan Act for ten millions of money, and a Land Act which they propose themselves, before it has come into operation, to amend. That is the position we are in at the present time. The Premier posed a little while before he became Premier as the enunciator of legislation which could not be overturned. The thing was an absurdity in itself. He has always stood in that position—“Give us power for a certain time and we will make such laws that no parties can afterwards overturn them.” We have had that party in power, and judging, as I say, by the programme we have before us now, we have also had the legislation that they pretended would make such a wonderful change in the colony. Has it made that change in the colony? I assume that the course they have taken, in coming down and asking, before the Land Act has come into operation, for power to amend it, shows that they have made a lamentable mistake there. I tell the seconder of the motion, also, that he has made a lamentable mistake if he considers he has a right to compliment the Government upon the prosperity of the times. The times are not prosperous, and if the Treasurer tries to delude us by any manipulation of figures to prove that they are prosperous, I think we can point to facts, which are much more substantial. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. We have not seen the effect of the bad times upon Brisbane; but let the hon. gentleman look at Rockhampton, Townsville, and as much further north as he likes, and west also, and he will admit that he has never seen so many unemployed men—so many idle storekeepers and clerks, and every other kind of men out of employment. Does that show good times? The hon. gentleman may say it is their own fault; but those men are going through the colony trying to find employment and cannot find it. There is no employment for them. That does not show good times. I was not surprised that the bad times in other parts of the colony had not been experienced here, and for this reason: The Government by their action in regard to the Land Act they passed last year dealt a blow at the pastoral interests, and by the way they interfered with the actions of the planters they dealt an equally severe blow at the sugar industry. In this colony, it is well known by men in business that the influx of capital from the old country comes primarily to Brisbane. It used to go to Sydney and Melbourne and then permeate to Brisbane. But now, owing a good deal to the action of the last Government, it comes direct to Brisbane. Squatting, as an investment, is interdicted, because there are bad times—there is no

money being invested in squatting. Sugar-growing is in a similar state, and the consequence is that the producing interests of the colony are entirely stopped for want of capital. All that capital has been spent in corner allotments in Brisbane, and there is from that cause a great amount of money unwholesomely in circulation about Brisbane, and that is detrimental to the colony, because the bad times are never felt until the interest has to be paid. People cannot live by building houses alone. That is the only industry that has been tried lately—building additions to stores and houses; while we see before our faces as distinctly as possible that all the producing industries are in a worse state than they have been for the last five years. That is the position of the colony at the present time, and, although I think that the seconder of the motion was sincere in thinking that we really were in good times, still I have not the slightest doubt that he was making a great mistake, and his error arose simply from his want of knowledge. If we look at the other industries of the colonies we shall find that they are not in the very flourishing state that the Treasurer has tried to make us believe; nor does the Treasurer believe they are in that state himself. I think we will have a great deal of information before us before the Estimates are passed, and I think that the Treasurer will have to acknowledge that, so far from the times being good, the revenue has been falling in a way that he seems, sanguine as he is, never to have anticipated. I am perfectly satisfied that if he analyses the last three months he will find that there is a falling off that ought to make him particularly anxious. He will also see the extravagant way in which the expenditure has been conducted for the last twelve months, and will be a great deal more anxious still. I wish, irrespective of the remarks made by the mover and seconder, to refer to the salient points of the legislation connected with the career of the present Ministry; and I think we are justified now, at all events, in looking for results from a Ministry who claim that triennial Parliaments should be the law of the country. If three years should be a sufficient trial for a whole Parliament we ought to have some results in two years from the present Government. But what results have we had from the present Ministry? I contend that the only results we have had have been bad. [At this part of the honourable gentleman's address an accident occurred to one of the electric lamps.] We have just seen another instance characteristic of the want of action of the Ministry. I gave the suggestion for that same electric light two years ago and they have been turning over the matter up to the present time; and its failure now is an example of how the Works Department has been worked since the present Government came into power. I was speaking about the Land Act, and was saying that it was the worst Land Act ever passed, and it was passed also at the worst time, because, at a time when it would have been a benefit to the colony to have had money invested in our producing industries, that was the very time it was cut off by a Liberal Government. No land was open for selection and no man could settle in the country. And why? Because the Government passed a Land Act which blocked it. What has been the result? At a time when money is so cheap in Brisbane that no proper investment can be got for it, no land can be had as a safe investment in which people might invest their capital in this country. The Government talk about bringing out a large number of immigrants, but what is the use of the immigrants if we have no land for them to settle on? Though hon. members opposite spoke in this way, and though this

Land Act was actually the work of their hands, yet every one of them on going before their constituents have condemned it—you, Mr. Speaker, among the rest. Why, sir, the Land Act has found no stronger condemnator than yourself; but I may be wrong in identifying you with the paper to which I refer, and if I am I apologise to you; but you know that the Press of the Darling Downs have strongly condemned the Act. All condemn it; it is generally condemned because it is not resulting in the actual settlement of the people. The next thing is the question of Immigration, and it is intimately connected with the Land question. I have heard Mr. Brookes, the hon. member for North Brisbane, denouncing this side of the House as being opposed to the introduction of anything at all but one kind of immigration here, which should be the immigration of labourers. The hon. member has said that we simply wanted labourers—wages men—and that what he wanted was men with capital to come here and work the land. Well, what have the Government done in this matter? They have not made any reform in the slightest respect, and have actually insisted upon bringing out nothing but wages men. That was my notion, and I think it is a very good one too, because capitalists can find their way out here by themselves. Again, the men who come here are leaving the colony faster than ever they did at any previous time, as is proved by the returns of the Registrar-General, and yet there is no effort made to find them employment. One great fault has been, that the Land Act has so operated as to prevent men settling on the land, and it has prevented men from employing labour that would otherwise have been employed. The next great feature in their policy was the loan of last year. That was a great feat in legislation. I think, myself, it was a disgrace to the Parliament that passed it. We passed it in one night after no consideration; and had we given it consideration, I do not think that we would ever have passed it. I do not think there is any hon. member present who has not come to the same conclusion that the hon. member for Fassifern did when he addressed his constituents the other day, and confessed that this Loan Act is a yoke round his neck which couples him to a Ministry that he would otherwise be freer to criticise. I will speak about the loan being a dead failure by-and-by: still, while it was passing, the Treasurer never had the courage to say we were borrowing for five years. The Agent-General had the assurance, in spite of everything said by this House, to assure the English public that it was borrowed for five or six years. Had the Treasurer in this House intimated that we were borrowing for five or six years he would have cut the ground from under his feet. All the men who had to wait for doles out of this loan might have said "Our chance may come at the next Parliament," and they would not have voted for it. It was not a fair thing to have done. I know the hon. gentleman is fidgeting in his seat, and wishes to direct my attention to the statement that it might be some years before he could get it; but that was an admission that it might be some years before he would be able to borrow it, and not at all an admission that it was the policy of the Government not to borrow it at once if they could. The result has been that every man has been frightened to speak out his mind, and I say if the Maryborough and Wide Bay districts had spoken out their minds now, they would condemn the Ministry without the slightest hesitation, notwithstanding all the banquetting and speechifying. I have not the slightest doubt that the men who supported the

loan would utterly condemn the policy of the Government if they could only see their way to get what was actually promised to their constituencies. Is it a proper thing to see members of Parliament hanging on to the Government for the chance of what they may get from them? It is taking from Parliament and giving to the Ministry what essentially belongs to Parliament itself. A Parliament is justified in making provision during its own existence, but I say it is wrong to attempt to control the future; it is wrong to bind members of Parliament to a Ministry by what they may expect from the loan. A Government ought to be supported for fairly legitimate reasons, and they are entitled to support while members have a belief in their opinions; but how is it possible for a man who is rendered helpless by his constituents to act fairly as a member of Parliament? How many members are there on the other side of the House whom we know perfectly well would not support the present Government unless they were forced to do so by the Government themselves, and by their constituents, who insist that they shall support the Government; because if they did not they would not get their dolos out of the loan.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No!

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No! There is the hon. member for Stanley—he says “No,” and he does so because he expects to get a railway of his own; but I think the next time he goes before his constituents he will find that that is not the most popular railway in the district, nor will it do the greatest good for the greatest number in that peculiar locality. But what I say is this: that hon. members admit and know it to be a fact that they have voted against their opinions simply because their constituents are afraid that if they voted otherwise, or spoke out their opinions freely, they would not get the particular railway or vote that the Government have introduced in the ten-million loan. That is the only reason that keeps them as they are at the present time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: No! Well, hon. members have not travelled as far as I have lately. I have gone into districts where Ministers have been fêted and banquetted, and where I have been fêted and banquetted myself, and I know what it all means. If there is one thing hollower than another in this world it is the pretences that have been made lately to support the Ministry, and especially in particular localities, as has been shown by recent elections up north. I say that this undue influence held by Ministers over members of Parliament will some time or other be resented by the constituencies. It is not a right power for them to hold; and if members themselves are not able, during the present Parliament, to resent it, the next general election will show that I am quite right in what I say. Now, sir, as to the manner in which this money has been subscribed in England. The Treasurer says he considers that the loan has been a success. I consider that it has been a failure, and that it has been a failure mostly by the bad action taken by the Treasurer himself. Two years ago, very nearly, our loans stood on the money market of England at a higher price than the loans of New Zealand, South Australia, or Victoria. I believe I am right in saying that from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 per cent. more was got for the Queensland loan in November, 1883, than was obtained for the loans of the colonies I have named, all of which borrowed money at the same time that we did. There has

been nothing since to make our loan go off exceptionally wrong, except that which investors are always trying to take advantage of—that is, to cheapen the loan if they possibly can. What means had they of doing so? They had none except the words used by the Treasurer himself—that he wished to get a large amount of money in the English market in order to replenish the banks and carry them over the bad times.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quote correctly; refer to *Hansard*.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I cannot quote the words from memory, but I do not think I am doing the hon. gentleman any injustice when I say that his proposition was to borrow a large amount of money at home, and distribute it amongst the banks, and thereby tide the colony over the bad times that were pressing upon it. I do not think the hon. gentleman can say for a moment that I am misrepresenting him.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Unintentionally.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I do not wish to be misunderstood. I say that the Treasurer distinctly told this House that it was part of his scheme that a portion of the money borrowed was to be used for the purpose of aiding failing industries in the colony during times of depression. Those remarks were reproduced in a large number of English papers. I do not remember having seen any comments on them, but simply the Treasurer's own words reproduced; and what has been the result? That our loan fetched £63,000 less than if it had been sold at the same price as our other debentures that were sold at the time that South Australia, Victoria, and New Zealand sold theirs. That is a pure loss to the colony brought about by the bungling of the Treasurer. He put into the hands of the enemies of the colony weapons by which, possibly, they might benefit themselves, but, at all events, by which they were able to be hurtful to us. I say that we have a reasonable right to claim from the Treasurer that he should use every discretion in dealing with the funds of the colony; and I cannot but condemn too severely the action of men who, maliciously or maliciously, decried the colony. I have done everything that was in my power to prevent anything appearing in the English papers that would be detrimental in any way to our financial arrangements; but when the hon. the Colonial Treasurer made the statement he did last year I saw at once that he had made a very great mistake, and that it was absolutely certain it would be used against the colony. There is another matter, sir, which I hope you will forgive me for noticing at the present time. I do not think that you yourself, sir, are free from error in connection with this matter. I refer to one speech which you made in Toowoomba, and which I saw quoted in an English paper, and I do not think it will redound much to the credit of us as legislators if it is really taken as serious. That was a speech in which you advocated the repudiation, in fact, of the municipal debts due to the country, and there was a leading article upon it in one of the Brisbane papers, which I saw reproduced at the time. Had you, sir, been in the same financial position as the Premier, I have no doubt that that would have been made a handle of to depreciate the colony a great deal more than has been done; because the financial credit of the colony depends so much upon the absolute certainty that we will not repudiate; and I think your words, sir, would lead to the notion that there is a party in this colony, that may come into power, who believe in

municipalities repudiating their debts. The difference between municipalities repudiating their debts to the colony and a State repudiating its debts to its creditors is very small indeed. I do not mean, sir, to take advantage of you in any way, but this is the only mode I have of referring to the matter, and I take advantage of it because I wish to give you a chance of explaining the action you really did take, and I hope to hear that you have been thoroughly misunderstood; because if the old country creditors become possessed of the notion that we are in the slightest way tinged with repudiation I believe it will be a bad day for Queensland. Well, the action of the Government in connection with the last loan has, I say, resulted in the colony actually losing £63,000, and that was attributable entirely to the action of the Treasurer himself. Not only that, but, looking at the way in which the loan was floated, we can have very little doubt as to what the result will be when we appeal to the money market again. I have now referred to the two chief features which distinguished the legislation of last year. There is another thing, however, that no doubt will form the subject of many a future debate, and that is the extraordinary remedy proposed by the Government for the bad state of the sugar trade. Anyone watching the conduct of the Premier during the recess cannot help coming to the conclusion that he has done everything he possibly could to block the operation of his own Act. At the present time, and under the present laws, the sugar-planters pay for the importation of their own labourers. The Premier's solution of the trouble caused by this immigration being stopped was that we ourselves—that is, the people of the colony—should pay for the immigration of cheap German colonists; and that the planters, of course, would be only too glad to fall in with the idea. But they have kept aloof, simply because they knew the thing would be a failure as soon as they attempted it; because the people themselves will undoubtedly rise against such a nefarious proceeding as bringing Germans to work on plantations when the planters are perfectly prepared to bring their own labourers at their own expense. The Premier has seen this all through; he has not set himself to work to procure this German immigration, and his grand solution of this kanaka labour question has not come into operation. He says it is because the planters will not have Germans. I say it is because the people of the colony will not have them, and that for that reason the Premier is afraid to put his own Act into operation. I will now refer a little to the style in which the different departments have been worked by the Ministers themselves—to the administration. I will commence with the Minister for Works. I do not think his administration has been at all characterised by wisdom, and I am quite sure that he has brought about results that were never contemplated by himself. It is always the case that an ignorant man, using certain remedies, brings about a different result altogether from what he anticipated; and that has been the effect of a good deal of the administration of the Minister for Works. I will give an example. Take, for instance, his manipulation of the rates for stock being brought from the interior by railway. His idea was, no doubt, to make himself popular; and his higher motive was, no doubt, to make money for the department by charging the squatters so much more for carrying their cattle. I give him credit for the good motive, that he wanted to get a larger sum into the Treasury, and at the same time—he will excuse me for saying it—getting a little popularity for himself. What has been the effect of it? The effect has been perfectly different from

what he anticipated; it has been twofold. The effect has not been to put an imposition on the squatter which did not lie on him before. It has simply shifted the business from one squatter to another, and the people in Brisbane are paying a higher price for their cattle than ever they did before. The other effect is that the department is only getting one-fourth of what it did in the shape of income from this source. I will show that from some correspondence I have had with the department on the subject within the last two or three days. A return which I hold in my hands shows that the number of cattle so carried during the five months ending 31st May, 1884—when the old rates were in operation—was 6,407, and that the amount received for them by the department was £3,533; then the Minister for Works raised the rates, with the result that during the same five months of the present year he carries 1,500 cattle, and gets £1,000 for them. That shows that the hon. member has not the slightest notion of what his own business is. His business is to increase the facilities given by a railway to the public, and to make as much money for the department as possible. But he has failed to do either, and the only effect of his action is, that the price of cattle has been ten shillings a head more than it otherwise would have been during the last five or six months. That is one instance of the hon. member's want of wisdom which he has shown in the management of his department. I will give another example of this want of wisdom. The hon. member has posed before us as a great reformer, and he has told us that he has actually saved £5,000 to the Government by himself going and inspecting the Stanthorpe line. I will tell you what really happened. The hon. member called for tenders for this Stanthorpe extension, and in his opinion—which, I have no doubt, is the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief—those tenders were too high. Then he gets a fancy into his head that there is a ring against him—possibly there was—I do not know anything about it—of railway contractors, and he advertises in all the southern colonies for tenders. As a matter of fact, tenders came in from Melbourne and from Sydney. Of course, it stands to reason that there was fair competition, and although the Engineer-in-Chief's opinion may have been that the prices were too high, still any sensible man would have come to the conclusion that it was a fair thing to give the contract to the lowest tenderer after they had invited competition all over the colonies. What did the hon. member do? What he did, instead of effecting a saving of £5,000 to the Government, will be the cause of their losing many thousands of pounds in future years. He manipulated the Queensland contractors, and got one of them to accept £5,000 less than he actually tendered for. That was not a proper thing to do, for he was putting himself under an obligation binding himself to carry through the man he had bribed. That contractor has got the Minister for Works thoroughly in his hands.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Don't you believe it!

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It is clear to any sensible man that the Minister for Works has put himself under that man's thumb, because he cannot afford to allow himself to be made a fool of. The hon. member has shown to all outside tenderers that after asking for a fair competition all over the colonies he will go behind their backs and make an arrangement outside the tenders altogether. It simply means that Mr. Miles can be made a fool of, and that that man will carry out his contract, no matter what expense the Government is mulcted in before it is done. The Minister for Works is

bound to carry that man through, simply because he has put himself into his power. The hon. gentleman has made a very great mistake in reducing the price by £5,000. The contractor will, no doubt, carry out the work, but we shall find that it is not the cheapest contract.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles): Bashford says it is the best contract he ever had.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Exactly. I have been trying to prove that all through—that the Minister for Works has put himself into the hands of the contractor. No honest Minister for Works would think of putting himself under the thumb of a contractor—of putting himself into such a position that he cannot allow that contractor to go.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You do not know what you are talking about.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I am afraid the hon. gentleman knew very little about what he was doing when he dealt with Bashford. What has he gained by letting the contract at a low price? The Minister for Works is bound to carry it through now, and he has got the contractors from other colonies to say that they will never come and contract under the hon. gentleman again, because they will not get fair play from him. I do not think that management of this kind at all redounds to the credit of the Minister for Works. I hope that some of the statements I have alluded to are not true. I can simply go by what I have seen in the newspapers. It does not do to bounce contractors. The thing to do is to do your work with them honestly, and see that they properly carry out their contracts, while at the same time treating them as men. I noticed that altogether seventeen tenders were sent in for that line, and I think the chances were that the men who tendered were nearer in their estimate of the cost than either the Engineer-in-Chief or the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman has placed himself in such a bad position that unless we have as his successor a different man from him we shall never find out whether Bashford gets fair play or not. I have so far dealt with the Minister for Works. Now, just a word or two about the Colonial Treasurer and the Minister for Lands, to show the style in which they have managed the business of their departments.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope you have not done with me.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I should like to have further details in connection with certain matters relating to the Colonial Treasurer's department, and the extraordinary position he recently occupied before the public. The hon. gentleman comes out as a radical reformer, and certain reforms are to be made in the Customs Department, but what is the result? A deputation of Customs officers wait upon him, with what success we may see in a notification in the *Gazette*, and I have not the slightest doubt but that he will come out in exactly the same way as the Minister for Lands has done in respect to the Timber Regulations. The hon. gentleman gets his Land Bill passed and then imagines he has the power, which I never thought or assumed he had, to tax the timber-getters of the colony. The result of his action was just what I told a deputation of timber-getters who waited upon me it would be, when I said that if they would only represent the matter to the Minister for Lands before the House met he would rescind the regulations. Was it not so? And that is the way of the Government. They announce measures of reform and then run back from them. Actions of that kind are unworthy of the Government. I have nothing to say about

the Minister for Education, because he has not been long enough in office to commit himself; but I have not the slightest doubt that he will be like the rest of the Ministry. I am no great admirer of the way in which the Premier has tried to pose before the British nation in sending back those Polynesians who have been recently returned to their islands. I think he would have shown greater decency by appointing other gentlemen on the Royal Commission in connection with this matter, than two whom he did appoint. The member for Bulimba, who was one of the Commissioners, ought not to have occupied that position. Applying to him words which have been used by the hon. the Premier in similar cases, I say he has been distinctly bribed for his vote.

MR. BUCKLAND: No.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: His vote was bought and he sold it. Those are exactly the same words used by the Premier in a similar case on a previous occasion.

THE PREMIER: Under very different circumstances.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: One member of the Commission was a gentleman who had committed himself to find a verdict in a particular way. He was implicated in the "Forest King" affair, and was bound to find a particular verdict, and no one ever doubted how the hon. member for Bulimba would decide on that Commission. The only honest man on it was really the Scotchman who wrote the report. I have read the report and the evidence taken by the Commissioners, and given both a good deal of consideration, and I must say that the evidence does not warrant the conclusions arrived at. The conclusions go a long way beyond the evidence received. If the Government were to act in a similar manner on similar evidence they would have to send back every black man in the colony and a great many white men. They have posed a good deal before the public as protectors of humanity, but is not the whole affair a miserable story? Look at the staff, and observe the circumstances under which the islanders were taken aboard the vessel, which was to return them. At the last moment it was found that the officers in charge could not start without a piano. And how were the poor islanders at Mackay, who were sent back by this regenerator of his country, treated? They were kept up all night off Flat-top Island without any protection whatever from the weather in an open boat, many of them in a very bad state of health, and some of them half dead. The Government have been trying to pose before the Exeter Hall people, while at the same time they were neglecting the real germ of humanity, for, as I have said, the kanakas were left out all night—a cold bleak night it was—without even the protection of a tarpaulin. I think it should be known that the hon. the Premier and his friends have been posing in this mock humanity style. I have often been met by friends of Mr. Griffith's, in different towns of the colony, who are very anxious that I should take very strong measures to force the Government to do certain things in connection with this question, and they have said that if I would only be quiet Mr. Griffith would be quiet too. If the hon. gentleman believes the evidence in this case justifies the action he has taken, he must go further; and I think he will then get a solution of the difficulty, and take out the kanaka question from the political puzzle it has been in all along. The hon. member has made every use he possibly could of it, not for the purpose of reforming it, because the thing is in a worse position now than ever it was. All these abuses have occurred during his own time.

The PREMIER: Have been found out.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. member could easily have gone back to the time when I was Premier, and had evidence taken in the same way. Why did the hon. member not do it? Every ship sailed under the instructions of the hon. the Premier.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: If he has been able possibly to fasten it on my time, I have not the slightest doubt he would have been only too glad to do it. There is one point I shall simply make a remark on. I notice that additional members have been appointed to the Upper House, and I have also had under my attention for some time a most remarkable speech made by the Premier at Charters Towers. In the opinion of many of my friends, that speech contained a threat that the hon. member would find means for passing the Payment of Members Bill through the Upper House. I think it would be interesting to the House to know to what extent the fact of two additional members having been appointed to the Upper House points to the solution of the hint given by the Premier. I see no justification for the step. I am aware of no vacancy, and I do not think His Excellency has any right to benefit one political party at the expense of another. I do not see what business His Excellency has, when his predecessor refused to grant nominations to the Upper House, to take a different view and grant them. It has been a clear understanding that the Governor should not interfere for the purpose of trying to balance parties. If we are to put together the hint conveyed in the speech at Charters Towers and these increases—increases on the same grounds having been refused to other political parties—then I think we shall have to consider the conduct of the Government from another point of view. When the number of members of this House was increased to fifty-four I thought we were entitled—no, I did not think we were entitled, but I thought there were fair grounds for claiming that the Governor should increase the number of members of the Upper House. At that time we were in power. I laid my views before Governor Kennedy, and he declined to accede to them. He put his views before the Secretary of State, and was backed up and told he had done perfectly right. Therefore it was a fair understanding between us that what had been refused to one party should not be granted to another. In increasing the number of members in the other House, His Excellency has done what he was not entitled to do as Governor of this colony. The mover of this motion said that we should have the government of the colony in our own hands, and not be dictated to by the Upper House; but what does this mean but dictation by the Upper House? If this is the solution of the matter, I think the hon. member will very likely find he has made a mistake. The Address says:—

“It has been found that in some of the older settled districts in which selection had been going on for many years, the provisions of the Act requiring survey before selection are not well adapted to secure the occupation of the land still remaining unselected.”

I remember the memorable night when the survey-before-selection clause was passed, when the stern Minister for Lands caved in without a single word of comment from any part of the House to the proposition made by the hon. member for Darling Downs. It was the most cowardly thing I ever saw done in the House—done without the slightest consideration and without the slightest debate. And now before the thing comes into operation they come and ask us to virtually repeal the Act. Do Ministers under-

stand the Land Act? The Minister for Lands never did understand it. He knew—or ought to have known—that survey before selection was a vital matter connected with the colony, but he gave it no consideration. He thought it was all right; and now he comes before us and asks us to virtually repeal the Act before it has been in operation at all. There are a good many interests connected with the land, and, now that he has passed that Act, I think he will find it more difficult to deal with those men having vested rights than under the old Act of 1869. He will find he has made a gross blunder in giving the pastoral lessees the powers they have.

“The Estimates for the present year will be laid before you forthwith. It is gratifying to note that, notwithstanding the effects of a drought of unprecedented severity and duration, the Revenue has continued steadily to advance.”

Now, Mr. Treasurer, is that true? The hon. member knows perfectly well that it is not. If he looks at the last three months' account he will see that the revenue has steadily declined, while the expenditure has steadily increased. If he had done what I have done—and I will show the House, whenever we have a financial debate, the extraordinary increase in expenditure—he would never have had the heart to put such a paragraph in the Speech. I like to see this Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments. The Government stick like grim death to five years for themselves, but they want to shorten it for others.

“A Bill to make provision for Regulating the Width of Streets and Lanes, and to prevent the Subdivision of Land in such a manner as to be injurious to the public health.”

Just imagine the Treasurer, after placarding the whole of the southern district with his blessed posters, and cutting up ground into little bits of ten-perch allotments, and after he has done all he could to get miserable people to live on them, suddenly turning round and bringing in a Bill to prevent its being done! I remember being told a long time ago that it was a great mistake to put the working classes on such small lots, because when the men went to their work, and the wives were left behind, one woman would be able to throw a bucket of water on to the next verandah. This is legislation with a vengeance. I can quite imagine the unctuous smile with which the Treasurer will confess all his faults and pass that Bill through. I shall vote for it when it does come; the hon. member will have my cordial co-operation.

“I trust, also, that time may allow of your dealing with the important question of the supply and conservation of water, upon which much valuable information has been and is still being obtained by my Government.”

I doubt whether they have much information about it even now. I am sorry that they face this difficulty in such a very half-hearted way. I believe myself that it is the most important thing the Government have to consider this session—the water supply not only of Brisbane but throughout the colony generally; and the fact of their saying that they hope time will be granted to consider the subject gives me small indication of a good measure. I do not think that the water supply is in a proper position. I do not believe that the legislators of the colony are sufficiently alive to the good effects that may result from good legislation in this direction. I have seen little more than has been done about Brisbane, and what has been done about Brisbane has not been a credit to the country. We thought we were going to extremes when we promised the city of Brisbane £80,000 some time ago—at least some members thought so—for an additional supply of water. That money has scarcely been

spent yet, and now the increase in population has been such that Brisbane, when that additional supply comes in, will be just as badly supplied as it was before. The matter requires to be dealt with seriously. It is much more serious than many matters that have got into the Speech. I will not take up your time, Mr. Speaker, with further remarks at the present time. We shall have the finances of the colony before us in a very short time, when more will have to be said. I have simply, in sitting down, to characterise the Speech as one of the most cautious documents I have ever seen. The Government are committed to nothing, not even to expressing an opinion as to whether they would have sent a contingent, had they had the chance; there is no opinion expressed about anything; it is the most meagre schedule for legislation that I have ever seen submitted in a Speech, and surely that is not actually what we have got to anticipate after such a barren result as we have had for the last twelve months. The Premier has preached for years of what he would do if he got into power. I have gone over all he has done. He has got his Land Act and his Loan Act passed, and the only thing to do is to spend the ten millions. That is the work he has left for this session, and he is very much mistaken if he thinks it is going to pass by us so very quietly. Although we have not a big programme before us, we have a great deal to criticise in the Estimates, and I am sure that the Treasurer will find that they will be a great deal better for the way in which they will be criticised. Last year the Estimates were passed through hurriedly, and the Land Bill was passed through too hurriedly; but I am sure that members on this side of the House know the extravagant rate at which the expenditure has been carried on at the present time, and seeing our failing resources they will examine very closely a great many of the acts of the Treasurer.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker.—The hon. gentleman has given me very little to reply to. A great part of his speech every one has heard before in this House last session—the speeches he used to favour us with on the Land Bill and the Loan Bill. He has warmed them up again and gave us a re-hash of them this evening. There was very little new, and what was new was not particularly accurate. I propose to follow the hon. gentleman in the order of his speech, but I am going to confine myself to answering such matters as appear to deserve passing notice, before the Address is adopted. The hon. gentleman first of all referred to the passage in the Speech referring to the troops sent by the Government of New South Wales to assist the Imperial Government. He expressed his opinion—an opinion of disapproval—of that action, and he also went on to say that although this Government had never made an offer of troops to the English Government we had posed as if we had done so, and we had taken credit all over the world for having done so. He characterised our action as cowardly. That is an instance of the hon. gentleman saying something new which is not accurate. What the Government did is perfectly well known, and it ought to be known as well in England as here. The communication sent from here to the Agent-General—a message we were bound to send—was this:—

“Men wishing to volunteer for Soudan offer services to Colonial Government. Inquire and state by telegraph whether assistance from colonial corps is desired by Her Majesty's Government.”

At this time an offer had been made by New South Wales, and a reply had been sent from London. I had seen a copy of that reply in full, although only a portion of it was published at that time in New South Wales, and I inferred

from the telegram sent from the Secretary of State that it was at least doubtful whether the Imperial Government really did desire assistance. I therefore sent a telegram in those words to the Agent-General. The Agent-General communicated with the Colonial Office, and enclosed a copy of my telegram, and the interpretation they chose to put upon it is a matter that I do not think we are responsible for. We have never in any way disguised what we have done. We did what we were bound to do. It is not necessary to go into any ecstasies about the patriotism of the colonies or anything of that kind; but offers were made here, and for my own part I am satisfied that if assistance had really been wanted, and the Imperial Government had expressed a desire to have it, the colonies would have been willing to give as much as they could. I have stated the action of the Government. There is no misunderstanding on the subject of this colony in England or anywhere else, for the proceedings were made thoroughly public. The following reply from Lord Derby was dated 20th February, and was sent to the Governor of South Australia:—

“Transmit following telegram to Governors. Her Majesty's Government highly appreciate patriotic offers South Australia Victoria Queensland with respect to force foreign service but length of time before they could be embarked for active service is obstacle to immediate availing of it. Offer by New South Wales was fully armed and equipped force to sail forthwith and other Governments will appreciate difference as regards immediate use. Force under orders is considered sufficient at present but if operations prolonged till autumn Her Majesty's Government would gladly take into consideration offer.”

We know now that nothing further came of it. There were some negotiations between the Agents-General and the War Office, and finally, of course, as we all know, the operations in Africa were discontinued. As to the accusation that the Government has taken credit for what they have not done, it is simply ridiculous. The hon. gentleman then went on to quote from speeches said to have been delivered by members of the Government—speeches supposed to have been delivered long ago, before they became members of the Government, and to the effect that if once they got into power they would pass laws that no Government that came after them could interfere with. Well, the hon. gentleman in making that statement was drawing upon his imagination for his facts. The only thing said by any member of the Government, within my knowledge, that resembles even in the smallest degree that statement which the hon. gentleman has put forward was this: I have said on one occasion, and perhaps on more than one, not long ago, that we had since we had been in power passed laws which if they were only in force for a year or two would render impossible the carrying out of such schemes as the Transcontinental Railway scheme, and I am glad to think we have; glad to think that in a very few months it would be impossible for any Government to attempt to carry out such a scheme as that in Queensland. That I have said, and that I repeat; but for the rest, such a boast as the hon. gentleman credited us with would be idle. But it was never made, and if I ask where, and when, and by whom it was made the hon. gentleman cannot answer either question. The hon. gentleman then referred, as he often does, as a prophet of evil—though fortunately for the colony his prophecies seldom come true—to the terrible state of depression in the country. No industry in the colony was flourishing except the building industry in Brisbane. And how does the hon. member account for that? I do not profess to be a great financial authority, though the hon. member does, and this is the extraordinary theory he sets up, and

it certainly does not appear to me to be accurate or correct. There are, he says, immense quantities of money coming into the colony, and as the owners will not lend it for pastoral occupation and will not advance for agricultural pursuits, nothing can be done with it but to buy corner allotments. Financiers are generally supposed to know their own business, and it would be strange indeed to find them, in the face of depression in all the industries of the colony, coming into this poverty-stricken country and spending money in comparatively unproductive works. The hon. member's prophecy seems to me to be simple balderdash. We are perfectly aware that there is depression in the pastoral interest in the colony, and not only in this colony, but in the whole of Australia. We very much regret it, and I should be delighted to see it removed. And it is removed in many parts of the colony now; nor have we suffered so severely here in that respect as in many other parts of Australia. But to attribute the depression in the pastoral interest to the Government is simply idle. Then he referred to the Land Bill as being a blow to the pastoral interest. Of course he also spoke of a blow to the sugar interest. If people would only believe all that the hon. member tells us, it would appear that this Government, during the less than two years they have been in office, have been employed in trying to ruin all the interests of the colony. Still, in spite of them there is this plethora of money. Of course the hon. member knows as well as we do that the Government are not trying to ruin any interest. Hon. members opposite forget their own inconsistency. One day they refer to the Land Act as being entirely in favour of squatters—a squatter's Land Act, made in consequence of some unholy bargain with the squatters—and the next day we are told that the Land Act has dealt a cruel blow to the pastoral interest. What do hon. members mean? The only conclusion I can come to from their inconsistency is that they do not mean either one thing or the other, but they say what first comes into their heads. The hon. member of course repeated the story about the blow to the sugar interest. It would seem as if we have been inflicting blows upon the sugar interest ever since we came into power. If there was any blow inflicted upon the sugar industry it was inflicted at the last general election, when the electors of the colony distinctly told those engaged in it that they would not give them Indian coolie labour; and if we are responsible for any blow to the sugar interest it is, in so far as we have been responsible for educating the people to come to such a conclusion. The hon. member of course repeated the calumnies and statements made during the recess, and during last session, about the action of the Government in connection with immigration. The hon. member knows that the action of the Government has been perfectly consistent throughout from the inception to the end. There has not been the slightest deviation from the path which we have marked out for ourselves in our announcements in this House. It suits hon. members opposite, however, to say that we have departed from what we promised to do. It suits the hon. member to adopt that kind of warfare—to get up and say we have done nothing of the kind; but I say that we have done all that we could to induce employers to take advantage of the Immigration Acts; and that they have not taken advantage of the offers held out to them is their fault, and not the fault of the Government. But I would suggest this to some of these gentlemen: that if they did not mix up their business and politics in the way that they do, they would be more likely to

be successful in both; and so long as they act in the manner they now do there is little probability of their doing themselves any good or the Government very much harm. Politically and financially it would be to their interest to separate the two, and they might then get some advantage out of both. I do not think it necessary to refer further to the statement that the Government had tried to block German immigration, or any immigration whatever, for the planters. The Government have acted consistently throughout in this respect. We have done all we could to assist the planters, but what we have refused to do, and what we shall always refuse to do, is to enter into contracts for the planters and to make the engagements for them. If the planters want labourers they must engage them themselves, and the Government will assist them to bring them out. That is what the Government have always said: if the planters want labourers the Government will assist to bring them out, but they will not engage them. There is an agent appointed by the Government and supplied with the fullest instructions that can be given at present. If the persons who wish to employ labourers will give the required information, the necessary arrangements for the immigration of labourers can be made by wire if necessary. Further than that the Government cannot go. We cannot, as someone suggested, bring a thousand men, and send them round to the employers to see if they want them. We have heard to-day of unemployed men going round from place to place in the North in want of work, and we are also told that employers there cannot get labour. However, I say that if there is a dearth of labour in one place the employers have themselves to blame for it, because they deliberately set themselves to drive every white man out of the district. When a man came to them and asked them for work, he was told, with an oath, to go to Griffith and ask him for work.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Where is that?

The PREMIER: At Mackay, if the hon. member wants to know where. It is notorious. It has been the case for months and months, and now these same people telegraph to us to supply them instantly with 200 white labourers! There is a Nemesis in human affairs—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: There is indeed; I have said so before in other words; and if people persist in doing these things—well, the retributive Nemesis comes much quicker sometimes, Mr. Speaker, than is commonly thought.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You are Nemesis' assistant.

The PREMIER: Quicker than is thought by hon. gentlemen opposite. The hon. gentleman then referred to our work of last session, and said it consisted of a Land Bill and a Loan Bill. With regard to the Loan Bill he has made the same extraordinary statements so often that, like others he has made, he has got to believe them. He said that the only tie which binds the party on this side of the House together is the fear that if they vote against the Government they will not get any money spent out of the loan.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman's experience of office must have been very unfortunate. I suppose he has acquired his knowledge of the nature of members of Parliament from his own dealings with them when in office; but does not the absurdity of the statement occur to him? Surely he has sufficient humour to see the absurdity of the proposition of keeping a party

together by what is already voted! If it were something to be voted, or a promise of something to be voted, the hon. gentleman from his own experience might say that there was something in it. The statement bears on the face of it its own refutation.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about Bowen?

THE PREMIER: I think there are very good reasons why the railway to Bowen should not be made. What is it that keeps the Government in power? It is that public opinion is in favour of them. That is what keeps the party together, and when public opinion ceases to be in favour of the Government, I hope the Government will cease to be a Government, and that we shall not follow the example of some of our predecessors and continue to hold office after they were condemned by public opinion almost unanimously throughout the colony.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Triennial Parliaments.

THE PREMIER: What about triennial Parliaments? I do not understand the hon. gentleman's interjection. The hon. gentleman next told us that the Land Act has stopped settlement. He told us ever so many times last session that it was going to stop settlement, and now he says selection is stopped. But, sir, does he—does any sane man—suppose for a moment that you can introduce a radical change in the land laws of the colony without some wrench—without some temporary cessation of operations? The Land Act came into operation on the 1st March, and does he expect that in four months we could do what it took years to carry out under the operation of former Acts? Did he, did anybody ever dream that the land would be all surveyed, valued, and open to selection in three or four months? Nobody ever expected or dreamt anything of the kind. It was pointed out over and over again, during the debate on the Bill—only hon. members opposite would turn a deaf ear to what they did not like to hear—what the consequences would be—that there would be a temporary cessation of operations, as must be the case when any unusual change in the law is made. The Act cannot be brought into operation all at once. No hon. member knows better than the hon. gentleman that, so far as pastoral lands are concerned, they cannot be valued and opened for selection for months.

MR. MOREHEAD: Nonsense; you don't mean that!

THE PREMIER: The hon. member knows that those lands cannot be made available until the runs are divided and the resumed halves are surveyed. It is perfectly idle to talk in that way. Hon. members may think it funny. It is something the same sort of thing as playing practical jokes upon children, and saying, "Look at this dreadful Government we have in power not allowing any land to be open for selection," when they know that under the law, as it stands, it could not be open to selection in the time. Then it is said, "This is the consequence of the maladministration of the Government."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Of course.

THE PREMIER: I knew the hon. member was only joking, and I should only like to say that Parliament is not the place to play practical jokes in. The hon. member should speak seriously occasionally. We know that he is very amusing sometimes, but when he does these things over and over again, and seeks every opportunity for practical joking, it does not redound to his credit or to his Parliamentary reputation. The Land Bill, Mr. Speaker, was introduced for the purpose of making a great

reform—as we believed, and believe—in our land laws, and to give a great increase to the revenue of the colony.

MR. MOREHEAD: To pay the interest on the ten-million loan?

THE PREMIER: Yes, to pay the interest on all the loans of last year; and hon. members knew all along, what every sane man must have known, that that could not be done all at once. We always said that it could not possibly be done in one year, and as yet there has been only three or four months during which the Act has been in operation. It is true that a temporary difficulty has arisen. It is a difficulty that no doubt will require some careful consideration; it may cause some temporary embarrassment in our financial affairs—I do not mean embarrassment actually in the Treasury—but some anxiety to those who have to keep our finances in proper order. It necessarily will do that; but we knew that all along. When hon. members last year said there would be no increase of revenue under the Act during the first year they were beating the air. We all knew it.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You never said it. When we told you, you would not believe us.

THE PREMIER: What I say now I said all along. I am saying nothing new on the subject, but then hon. members opposite did not want to listen. Having got a particular fad into their heads and given utterance to it, they did not listen to the arguments brought forward against it, and at last they came to think that nobody had noticed them, and that they had made a new discovery. But I say that we all knew what the consequences would be, and I said that when the Act was fairly in operation one consequence would be that it would become impossible for any succeeding Government, not to repeal it, but to work such a scheme as was contemplated two years ago. The hon. gentleman's inconsistency is marvellous. Sometimes he says the effect will be that all the land of the colony will be taken up directly. I only hope it will. As soon as we can get all the lands of this colony settled by as many people as it will hold, I think we shall have done our duty; and we shall have done a great deal more for the welfare of the colony by our scheme than by that proposed by the hon. gentleman.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does not the hon. gentleman know it is all leased now?

THE PREMIER: The hon. gentleman asks such funny questions. Do I not know it is leased? It is leased, but under a most wasteful and extravagant system—wasteful to the country because it does not get fair value for its land, and wasteful also because the holder has not a tenure to enable him to make proper use of it. That was discussed over and over again last session. The hon. member does not seem to have learned anything since last session on the subject. The hon. leader of the Opposition referred to the floating of the loan, which, he said, was our only other achievement; but before passing on to that I wish to say a word or two about the fact that we propose to take power to suspend the provision with regard to survey before selection in the case of land in some districts. The hon. gentleman calls that "repealing the Land Act." Of course, he may call it anything—he may call it "flying kites" if he pleases. But it is perfectly well known that in the older districts of the colony the land has been picked over and over a good many times, and it is not worth while to survey the land remaining unselected. In the next place it is very likely that men looking out for pieces of land to select would not take up the pieces that were surveyed, and therefore there is no

advantage in having survey before selection in such places, but there is an advantage in having it in those parts of the colony where the lands have not been picked over. The question of survey before selection was introduced here last session. The motion was made one afternoon by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates), and met with some discussion. If any mistake was made, I think hon. members who were present and who did not take part in the discussion are as much to blame as others. Certainly the Government and the country cannot congratulate themselves on having received any assistance whatever from hon. members opposite on that occasion. I hope it will never be recognised as a rule of this House, that if hon. members think a mistake is being made in the interests of the country they should sit silent and wait until some succeeding year, and then talk about the mistake that has been made. It is the duty of hon. members on both sides to take an active part in legislation for the good of the country. I do not think any mistake was made in that respect, excepting that if it had been a little more fully discussed—and hon. members will not forget that I did my best to get them to discuss it more fully—we should have given more consideration to the matter of the older settled districts. With that amendment—a very trifling one after all—I think the Land Act will require no further alteration for a long time to come. I am aware the hon. member opposite does not think so. It does not produce revenue in the way he would like it to do—namely, by selling the land. By living from hand to mouth it is always easy to make a revenue. We could have had a surplus this year of £200,000 or £300,000 without any trouble, simply by adopting the means the hon. member did. But we did not consider living from hand to mouth like that was the way to manage the finances of the colony. We would prefer to see even a deficiency in one year if it would be made up by a large surplus years afterwards, rather than get a temporary surplus at the expense of the future. That is the difference between us. We certainly are not going, as long as we are here, to sacrifice the future for the convenience of the present. The hon. gentleman then passed to the loan. Not having had the making of it, of course he considers it very wicked. He wished it to be understood that the Colonial Treasurer, in introducing it, had given it to be understood that the money was all to be borrowed at once, and that the Agent-General had taken upon himself to correct that misapprehension. It is quite true that the Agent-General pointed out that the money was not to be all borrowed at once. What he did was simply to state in London what had been stated here by my hon. friend and colleague the Colonial Treasurer in his place in Parliament, that the Government preferred to include in one Loan Bill sums of money that were expected to be sufficient to carry out the works that were authorised at the time. The Agent-General made no correction in what the Colonial Treasurer had said. The hon. member opposite thinks the loan did not fetch a satisfactory price. I think that, under all the circumstances, it fetched a very satisfactory price. Certainly it did not fetch as good a price as it might have done if the circumstances had been different. Those circumstances were peculiar—very peculiar. There was a threat of war—all Europe believed that in a few days there was going to be war between Great Britain and Russia—and it was a difficult thing for the Government to know what was best to be done. We were not in any financial straits, because we had money enough to carry on for a considerable time, and if there had been any danger of running short of money for

works already authorised, the difficulty would have been got over by the voluntary offer on the part of the Bank of England, of money reasonably required up to the end of the year. An offer to the extent of a million—entirely unsolicited by the Government—was made by the Bank of England, and I was very much pleased as well as surprised to receive that offer. At any rate it showed that all persons do not share the pessimist views of the hon. member who now leads the Opposition, and that even in Great Britain there are some persons who think that the affairs of this colony can be managed without his assistance. If it had been necessary we should have taken advantage of that offer, but we thought it much better to float a certain portion of the loan authorised, at a convenient time. We were in daily communication with the Agent-General, and we had the advantage of the advice given by our financial advisers in England. First, we had the advantage of the advice of the Bank of England; we had also the advantage of assistance from the London managers of the Queensland National Bank, who gave that assistance most loyally, and, I believe, entirely in the interests of the colony; we had also assistance from other persons, and that advice was communicated from time to time to us by the Agent-General. But all the while there was danger of war with Russia, the relations between the two countries being in a very strained condition. We finally thought it best to leave it to the judgment of our financial advisers in England to decide upon the best time to float the loan. Then came into operation certain forces which we had anticipated for some time, and which we had been warned of by the Agent-General—namely, an attack on the Queensland loan in England, not by financiers but by political opponents of the present Government. Of that we had warning at the beginning of the year, and, as we anticipated, attacks were made in various financial newspapers in Great Britain; and as far as can be ascertained from the best authorities, in the absence of the original documents, those attacks came from political opponents of the present Government of Queensland. I do not accuse the hon. gentleman opposite of being a party to those attacks, but I am sorry for his allies in Great Britain. I have no doubt that those attempts to ruin our credit were made by political enemies of the Government. That is a sort of political warfare very much to be deprecated; it does no good to those who engage in it, and it may do harm to the colony, but retribution will certainly come. That it was simply a conspiracy to injure the credit of the colony is sufficiently shown by the fact that letters appeared in various papers purporting to come from different parts of England in almost identical language, saying, amongst other things, that the repayment of the loan was not guaranteed by Great Britain; as if anybody ever said it was! There was also published an entirely garbled extract from a speech of the Colonial Treasurer. No one, reading both speech and extract, could fail to see how shamefully the meaning of the Treasurer was distorted; and I should like to know who was the man in Queensland who got up that conspiracy to damage the Queensland loan—for I have not the slightest doubt that it was got up in Queensland, if not in Brisbane, by enemies of the Government, who thought that if they could succeed in damaging the position of the Government, even at the expense of damaging the credit of the colony, they would be doing a good work. I should like to see those men exposed. I wonder whether I am now addressing any person who was a party to that conspiracy. That the attacks were political

and not financial is beyond the shadow of a doubt, but I do not think they had much effect on the loan—they were ill-managed and did not have the desired effect. If we could only find out the man who originated the conspiracy, he would be a marked man for the remainder of his life in Queensland; unpatriotic conduct of that kind would never and ought never to be forgiven. However, the loan fetched probably 10s. less than it otherwise would have done.

The HON. SIR T. McILLWRAITH: £2 10s.

The PREMIER: Ten shillings less than it otherwise would have done, from the fact that the very morning the loan was floated there came a message from St. Petersburg indicating that war was almost certain.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Was not that telegram sent from Brisbane too?

The PREMIER: I do not know. Perhaps the hon. gentleman may be in the secret. Statements in reference to the loan were sent to different papers in the form of a circular, and some put them in, while others left them out; but that there was a distinct organised attack on the loan by natural enemies of the colony, and political enemies of the present Government, is undoubted; and I hope no hon. member of this House was an accomplice in the crime. The hon. gentleman said that the Speech contained a very meagre programme, but if we can dispose of the whole of that programme, as I trust we shall, I think that the amount of work done this session will bear favourable comparison with that done during any session of the Queensland Parliament, or the Parliament of any other colony. There will be plenty of work to do, though the subjects to be considered will probably not excite any great amount of party feeling or animosity. The leader of the Opposition did not refer to New Guinea, and I was rather surprised at that; but he did refer to the islanders returned to New Guinea and its islands by the Government, and accused us of trying to pose before the people of Great Britain as philanthropists, or something of that kind. What did the Government do? I consider they simply did their plain duty in the matter. But from his speech the hon. gentleman left one thing perfectly plain—that if he had been in office those men would never have been sent back to their homes. The hon. member of course repeated the slander he uttered last year—that the present Government are responsible for the abuses in the labour trade. And why? Because the ships by which those abuses were committed sailed from Brisbane after the present Government came into office. But when the Government came into office we could not at once revolutionise the whole system. Three or four months elapsed before we were able to discover what was really going on, and it was during that time that the ships complained of went to sea, under the *régime* initiated and carried out by the hon. member and his colleagues. Our consciences are clear so far as that goes. Then the hon. gentleman reviewed the constitution of the Commission appointed to investigate the alleged abuses, but if the hon. gentleman had been in office it is highly improbable that a commission would have been appointed at all—he would have denounced the whole story as a fabrication. And if a commission had been appointed, it would not have been like the one appointed recently. That Commission consisted of three members—Mr. Buckland, the member for Bulimba, Mr. W. Kinnaid Rose, and Mr. Milman. In respect to Mr. Rose, the hon. member was fair—he had nothing to say against him. He said that gentleman wrote the report. Well, if he did, it does him credit. Whoever wrote the report, it is a remarkably

able report, and I think it is entirely founded on the evidence. The hon. member referred to Mr. Buckland and said he ought not to have been on the Commission. But that Commission was the kind of commission on which, according to the practice of Great Britain and her colonies, it is usual to place a member of Parliament; and the appointment of Mr. Buckland, therefore, was entirely in accordance with that practice. Can any member who knows the hon. member for Bulimba point to any man in this colony who is his superior as a man of sound common sense, likely to come to a correct conclusion as to questions of fact, and whose opinion would be of more weight? I do not know of any. We all know the kind of man required for a jurymen. I do not know whether the hon. member for Bulimba is present, but if he is, I have no objection to say in his presence what I have said in his absence—namely, that he is a kind of typically good jurymen, whose opinion concerning questions of fact is valuable and valued. As to saying that the fee for his services was bribery, the hon. member knows the proper term by which to characterise that statement. It is without any foundation at all. The leader of the Opposition has quoted the language I used on a previous occasion when I accused him of bribing members of Parliament. But the occasion when I referred to bribing members of Parliament was when money was handed out of the Treasury to pay members for work they never did. This case is entirely different. The work done was arduous and difficult, and never has service more richly deserved the paltry remuneration that was given than the services of these Commissioners. I am quite well aware that members opposite are intensely indignant that such a commission should have been appointed; but, as I have said, the Government have done what they considered their duty, and they do not want any credit for it. The hon. gentleman also referred with unfairness to Mr. Milman, and said that he had judged the case and was bound to give the finding he did. Why? Because he was concerned in the seizure of the "Forest King." The hon. member says he has read the evidence through very carefully. Well, if he has read it he must have seen that Mr. Milman was not present when the islanders brought by the "Forest King" were examined. Mr. Milman, fearing that it might be thought he was biased, was not present at that part of the proceedings of the Commission. As to the rest of the hon. gentleman's remarks on this subject, I challenge any man to read the evidence with a desire to arrive at the truth—and not with a determination to burk the truth—and come to any other conclusion than the Commissioners came to; and when they came to that conclusion what course was open to the Government except to return the islanders? There was no other course. The hon. gentleman does not see any harm in the way these men were introduced. What he blames us for is that some officers of the Government did not make allowance for delay at Flat-top Island. It does not strike him as a serious thing that the islanders were wrongfully obtained, but when twenty or thirty men are kept on board a steamer at Flat-top Island for twelve hours without any food, he says that is an act of atrocious cruelty. The hon. gentleman has entirely inverted the real position of things in this matter. What other persons regard as grave matters he considers as of no consequence, and what others consider to be of less consequence he thinks are of grave importance. However, the action is done now; the men have gone; and we take the responsibility of what we have done. We will ask Parliament to vote the necessary expenditure, and I am sure that it will be cheerfully voted. Another matter the hon. member referred

to was the appointment of additional members to the Legislative Council, and he spoke of some communication which I have not heard of before, and which he said had passed between himself and Sir Arthur Kennedy with reference to the appointment of additional members to the Legislative Council. He said that on previous occasions Governments had been refused the opportunity of redressing the balance or inequalities of parties in the Legislative Council, and he thought the practice ought to be continued. But I do not know of any instance in which a Governor has been asked to redress the inequality of parties in the Council. But does the hon. gentleman forget that a Government of the party with which he is connected appointed at once five members to the House, and was strongly censured by the Secretary of State for so doing? Does he know that during the time he was in office he increased the number of members in the Legislative Council by three—not filling vacancies—and that when he was actually beaten at the polls, and there was no possibility even if all the candidates he had in the field were returned of his having a majority, he persuaded the Governor or the Administrator of the Government to appoint two members to the Upper House? Does he remember all this and object to two members being put in the Council at the present time? I do not know that it is important that there should always be a vacancy when a member is appointed to the Legislative Council. I certainly deprecate packing the Council except under circumstances of extreme urgency, which I have never seen in this colony. The hon. gentleman can never complain that he has not had an opportunity of redressing the inequalities of parties in the Council. At the present time there is one member of that Chamber who has been absent three whole sessions, and his name still appears on the roll. Is he to remain absent for ever? Is a fair representation in that House to be postponed until vacancies occur? We know one other member of that House, who, although his place has not been formally declared vacant, will never be back again. The present position of the constitution of that House, in which a man is allowed to be absent two whole years before his seat can be declared vacant, is an extreme anomaly, especially when it is remembered that leave of absence may be granted, as it has been granted indiscriminately, to members to go away for years at a time. I do not think, however, the Government will follow the example of the hon. gentleman in increasing the number of members of the Legislative Council unless other circumstances take place to justify it. As to the attack made with reference to the appointment of these two members, it entirely misses its mark. The hon. member indicated that in his opinion the present Government was losing its hold on the people. That is entirely a matter of opinion. The hon. member says no one knows better than himself the hollowness of apparent welcome and support. No doubt the hon. member has had his share of that experience, but perhaps others may not be so unfortunate. I think I can gauge pretty well the sincerity of the apparent warmth of public expressions of opinion. During the short time we have been in office—considerably less than two years—in which we have had an exceptional amount of legislation and an exceptional amount of important work almost entirely new, I believe we have done nothing to forfeit the confidence of the people. As for administration during this last recess, it has been practically no recess at all. The work has enormously increased, and although I have been relieved of the Department of Education, I have found it impossible to do all I should have liked to do. The hon. member

professed to give a history of the shortcomings of all the members of the Government; but, as on a previous occasion when he attempted to do that, he stopped in the middle. He said the Minister for Works was a total failure, and why?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Because he is.

The PREMIER: Because he let a contract for £5,000 less than the contractor wanted. I fail to see the force of that argument. The Minister for Works was under no obligation to the contractor, and had a perfect right to endeavour to induce him to take the contract at a price less than he first asked. I think the price is a very good one indeed—remarkably good; it is probably the best contract the contractor ever had. The complaint against the Minister for Lands was that he had altered the Timber Regulations. The hon. member was not aware that a royalty could be imposed. If he looks at the Land Act he will find that word is expressly used. The regulations were made the day after the Act came into operation, and it was not strange that there should be some inaccuracy—that they should be capable of some improvement. We do not profess to do everything perfectly right all at once; and we do not care to defend ourselves by saying that our predecessors did just the same as we have done, only a great deal worse. It is not worth while to do that. Then as for the Treasurer, the great mistake he made was that some regulations about overtime were not finally made in the shape in which they were originally contemplated. The hon. gentleman has been engaged for six months in trying to pick holes in the conduct of the Government, and bring up all their sins, and what a poor array of facts he has brought forward! I have felt some difficulty in answering them—it is difficult to catch hold of anything to answer. What have we done after all? We have done exactly what we said we were going to do last year. The hon. member objected to our doing it then; now he objects to our having done it. I have no doubt the hon. member will have an opportunity, when we come to the finances of the colony, of saying a good deal. The land revenue has necessarily been diminished by the change in the land law, and we shall have to set ourselves to make both ends meet, which I have no doubt we shall be able to do without any difficulty. The time has not yet arrived for the discussion of that matter. The hon. member, when he was talking about the delay in connection with the Land Act, might have thought of the neighbouring colony, where a new Act has been in operation more than six months, and not a single acre of land has yet been offered for selection. We have seen that where any land has been thrown open under the present Act there has been an ample number of applicants. I have no doubt that by the time we meet Parliament next year the hon. member will have found some other mode of attacking the Land Act. He will probably find then that there are too many selectors, or that the colony is not large enough. I shall not keep the attention of the House longer, Mr. Speaker. I hope that during the present session we shall be able to dispose of most, or all, of the measures mentioned in the Governor's Speech; and of course there are other matters not sufficiently important to find a place there. I trust that, without making the session very long, we shall be able to do an amount of work for which our constituents will thank us, and which they will appreciate.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it would be very unwise

to adjourn the debate now. We have sat after tea, and we may as well go on. I presume the hon. member who moved the adjournment of the House is prepared to follow my hon. friend the Premier, and we are prepared to listen with great attention to what he has to say. I would ask the hon. member what reason he has for moving the adjournment at the present time?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The only reason is a desire to forward the Government business by having a full discussion on the programme before us. Several members on my side of the House are not in a position to go on with the debate to-night. I do not want to stop any longer, and I know my hon. friend, Mr. Macrossan, does not want to stop either. He is not well.

The PREMIER: It is a very unusual thing to propose the adjournment of the debate at this hour; it is entirely an innovation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is not.

The PREMIER: It was done last year under special circumstances, as a particular favour to an hon. gentleman who had only arrived that morning.

Mr. STEVENSON: That is the case now.

The PREMIER: I have frequently heard the present leader of the Opposition say he could see no reason why the debate should not close in one evening. We do not desire to do that now, but we do desire to get on with the business. The hon. member gave no reason for wishing to adjourn.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I gave the reason.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said that some members wanted to stop. It is not the practice to adjourn the debate so early, it is entirely an innovation, and an extremely undesirable one. Of course the Government have no desire to push on against the wishes of hon. members, but some better reason should be given for adjourning.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The reason given by the Colonial Treasurer for continuing the debate—that we have sat after tea and may as well go on—is no reason at all. I do not think it a full and sufficient reason. A good reason has been given by members why we should not go on. It is well that we should have the papers before us and the speech of the Colonial Secretary carefully checked and revised before a reply is made to it. We should have time to read his statement carefully, although we are not in any way anxious to prolong the debate. I have no doubt it will be closed this week, although no pledge to that effect has been given; but at all events the reason given by the leader of the Opposition ought to be a sufficient one, and that is that hon. members on this side who wish to speak are not physically capable of going on to-night. The hon. member who moved the adjournment of the debate has a severe cold and many others are not inclined to go on. We did not anticipate that any objection would be raised to such a reasonable proposition, and as the same course was pursued last session—

The PREMIER: As a personal favour.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No such thing. We do not want personal favours from the hon. gentleman. I do not think that any hon. member is entitled to expect personal favours in such a matter. We put this forward as a reasonable request, and it is no more than a reasonable and generous majority should grant.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The Premier must have misunderstood me. I asked

this because so many members are not able to sit in the House to-night. I cannot sit much longer, and I should like to hear the debate.

The PREMIER: I did not understand that.

Mr. KATES: I hope the hon. gentleman will consent to the proposition. The member for Townsville has said that he cannot go on, and asked that the debate be adjourned. Considering that the Speech has only been delivered this afternoon, there are things contained in it that hon. members want to consider.

The PREMIER: I did not understand the hon. member opposite to say that hon. members could not sit in the House any longer this evening. It may have been my obtuseness, or I may not have heard correctly, but I did not understand that. If I had understood it I should have at once acceded to the request.

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

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at a quarter to 8 o'clock until 3 o'clock to-morrow.