

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 25 November, 1887.

Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment.—Mr. Railway Surveyor Delisser.—Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act Amendment Bill—Further consideration in committee.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—
By Mr. NORTON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing—

1. The names of all land-owners on the proposed route of the first section of the Cleveland Railway who have not consented to give their land for railway purposes.
2. The area required from each of the above land-owners.
3. The estimated value of the land in each case.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MR. RAILWAY SURVEYOR DELISSER.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of referring to a matter which, I must confess, has given me some uneasiness. I referred some time ago to the employment of Mr. Delisser, railway surveyor, on the Gladstone to Bundaberg Railway, and I then mentioned that I had been informed by an authority which I considered to be reliable that Mr. Hannam, Engineer in charge of the Northern Division, had refused to give employment to Mr. Delisser. As I have given notice of motion calling for the papers in connection with that matter, I need not refer to it further now. But I may say that in connection with some other matters, I referred to conversations I had with Mr. Stanley, Chief Engineer of the Southern Division, from which I understood that Mr. Delisser had been sent to carry out the permanent surveys of the line from Gladstone to Bundaberg. From those conversations I was quite satisfied that Mr. Stanley was under the impression that Mr. Delisser, after some preliminary work, was to go on with the permanent surveys. Since that time I have seen Mr. Delisser, and he represented to me that I must have been under some misunderstanding in regard to the real facts of the case. He also left some letters and papers with me, which he asked me to go carefully into. I intended to allow the whole matter to stand over until the Estimates of the Survey Department were being dealt with; but I have since considered that I may as well take advantage of the present opportunity, and not delay it further; because I have been led into doing Mr. Delisser

some injustice. I believe the Chief Engineer was not aware of the instructions under which Mr. Delisser was acting, and he expressed some surprise to me that the work had not been gone on with further. Of course, so far as I am personally concerned, I should deeply regret, if by any remarks of mine I have done Mr. Delisser, or any other man, an injustice. But acting upon the information which was given to me, and not supposing for a moment that the Engineer and I had been under any misapprehension in regard to the subject, I made the remarks I did. Of course what statements I made upon that occasion were made on the supposition that Mr. Delisser was actually going on with the permanent work. I knew he had been sent there to do the permanent survey, the trial survey having been already carried out, and it was only natural for me to suppose that the permanent survey had been in course of being carried out from the very first. I am not going to read any of the papers I hold in my hand except one—namely, the letter from Mr. Delisser; but I may say that I have looked over the others, and I find that Mr. Delisser's statement is borne out by them. The letter is addressed to myself, and is as follows:—

“DEAR SIR,

“I have again to trouble you in reference to some remarks which you expressed about me in the House, and which were reported in the *Courier* of October 14th last. I herewith forward the extract from the paper containing the phrases to which I take exception, as I am quite assured now that you have been labouring under a delusion, or rather a misunderstanding. I herewith enclose for your information copies of my instructions when I first went to Gladstone, from which you will see that I was obliged to follow the instructions given me by the inspecting surveyor, and am not responsible for delays occasioned thereby. I have seen the Chief Engineer and complained to him that proper contradiction to your remarks had not been given to you before. He informed me that he was ignorant of the instructions I had received from the inspecting surveyor, but he was aware that I was doing the trial work, which was necessary to carry on the permanent survey, and that he had told you he considered I was going on with permanent survey. He promised me to look over my instructions and to see that you received correct information on the matter. In the accompanying paragraph from the *Courier* you are made to state that when you ‘went up to Port Curtis a few months ago Mr. Delisser had then been there some weeks, and the Chief Engineer said he had been delayed on account of wet weather.’ You will perceive from my instructions, dated 14th March, from Mr. North, that I had to perform a deviation for a line from Cooke’s Gap, which is on the Rockhampton survey, to join a trial line formerly made, with the intention that a station should, if possible, be put on the mud flats to the east of Gladstone. By a copy of my telegram, dated the 18th March (also forwarded), you will see that I telegraphed virtually to the effect that it was not advisable to carry out his instructions. The reply I got was still to carry out Mr. North’s instructions. Copy of my report on this deviation I herewith forward you. You also state that, ‘long after the Chief Engineer thought I was going on with the permanent survey I had hardly begun it, but had been going on all the time with the trial surveys.’ You will see from the copies of the instructions I now forward that I was bound to carry them out. Authority was given the Chief Engineer to make the permanent survey, and I was appointed by him to do the same, yet the extra trial work which the Chief Engineer required, and which I was instructed to do by the inspecting surveyor, was of such an extent that out of 35 miles of the original survey there was little more than three which could be said to be the same. It was not until the end of June last that I received any authority to go on with the permanent work. During the time I was completing the work contained in the instructions of the inspecting surveyor I found, and subsequently reported on, a much better route, which has since been adopted by the Chief Engineer; and thus, so far from proving ‘that Mr. Delisser, however competent he might be to do that kind of work in open flat country, did not get on well with it in the kind of country in which he was employed,’ I claim that I have shown on this special survey peculiar aptitude for surveying in difficult country, and in this

particular instance I have saved the colony several thousand pounds. The original trial survey by a former surveyor was carried for long distances through swamps and mangroves, sometimes several feet below high-water mark. The present Chief Engineer objected to the route, and the inspecting surveyor, acting for him, gave me instructions which I was bound to carry out (before I could report upon any better line) to take the surveys between the spurs and the high-water mark of the mud flats. After having completed his instructions, I reported on them, showing the interference we made with the public road, throughout nearly the whole extent, as far as 11 miles from Gladstone, also the necessity of using very sharp curves to prevent most expensive cuttings and embankments, and, at the same time, reporting on the better route. I had to show, also, that between my proposed route and that as followed by the inspecting surveyor, there was no better line to adopt. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying had I not been trammelled with instructions that I, as an experienced surveyor, should never have had, that the permanent survey of the first 35 miles from Gladstone would have been completed by this time. To show my anxiety to push on the work, I applied two or three times for a draftsman, and also for more men, as on the kind of work on which I was engaged it was absurd to give me such a small staff. I must apologise for the length of this letter, but it is a most serious affair to me to have my professional character assailed, after so long a career, during which my sole endeavour has been to give satisfaction to those under whom I have been serving. After a residence in the colonies since 1852, and a professional career of thirty-one years, and a residence in Queensland since 1868, fourteen years of which I have been in the Railway Department, and have obtained first-class testimonials from the Chief Engineers under whom I have been acting, my statements here can be all verified by reference to the correspondence in the Chief Engineer's Office.

"I am, etc.,
"E. A. DELISSER."

From this letter Mr. Delisser seems to have been carrying out trial surveys under instructions from the inspecting surveyor, and the remarks I applied to him regarding the delay were therefore unjustified. I take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Minister for Works to the matter, because it is quite possible that he too may have been misled; and I express my regret that, from information supplied to me—information which was supplied without any intent to do Mr. Delisser any harm, but supplied through the Chief Engineer himself being misled—I regret that I said anything which could by any possibility have done Mr. Delisser any possible injury; and I hope the Minister for Works will look into the matter in order that, if possible, any prejudice that may have existed in his mind towards Mr. Delisser may be removed as far as possible. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—As far as I understand what I heard of the letter and of the remarks made by the hon. member, we are now told that the rate at which the surveys were carried on was due to the district engineer and not to Mr. Delisser. I do not know anything about the delay in making the survey; I only know that Mr. Delisser was not removed in consequence of incompetency, but because there were more men in the Surveyor's department than were required for the work in hand, and it remained for the Engineer to say what men should be dispensed with. Mr. Delisser was one whose services were dispensed with by the Engineer, but I do not know anything about his competency.

Mr. NORTON, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that I said anything in my remarks to justify the Minister for Works in stating that I desire to put the cause of the delay in this matter on the inspecting surveyor. I simply said that Mr. Delisser's statements in that letter are borne out by the copy of his instructions

which has been placed in my hands. Whether there has been any unnecessary delay or not I do not know, but a great deal of time has certainly been occupied in the work, and that seems to be explained by the letter I read from Mr. Delisser. I am not in a position to say whether the delay was justifiable or not, but I do say that a considerable time has been spent in making trial surveys instead of going on with the permanent work. There has been a number of months occupied in doing a few miles, but the copy of instructions I have received entirely removes all blame from Mr. Delisser.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

MARYBOROUGH AND URANGAN RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the House went into Committee of the Whole to further consider this Bill in detail.

Question—That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put.

Mr. FOXTON said it would be remembered that about a fortnight ago that measure was well debated, and on that occasion it was suggested that the company, which was practically the Transcontinental Syndicate, should be communicated with, in order that they might deposit the sum of £3,000 in the Treasury before the Bill became law. The representatives of the company in the colony had, to his personal knowledge, used their best endeavours to get into communication with the syndicate in England, and induce them to remit the money; but, unfortunately, as he explained the previous day, the telegrams which had since passed between them had been mutilated, and the correspondents at each end appeared to have been at cross purposes. He thought it possible that the matter might have been explained that day, but nothing further had transpired, except that a letter had been received explaining a former mutilated telegram, and that, of course, threw no light on the subject. He was, therefore, unable to do more than assure those members who were so strenuously opposed to the Bill that the money would be deposited in the Treasury. At the same time, he still held to the views he expressed on a former occasion, that he could not see that the country would be one bit the worse for allowing the measure to become law in its present form, and he did not know that he need go over the arguments that had been used *ad nauseam* to endeavour to prove that position. He desired, however, to direct the attention of hon. members to clause 5 of the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act. It provided that the company, before it should be allowed to go on with the line, should have a capital subscribed in good faith, and by responsible persons, equal to £1,000 for every mile of railway, as shown on the deposited plans, and a paid-up capital, actually available for the construction of the said railway, equal to not less than one-tenth of such subscribed capital. That was deemed to be a very fair provision in the principal Act, and it did seem to him that if that were considered proper security to give in the first instance, it ought to be so regarded at the present time. The syndicate in England, in addition to what they had already paid, were, he believed, liable now to Mr. Rawlins or somebody else for something like £2,000 whether the Bill went through or not. That, in itself, although the £3,000 was not paid into the Treasury, was a very tolerable guarantee of their *bona fides* and of their intention to carry out that railway. He believed that

would be admitted by all hon. members except those who saw in the Transcontinental Syndicate a dreadful bogey. It would also, he thought, be generally admitted that the construction of that line, either by the Government or by private individuals, with a power of purchase reserved to the Government, would be a boon to the district in which it would be made and to the colony at large; and it would be very many years before it could be constructed if it was not constructed on the terms proposed in that Bill.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the hon. member in charge of that measure had not made it quite clear to him that he had got the money—the £3,000—but appeared simply to be in hopes that he would get it. That was not a position in which the Committee should be placed, and he would suggest to the hon. member that he withdraw the Bill once for all, and that they should hear no more about it. There was, however, another matter to which he (Mr. Brookes) would refer. He understood that the sum of £2,000 had been deposited already. He spoke considerably in the dark, and there might be difficulties in the way of what he proposed, but if the Bill was absolutely withdrawn he would like to see that £2,000 refunded. He did not think it would be quite generous, when such efforts had been made by the member in charge of the Bill, to refuse to return the money. He should be inclined, in the hope that they might keep the Transcontinental Syndicate across the ocean, to return the £2,000. He thought it might be handsomely returned, and the whole affair considered not only dead but buried.

Mr. FOXTON said he saw no reason why the Bill should be withdrawn, unless it was the will of the majority. He was perfectly willing to let it go to a vote, but he did not see why, at the request of the hon. member for North Brisbane, who, no doubt, was a very influential member, he should withdraw the measure, simply because he desired that it should be withdrawn. He had pointed out that the Transcontinental Syndicate was a limited company, and, of course, everyone would be aware that it was necessary in order to get at the funds of the company to give notice of calls, and it was gathered from the telegrams received by Messrs. Hart and Flower that it was impossible to give the necessary notice of calls to get the money in the time required by the Committee. Of course they were simply in communication with the secretary of the company, a man probably who had very limited discretion in the matter. He pointed that out on a previous occasion, but hon. members seemed to think it would be very simple to telegraph to England and get the money, but they forgot that probably a meeting of the company would have to be called in England, and possibly some of the directors might be out of England. Anyone acquainted with the making of public companies would see that it would be difficult to raise a call in that sudden manner. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, had maintained that he would like to see the £2,000 and interest returned to the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, and the Bill put aside. Now, that money would become absolutely forfeited in December, and if the hon. member was in favour of the return of the money in this instance what would he say if the additional £3,000 was deposited, and the work not carried out? Would he still be of the same opinion that the money should be returned? If the argument was good now that the £2,000 should be returned, would the hon. member recommend and support the return of the £5,000 and interest twelve months hence? If he would, what was the

advantage of depositing the £3,000 additional if the colony was not going to enforce it as a penalty for the non-completion of the contract? He did not see that there was much to be gained by the deposit of the £3,000 at all.

Mr. MURPHY said he came to the same conclusion as the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, that if the money was not forthcoming the Bill should be withdrawn. He understood that that was the arrangement, and he was quite sure that other hon. members of the Committee understood the same thing. He thought the hon. member was quite wrong to persevere with the Bill, because he was sure he would not get it through without the additional security.

Mr. W. BROOKES said if the hon. member for Carnarvon did not insist upon the return of the £2,000, he was not prepared to insist upon it.

Mr. DICKSON said he thought the hon. member for Carnarvon must remember that the Bill was supported by many who did not believe in the principle, but who gave their consent to it because it merely seemed to be an extension of an existing agreement, and that it would be considered rather sharp practice to take advantage of the termination of the original agreement, and forfeit the deposit if there were a probability of those who had obtained the advantage of legislation were allowed additional time for which they would make a further deposit. He thought the hon. gentleman had been treated very fairly in the matter, because the Committee had held over its final determination until the company had exhibited its *bona fides*. He thought they had failed to do so. The company had been allowed a reasonable time to forward the additional deposit, which, he thought, should have been arranged for before making the second application, and that deposit not being forthcoming, he thought the Committee were quite justified in requesting the hon. gentleman to withdraw the Bill. When the Bill was at its second reading, had it been a new proposal, he should certainly have opposed it, after the manner in which the colony had been treated by the original promoters of the scheme. The Wide Bay and Burnett district had been placed at a very marked disadvantage by the original proposals, and the delay which had since taken place in carrying out the work. Had it not been for the company, possibly the Government might have stepped in and provided the necessary funds for the construction of the line. At any rate, he thought they had seen enough to warn them to be cautious in assenting to any proposals of that kind in the future, and unless the hon. gentleman could now show the *bona fides* of the company, by depositing in the Treasury the additional sum, he ought to take the advice tendered to him by the member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, and withdraw the Bill, because the support he had received up to the present time was granted to him on the understanding that the company would prove their *bona fides*.

Mr. FOXTON said he disclaimed having given any undertaking such as had been mentioned by the hon. members for Enoggera and Barcoo. That was the expression which had been used by those hon. gentlemen.

Mr. DICKSON said he did not say the hon. gentleman gave any undertaking, but that he obtained the support of the Committee on the understanding that the company would show its *bona fides* and make the additional deposit.

Mr. FOXTON said perhaps he misunderstood the hon. gentleman. He thought the hon. gentleman said he had given an undertaking, but he had done nothing of the sort, and denied it entirely.

Mr. MURPHY said he did not mean to say that the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill gave any undertaking, but he allowed the Committee to understand that that would be the course to be pursued.

Mr. FOXTON said he denied that. He did nothing of the sort. A suggestion was made, he did not know by whom, that the matter should be postponed, and it was backed by the Premier, and he agreed to postpone it. He said very little at the time, but he agreed in a few words to postpone it to ascertain whether it might not be possible to get the money from England, and so satisfy the scruples of some hon. members. He certainly had never undertaken nor allowed it to be understood by anything he had said that the Bill would be withdrawn. A majority of the House had approved of the principles of the Bill by passing the second reading, and the Bill was now in the possession of the Committee, and he did not feel that he would be justified in taking upon himself the withdrawal of the Bill, nor would it be becoming on his part to do so. He thought they should, at all events, come to a vote upon the measure, and if a majority agreed to the clause before them they could go on. If, however, hon. members were prepared to obstruct the Bill they must accept the responsibility of doing so. He regretted that the hon. member for North Brisbane had spoken so low that he could hardly follow him, but he gathered from the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo that the hon. member was also of opinion that he (Mr. Foxton) had given an undertaking that the Bill would be withdrawn if the money was not paid.

Mr. W. BROOKES: No.

Mr. FOXTON said he could not hear all the hon. member had said, but he gathered that from the interpretation of his remarks by the hon. member for Barcoo. With regard to what the hon. member for Enoggera had said, it must be borne in mind that the proposal of the £3,000 deposit originated with the select committee, and until the report of that committee was conveyed to the syndicate in England they were in perfect ignorance that there was any desire that a further deposit should be made. The telegrams received, vague as they were, conveyed that idea. He understood there had been communications by the Government on the subject of the Bill, and that, while the Government signified their intention of supporting the extension of time asked for, no mention was then made of a further sum being required as a deposit. It was, he thought, scarcely fair to cavil at the syndicate for not having given evidence of their *bona fides*, when the evidence required had only been suggested by the select committee who reported upon the Bill a fortnight or three weeks ago, and of which the syndicate had only been apprised by telegraph. If the syndicate had received notice that a deposit of £3,000 or any other sum would be required, and ignored the desire of the House in that respect, the argument used would be a fair and just one; but to take them by surprise with a request for a deposit of £3,000, and knowing the difficulties of communication, to object that they had in so short a time failed to establish their *bona fides* by neglecting to forward the deposit, seemed to him an unfair way of meeting the question.

Mr. NORTON said he did not like the Bill in any shape or form, but he must say in support of the hon. member for Carnarvon that he did not understand from that gentleman that he would withdraw the Bill unless the money was produced. The hon. member had, he understood, withdrawn it from discussion for a time at the suggestion of the Premier—no doubt anticipating that the deposit would be forthcoming

He could not feel surprised at the position the hon. member had taken up, and were he himself in charge of the Bill he would probably take up a similar position. Some hon. members very strongly recommended that the Bill should not be dealt with until the money was paid down, and that probably led to the misconception that existed on the subject. While he agreed that the hon. member was justified in the position he had taken up, he considered that those opposed to it were just as much entitled to maintain the position they had previously taken up, and insist upon the money being deposited before they consented to go on with the consideration of the Bill. He had already said that he did not like the original Bill very much, and he felt now that, by consenting to pass the Bill before them, they would be conferring a favour, not upon the new syndicate prepared to come in and carry out the work, but upon the men who had failed to carry out the work after getting the House to pass the original Bill. Those men no doubt got that concession in order to put the proposal upon the market; and they came forward now and asked for the proposed concession and extension of time, in order that they might transfer the work to a new syndicate. If those men had lost by failing to carry out the work in the time fixed by Parliament, let them bear the loss. Why should that House make it up to them? If they had shown that their object was to carry out the work themselves, and that they had been unable to do it through circumstances they had been unable to control, he would have been disposed to treat them with some leniency. But they had not shown that, and he did not see why that House should be made use of by speculators. He hoped the Committee would not consent to the Bill being passed without the deposit of the money, and, as he had said, he would not care to see it passed even then, because the original promoters would get the benefit of the extension of time, and he did not feel any tenderness towards them at all. He did not think that House should be made an instrument by which companies were to be floated with a position they would not have unless a Bill had been passed by the House. Hon. members must decide for themselves whether they would allow the Bill to be passed, but he hoped it would not go any further.

The HON. G. THORN said that as the hon. member for Carnarvon had already postponed the Bill for a week, he would advise him now to postpone it indefinitely. It was very remarkable that there was not a single Wide Bay member present to assist him to get the Bill through committee. Why were they keeping out of the way? He was glad to see that the hon. member, Mr. Bailey, had just entered the Chamber; perhaps he would throw a little light on the subject. He intended to oppose the Bill in the interests of Maryborough, for reasons which he declined to state.

Mr. GRIMES said he was under the impression, from the discussion last week, that it was the intention of the hon. member for Carnarvon to withdraw the Bill if the money was not forthcoming by that day. His opposition to the Bill was as strong now as it had ever been, and he could see from the attitude of hon. members that there was very little likelihood of its getting through if the money did not turn up. With regard to the return of the forfeited deposit, as suggested by the hon. member, Mr. W. Brookes, he believed it would be dangerous to do so. The whole affair had been got up as an advertisement for the sale of land; it was the impression in the Wide Bay district that that was the purpose for which both the original Bill and the present

one had been introduced. If they returned the £2,000 to the promoters of the company they would be offering a strong inducement to other syndicates to get a very cheap advertisement at the cost of the taxpayer. He should object to the return of the money. Were it to be returned, together with interest for the time it had been lying in the Treasury, they would be flooded with proposals to obtain Bills for the erection of bridges, railways, and other works, merely in order to secure an advertisement for some land syndicate. It would be a waste of time to attempt to force the Bill on until the money was forthcoming, and he would advise the hon. member to postpone it for another week.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he did not believe in any more postponements. Even if the money did come, he should oppose the Bill all the same. The Bill was objectionable in itself, and if it was to be postponed at all, it should be postponed for not less a period than six months.

Mr. BAILEY said he agreed with the hon. member, Mr. Grimes, as to the non-return of the forfeited money. He wished it were ten times the amount, because he knew that that bogus company had prevented that part of his district from having a railway for some years—a railway that was absolutely needed. Every considerable town in the colony had railway access to the seaboard except Maryborough, and it had been deprived of such access by that bogus company, which had done the district ten times the damage that would be covered by the miserable sum which would be forfeited. The hon. member for Fassfern had twitted the Wide Bay members with not being present when the Bill came on. The reason was, they looked upon the proposal as so utterly absurd that they were quite sure no reasonable committee would entertain it. Those people were not investing any money in the colony; they were mere exploiters trying to gain a concession from the Government and palm it off upon the British public in the hope of getting gain by it. If the company had been a Queensland company he should not have objected to it, but he did object to men coming from abroad, getting valuable concessions, holding them for years without fulfilling their part of the contract, and then coming to the House and asking for further time, not to make a railway, but to float a company.

Mr. FOXTON: It is the same company.

Mr. BAILEY said it might be the same company, but they were not the same men. The men who had forfeited the £2,000 were not the men who would get it back if it was refunded. The original promoters had disappeared, with the exception of Mr. Rawlins, of whom they had heard so much. Even if the additional deposit had been paid, he should strongly oppose the concession being granted. He hoped that within a very few years they would see a line made to the seaboard from Maryborough by the Government, in the same way as Rockhampton and Brisbane had been connected with their seaboard.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. member must speak for himself and not for both the members for Wide Bay. He had reason to believe that the hon. member's colleague, Mr. Mellor, was very strongly in favour of the Bill. The concession had not been made to any particular set of men, but to a limited liability company; and if the hon. member knew anything at all about companies, which apparently he did not, he would know that companies were perpetual, although men were every day going into or coming out of them. There was nothing to prevent the whole of the £235,000, which was proposed to be put into the company

by the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, having been put into it two or three years ago. Nothing that the House could do could have prevented them, had they so chosen—if the matter had been put before them at that time, and they had thought well of it. They would have put money into it possibly, and would have gone on with the construction of the railway, and neither that House nor any other power could have prevented them. They would have become shareholders in the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, to which company the concessions had been granted under the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act. It was to that company, no matter who might be the shareholders, the concession was made. Surely it was beneath the consideration of that Committee to inquire whose money was put into the concern. There was a bargain struck with the company; the House did it with its eyes open, and bound the company down tolerably closely, and it appeared to him to be quite unnecessary for that Committee to inquire whose money or what money was invested in the purchase of shares in that particular company.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman was not altogether right in his contention. He was right in stating that the House made the concession to a particular company, not to a particular people; but it must be borne in mind that the concession was made to a company consisting of certain persons who were well known. They knew perfectly well that the concession was made on the understanding that those persons would construct the railway, and not with the intention that they should get it and then pass it on to somebody else. The impression of the House at the time the Act was passed was that the names of those who appeared as the promoters were the men who would carry out the work, and, if that had not been understood, he did not think there would have been any chance of passing the Act.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Transcontinental Syndicate would not have got it passed.

Mr. NORTON said he believed they would not. The hon. member for Wide Bay had made a mistake in mixing up the original members of the company with the present company. The latter would lose nothing if the Bill was not passed; the loss would be to those who got the Act passed in the first instance, and he did not care if they did lose.

Mr. GRIMES said he thought it would be well for the Committee to have some idea of the way in which the residents of the districts regarded that railway, and with that object he should read a short paragraph from the *Wide Bay News* of 19th November, which said:—

“URANGAN RAILWAY.

“The boil-over of the Maryborough-Urangan Railway is only what was expected, and has really surprised no one who devoted any attention to the matter. The *bona fides* of the original projectors was always more or less doubtful, and if the Government had acted wisely they would have refused to entertain the proposals of the syndicate after they had failed to complete their original offer. It is now quite plain that we have been all humbugged, not only by the syndicate, but by those who should have given this important constituency more consideration.”

That was the view held by an important portion of the Press in the Wide Bay district, and he understood that the other paper there ran upon the same lines. They could therefore gather pretty plainly that there was no confidence in that district in that syndicate—that it was looked upon as a bogus affair; and unless they showed their *bona fides* by laying down the money required, the Bill had better be disposed of at once.

Mr. NORTON said one matter he had forgotten to mention, and which the hon. member for Oxley had reminded him of, was this: It had been reported that the real object of getting the concession asked for was to enable some person to sell land in the neighbourhood. Perhaps the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill was in a position to give some contradiction to that statement on behalf of the gentlemen who were interested in the proposal.

Mr. FOXTON said he did not quite hear what the hon. gentleman said.

Mr. NORTON said a statement had been made that the object of getting that further concession was not to make the railway at all, but to mislead the public into supposing that the work was to be carried out, while the real object was for the purpose of selling certain lands in the neighbourhood of Urangan which were now in private hands. Of course it was not desirable that a statement of that kind should go uncontradicted, and the hon. gentleman might be in a position to give it a distinct denial.

Mr. FOXTON said he had no knowledge of the matter, and, so far as he was aware, there was no truth whatever in the statement. He understood that the holder of the most important block of land was Mr. Corser, who, he was informed, was an opponent of the Bill; and he had heard that that gentleman was now prepared to take £12,000 for the piece of land for which he had previously demanded £20,000, so that, if his information were correct, Mr. Corser had come down in his price considerably. He understood that that gentleman had no interest in the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, but had been an opponent of it all through. He (Mr. Foxton) might be wrong in his facts, and wished it to be understood that he was relying upon information given to him by others. He understood that, with the exception of the piece of land known as Sims's, there was absolutely no landed property on the coast contracted to be purchased by the company.

Mr. W. BROOKES said in connection with that matter he was very much struck by the extract that had been read previously by the hon. member for Townsville, from the prospectus of the company. It was really worth reading:—

Land Purchases and Sales.—This question is one of the most attractive features of the scheme. It has been found that all land near the seaboard, with a railway running into it from the interior, in any of the Australian colonies, has always become immediately very valuable, as much as £250 to £300 a foot having been actually paid for land in Townsville, Rockhampton, and Newcastle, and it has been estimated that the resale of the Urangan Point land will eventually pay the whole cost of the line. There is one block of 1,190 acres within a quarter of a mile of the wharf, which can be purchased at from £5 to £8 an acre if very cautiously managed."

He confessed that when that was pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville it brought his conclusions to a very sharp point with very great rapidity.

Mr. FOXTON said it appeared to him that the only thing that paragraph proved was that it was a very foolish thing to publish that prospectus, unless the land mentioned happened to be land purchased before it was published. It was defeating its own object; it was publishing to the world that the company proposed to become purchasers of land. But was there anything wrong in the fact that they desired to purchase as much property as they could, having faith in the ultimate result of their undertaking? They were certainly very candid about it; they let the very people from whom they proposed to purchase the land know exactly the advantages they would be forfeiting by selling it. However, he thought the prospectus was not made public;

it was privately circulated. He admitted that from the point of view of the promoters of the Bill its publication appeared to him about as weak a thing as ever he heard of, but he thought their candour in giving notice to the people from whom they proposed to purchase the land could scarcely be used as an argument against them in the way the hon. member for North Brisbane used it.

Mr. GRIMES said he quite agreed with the hon. member for Carnarvon about the folly of publishing the prospectus, but perhaps the promoters had no idea it would have such publicity. It certainly had let the Committee into the secret of their proposals, and with that before them, he thought they would be doing very wrong to let the Bill pass without some substantial amount was put down.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the position the hon. member for Carnarvon had taken up was that it would be derogatory to withdraw the Bill, and that because it had passed its second reading a majority of members had approved of the principle of it. The hon. member held that it ought to be defeated by another majority before it was finally disposed of. Now, no doubt, so far as the hon. member was concerned, he was quite right in taking up that position. It was thoroughly understood, however, by the Committee, when the Bill was last before them, that unless £3,000 was deposited the Bill would not come up for consideration again. The Premier himself had confessed his ignorance of some parts of the prospectus, and had regretted that he did not know more about it when he made the promise in London to assist in the matter. Now, if the hon. member for Carnarvon withdrew the Bill he would not lose anything, even in honour. There was a strong opposition to it, and he did not think it was an advisable Bill to pass, even if the £3,000 had been deposited. He did not like it, even with the £3,000; but the £3,000 had been demanded as a guarantee of the *bona fides* of the people who were now taking the matter up. No doubt the name of the company was still the same, but the shareholders in the company were very different, and there was something else also very different in the matter. If the Bill did not go through, the £2,000 already deposited would be forfeited some time next month. The gentlemen in London forming the syndicate that was taking up the Bill would lose nothing by that forfeiture, so that he did not know that it could be said to be even the same company in that respect. Whoever might lose it, they would not lose it; he did not know who would lose it. Certainly they could not, because they would not put any money into it until the Bill became law. As to the question of selling land, of course the company were perfectly justified in buying land if they could at £5 an acre and selling it at £300 a foot; but he did not think Parliament should lend itself to such a transaction. Parliament had not yet descended to be the agent of companies that wanted to buy and sell land, and it would be a very profitable transaction for any company, under the pretence of making a railway, to get a concession from Parliament, buy 1,000 or 2,000 acres of land along the line at a low rate, sell it afterwards at a high rate, and then never make the railway. The amount of money they would deposit would be nothing compared with the profits they would make out of buying and re-selling the land. They knew that as soon as ever the Government notified its intention of making a railway to a certain place there was immediately a rush to buy land, and the land was sold afterwards at a higher rate. He thought the hon. member might withdraw the Bill. Even if he did get a vote in favour of the 1st clause, it was not likely to go much further.

Mr. FOXTON said the position he was in was this: that whilst one set of hon. members asked him to withdraw the Bill, others asked him not to withdraw it. He declined to take the responsibility of withdrawing it, and would let the Bill go to the vote. If it was defeated on the 1st clause, he should consider that as an authority to move the Chairman out of the chair. He did not like to take upon himself the withdrawal of the Bill.

The PREMIER said he was curious to know whether there was any probability of that £3,000 coming. He did not see what difficulty there could be in getting an answer to a plain question.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Mutilated telegrams.

The PREMIER said telegrams could be corrected in less than a fortnight. A plain statement had been made a fortnight ago that they expected £3,000 to be paid into the Treasury before the Bill passed; and it could not have cost much money to send a telegram to say that.

Mr. FOXTON: That was sent.

The PREMIER said that if the £3,000 could not be raised, it was a very different transaction from the one he was led to believe was intended. Certainly the impression left on his mind was that the money was forthcoming; and when, after his return to the colony, he had been asked by the solicitors in charge of the matter what position the Government intended to take up, he told them that if a substantial guarantee were given by the deposit of the money, the Government would support the Bill. He had understood that there would be no difficulty about getting the money. If there was no probability of the money being forthcoming the Chairman might as well be moved out of the chair.

Mr. SALKELD said that when the hon. member in charge of the Bill had moved the adjournment of the matter last Thursday week, he said he did so on the off-chance of the £3,000 being forthcoming.

Mr. FOXTON: No.

Mr. SALKELD said he remembered the hon. member using those words. He was sure that the majority of hon. members of the Committee understood that if the £3,000 was not forthcoming the Bill would be proceeded with no further. The measure had been brought in at nearly the end of the session, and had been delayed through waiting for that money. Several hon. members had gone away who might have felt disposed to vote against it if they knew the £3,000 had not arrived. It was hardly fair to take a vote upon the Bill, and he thought the hon. member should withdraw it. He must confess that the more he looked into the matter the less he liked it, and he should vote against it whether the £3,000 arrived or not. At first, when he considered that it would entail no expense upon the country, he was in favour of it; but his opinion had changed, and he had come to the conclusion that it was not a measure that the Committee ought to agree to. The concession they had granted to the company in the first case had not been attended to properly; it had been used, so far as he could see, for speculative purposes. In regard to the money that had already been paid into the Treasury, on the 4th of next month it would be forfeited. But according to the constitution of the company at present, it struck him that the persons who had deposited that money had sold out of the thing altogether, and whether the money were refunded or not would not affect the original parties.

Mr. DICKSON said he would support the suggestion of the Premier, that having gone so far with the Bill, they ought to extend the

time for another week. If the money had not arrived by that time there would be no excuse whatever. He took that course because he believed there was a desire in the Wide Bay district that the work should be proceeded with if possible, and an opportunity of fulfilling the expectations raised by the company ought to be allowed. The Premier's suggestion was a very fair one—that another week should be granted, and then if the deposit were not forthcoming the Bill should be withdrawn. In regard to the £2,000 which had been deposited, that should clearly be forfeited if those who made the agreement did not choose to fulfil it.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that to test the feeling of the Committee he would move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put.

Mr. NORTON said he would repeat that he thought the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, had mistaken the intention of the hon. member in charge of the Bill. He was quite certain that that gentleman's intention was, when he moved the Chairman out of the chair the last time the Bill was under discussion, to go on with the Bill, or at any rate to test the feeling of the Committee in regard to it whether the money came or not. That was his opinion, whether the Committee took that view or not. It was hardly fair to the hon. member for Carnarvon to treat him as though he were taking advantage of a misunderstanding. Before the Chairman left the chair, he would like to hear the opinions of other gentlemen who were on the select committee in connection with the Bill. Perhaps some of them had changed their minds, and had been brought to consider the matter in another light. The hon. member for Burke was in favour of the Bill at first, and he would like to know if that gentleman had altered his opinion.

Mr. FOXTON said two letters had been handed to him by the solicitors of the promoters of the Bill, but he had not hitherto attached much importance to them. In view of the remarks made by the Premier, however, he thought it was only fair that he should read them. He understood the Premier to say that it was his opinion, after talking over the matter with the company's solicitors, that there was a considerable amount of the capital in the colony. Of course, a deposit was required in regard to the first Bill to show the *bona fides* of the company, and it was also necessary that the company should have subscribed the paid-up capital, to give them some funds. But if a further guarantee were required it should have been asked for when the Bill was first submitted for the approval of the Government. The first letter was from the Under Colonial Secretary to the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, and was dated 7th September, 1887. It was as followed:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"I have the honour, by direction of the Chief Secretary, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, and to inform you that the Government will assist the Vernon Coal and Railway Company, Limited, in obtaining the extension of the time required to complete the Maryborough and Urangan Railway for another year."

Not a word was said about a further guarantee. The following letter, dated October 8, 1887, was sent by the Under Colonial Secretary to Messrs Hart and Flower, solicitors for the company:—

"Referring to your letter of the 30th ultimo, enclosing a copy of a Bill proposed to be introduced into Parliament with the object of obtaining an extension of time for the completion of the Maryborough and Urangan Railway, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Chief Secretary has no objection to the Bill as proposed."

So that there was no question about a further guarantee being required. Neither the gentlemen in England nor the representatives in Queensland had any notice of any further guarantee being asked for until the committee which sat in regard to the Bill put forward the motion that a further sum of £3,000 should be demanded. After what had been said within the last few minutes, it was necessary that he should read that correspondence in order to show that there was no such guarantee asked for. Of course, he did not know what had taken place verbally. He could not see his way to withdraw the Bill, but would like to see some finality about it. Personally, it did not affect him or his constituents, and he desired to be relieved of it, as it had become a perfect incubus. He would certainly be glad to have the Bill despatched that afternoon, one way or another.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he voted for the second reading of the Bill on the understanding that the £3,000 would be forthcoming, and other hon. members were in the same position; but if the clause came to a vote now he would oppose it. He would prefer going to a vote on the clause to moving the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. PALMER said he would ask the Chairman, if in his daily walks he met with a man named Judas Iscariot, whether he would take him to be an honest man as readily as he would take John Smith, for instance, to be one. It seemed as if the Committee were looking upon the measure in the same light as they would look on Judas Iscariot, simply because of the syndicate that was mixed up in it. He was on the select committee, and he could not see any reason why the Bill should be thrown out because the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate—of bad odour—was now mixed up in it. If the Bill became law, capital would be introduced, and Maryborough would be benefited by the making of a railway which the Government were not prepared to make now, and might not be able to make for years. If the money was forthcoming he thought the Committee ought to be satisfied, because a deposit of £5,000 would be sufficient to show the *bona fides* of the company, and a guarantee of their intention to make the railway.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he would, with the permission of the Committee, withdraw his motion that the Chairman leave the chair.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Question—That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 7.

Messrs. Dutton, Moreton, Jordan, Rutledge, Palmer, McMaster, and Foxton.

NOES, 24.

Messrs. W. Brookes, Norton, Morehead, Black, Hill, Dickson, Chubb, Macrossan, Buckland, White, Footc, Grimes, Adams, Donaldson, Bulcock, Isambert, Bailey, S. W. Brooks, Thorn, Macfarlane, Murphy, Wakefield, Scott, and Salkeld.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. FOXTON said he would accept the result of the division as a declaration on the part of the Committee that they did not desire to go on any further with the Bill, and he now moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put and passed, and the House resumed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think we should have some definite information from the head of the Government with regard to a matter of considerable importance, and that is how the Government have managed, with only the small appropriation granted by this House, to carry on up to the present time. We are entitled to ask the Premier when he intends to bring in a Bill for granting Supply to the Government. It must, I think, be evident that the way the obligations of the Government are being met is illegal, and I believe that opinion is shared by a great number of members in this House. I have never yet known a Government in the position the present Ministry are in to carry on so long without a vote on account. There has been one vote, and I think only one vote, on account granted since the session commenced. That must long since have been exhausted. As far as I remember, that vote was sufficient to carry them over one month's expenditure.

The PREMIER: It was estimated to be sufficient for three months.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman says it was estimated to be enough for three months! We will admit that it was sufficient for three months. We thought the Government would probably have come down and asked for a further vote on account, but they have not done so, and now they propose to go on with the Estimates. I would also ask the hon. gentleman how it is that the Supplementary Estimates have not been laid on the table of the House? We ought to have had them long ago. But for the unfortunate difficulty that has arisen, the House would practically have ceased to exist ere this—that is to say, if it had not been for the bringing on of that Australasian Naval Defence business, it is very likely that we should have been through with the Estimates and the Supplementary Estimates. But up to the present time the Supplementary Estimates have not been laid on the table. I have heard it rumoured that those Supplementary Estimates will disclose—I had almost said an alarming, but at any rate a very serious deficit, which will have to be made up. I hear—though of course I cannot vouch for the correctness of the statement—that there is a very large amount of unauthorised expenditure, which the House will be asked to grant Supply for in the Supplementary Estimates. We have already to deal with a large existing deficit, and I am told that the hon. gentleman has some scheme by which he proposes to meet that deficit. These are matters that, as far as the colony of Queensland is concerned, are of more immediate and greater importance than the question of the Naval Defence Bill. Our financial position is one that affects us more particularly than the Naval Defence Bill, and I think we should have had from the Premier long before this—but even now it is not too late to get some information—as to how he proposes to deal with the deficit, also what the Supplementary Estimates are to be, and if the report is true that there is a very large amount of unauthorised expenditure to be provided for. The statement I have made may be incorrect, but as regards the deficit being large we know that is quite true. I hope that before we are asked to go into Committee of Supply the hon. gentleman will give us some information on those points. That information is indispensable before we can go any further. If we are asked, as we shall be asked directly, when we go into committee, to go on with those Estimates, there will no doubt be a great deal of contention, and possibly opposition, to any further progress with the Estimates. In the meantime, before we get to that pass, we should like to hear from the hon. gentleman

whether it is his intention to deal with the deficit in the particular way which I have heard he does, what the Supplementary Estimates are likely to be, and whether the unauthorised expenditure has increased to an amount that he did not expect it would reach?

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—With the permission of the House I will answer the hon. gentleman's question. The hon. member asks how the Government manage to get along without a further Supply Bill. It has been the practice of the Government of this colony from the first, and of other Governments elsewhere, to treat votes of Supply actually passed as authorising the expenditure.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The practice of this Government!

The PREMIER: It has been the practice of the Government of Queensland from the first, and it has been the practice in other places, too.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Not in England.

The PREMIER: I am not sure about England; but it has been the practice in other places; I know there is a good deal in the books about it. It is, strictly speaking, unconstitutional, but that is the practice which has been observed. The sum of £250,000 which was voted was quite sufficient, with the votes that have passed Committee of Supply, to cover all expenditure that has taken place. It has been the practice for many years for the Auditor-General to certify that the money is available when the votes have passed Committee of Supply. It is a very convenient practice, and the constitutional authorities justify it. The hon. gentleman also wants to know when the Supplementary Estimates will be brought down. I expected that they would have been brought down before now. I expected to be able to bring them down on Wednesday, but I was disappointed on Wednesday. I was again disappointed to-day, but I believe they are ready now, though they were not ready at 4 o'clock. There has been some delay with regard to the Supplementary Estimates, because the Government propose to bring in Supplementary Estimates for the current financial year, and not simply for the expenditure that has been already incurred. There are numerous matters for which expenditure must take place during the current financial year; but before the money is expended the Government wish to have the approval of Parliament. Of course, the Supplementary Estimates, covering amounts spent last year, could have been brought in any time after the 1st of October, but the others have taken some time to prepare. There is a very large item proposed for rabbit fencing for this year, and that is money which the Government do not wish to expend without first asking the approval of the House, Parliament being in session. As to the course the Government intend to take in dealing with the deficiency, that can be more conveniently disclosed in Committee of Supply or in Committee of Ways and Means. I propose that this Parliament should make proper provision for all the expenditure that has been incurred during its existence.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I understand from the hon. gentleman's statement that in addition to the known deficit there must be in the Estimates, as laid on the table of the House, there will be a further deficit which we are about to be called upon to provide for in the shape of what the hon. gentleman describes as Supplementary Estimates for the current year. I think that is a very serious position for the country to be in. We know, from the Estimates already laid on the table of the House, that a heavy deficit on the year's transactions is almost inevitable, but I must say that this is the first time we have

heard in the House that in addition to that there is a further deficit to be provided for on the supplementary expenditure, in addition to the Estimates we have already got. The hon. gentleman never told us so.

The PREMIER: I did.

Mr. BLACK: I never heard it before, and I do not think any hon. gentleman ever heard that there was an additional supplementary estimate to be laid before the House.

The PREMIER: I said so yesterday in answer to a question.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman is sometimes very vague and evasive in his replies, but I should like him to point out where the matter has been referred to before.

The PREMIER: I said the House would be asked to sanction expenditure for the Melbourne Exhibition—that is one item—and for the rabbit fencing. I have mentioned that several times.

Mr. BLACK: I think the House is fully justified in demanding before any further Supply is granted that it should know the exact position of the country. The financial position of the country is in a most alarming condition so far as can be gathered, and the sooner we know the position the better. I hope it will not be so bad as some anticipate, but the sooner we know it the better. It will have to be divulged sooner or later. Now, there is no doubt, according to the statement of the Premier, that it has been the custom for the Treasurer to pay as soon as the Estimates have been passed. That is considered sufficient authority for the expenditure of the money, or is held to be so by the present Treasurer. The hon. gentleman granted that it was an unconstitutional practice, but one that had been found desirable, and I suppose is found desirable, by the present Government. Well, I think we are justified in not granting any more Supply until we have the financial position of the country laid before the House, and in consideration of the position taken up by the Government in reference to the Naval Defence Bill, I consider the Opposition are justified in demanding a full explanation of the financial position of the country before we are asked to deal further with Supply. It is quite certain, from what the Treasurer has said, that if expenditure is justifiable immediately after Estimates have gone through the Committee, then it would be a safeguard to the country that we should know the financial position of the country before the Committee is asked to vote any more Supply.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has made what I may call a very candid confession of the unconstitutional practice, which he says has been one of long standing.

The PREMIER: You know all about it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What position does the Auditor-General take up?

The PREMIER: He certifies that the money is available.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does he do so legally? I do not see how he can do so legally. There is no authority by which the Auditor-General can certify that any of the votes we have passed, either for the Colonial Secretary, Executive and Legislative, Administration of Justice, Public Instruction, or Treasury, are legally available. An Act of Parliament must pass through this House before those votes can be legally available, and if the Auditor-General certifies to that money being legally available he does what is contrary to his duty as laid down by the Audit Act. The Auditor-

General is the servant of the House. He cannot be dismissed by the Ministry of the day, and I really do not know how he can do such a thing. He is independent of Ministers; they cannot control him, and he can only be removed by a vote of this House. But if, as the hon. gentleman says, the Government have been making use of the money which has been voted by the Committee, not having been appropriated legally, how does that statement apply to the other departments for which no money has been voted? There are several departments for which no money has been voted yet.

The PREMIER: £250,000 is sufficient to cover those.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman says the £250,000 is sufficient to cover those. Well, there is the Department of Public Lands, and that is set down on the Estimates as requiring £91,000; we will say £100,000, because £107,000 was voted last year; Works and Mines require £61,000; the Railways, £542,000; and Postmaster-General, £331,000, making between £900,000 and £1,000,000 of money required by those departments which has yet to be voted by this House. Now, what is the expenditure on those departments for five months, this being the fifth month of the financial year? Yet the hon. gentleman says that with the three months' Supply voted the expenditure on those departments for five months will be met by the £250,000. By the hon. gentleman's own showing he must get money for those departments, and it would take at least £400,000 to pay those departments for five months. It would take £250,000 to pay them for three months. It would certainly take more money than the Treasurer has at his disposal to pay them for the four months which they have already been paid for, and the fifth month is now all but due. If the practice has been, as the hon. gentleman states, for the Government to take advantage of the votes as they passed in this Committee and use them illegally, obtaining as well the illegal consent of the Auditor-General, how is it that previous Governments were always so anxious to come down for votes on account month after month, even before the money was due to be paid? The ex-Colonial Treasurer used to be extremely anxious that we should carry on in that way. The Government of which I was a member did the same thing. The Colonial Treasurer when he wanted money came down to the House and asked for it; he did not use the votes as they were passed. I am inclined, therefore, to think that the hon. gentleman's statement, in regard to the practice of Governments hitherto, is not quite correct. I am afraid that the unconstitutional practice, if it ever has existed to any extent, has been extremely emphasised by the hon. gentleman himself. Now, as to the other matter about the financial position of the country, I think we ought to know something about that. We all know, of course, that there is a deficit from last year of £460,000 odd; and now we are told that the Government are going to ask for the Supplementary Estimates for last year and Supplementary Estimates for the current year, which will probably amount to about a quarter of a million more. We know the Supplementary Estimates brought forward year after year by the present Government have been extremely heavy, and we cannot look for much less than a quarter of a million as the amount of the Supplementary Estimates for two years. There will be certainly over £200,000 to be added to our present deficit, which will make our deficit very large indeed. There is, of course, one thing to be said in favour of the financial position of the colony, and that is, that the revenue from Customs has

kept on improving and the returns from our railways have also increased very much; but we have yet to see whether the increased returns from our railways have not been absorbed by a corresponding increase in expenditure, which I am afraid is very likely to have occurred. I certainly think that before the hon. gentleman goes any further with Supply he should let us know the exact position of the colony. He has certainly had plenty of time to mature his financial proposals, whatever they are going to be. It is patent to everyone in this House that, had it not been for the position which the hon. gentleman took up upon railways which were objectionable to this House, and upon the Naval Force Bill, the session would have been closed a week or a fortnight ago. So that the hon. gentleman's financial proposals must be ready, and must have been ready a considerable time ago, for submitting to the House. Nothing can be gained by delay in this matter, and a great deal may be gained by enlightening the people of the colony, and especially this House, as to our exact financial position. It is much better that we should know our exact position than that we should be depending upon rumours floating about outside. Even if things are as bad as rumour would lead us to believe they are, it is better we should know the truth, and therefore I say the sooner the hon. gentleman makes known his financial proposals and gives us thoroughly to understand the whole state of the financial position of the country, and the working of his own department especially, the better. I am sure that the hon. gentleman will agree with me that the sooner the truth, and the whole truth, is known as to our position the better.

The PREMIER: Of course, I will tell you all about it as soon as possible.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Nothing can be gained by delay, and I think the hon. gentleman can very easily make his proposals on Monday.

The PREMIER: No, I cannot.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Probably on Tuesday.

The PREMIER: Possibly on Tuesday.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I do not think Tuesday will be too early, considering the hon. gentleman has had such a long time to make up his mind. The Supplementary Estimates for last year have been ready, of course, for some time, and the Supplementary Estimates for the current year cannot take very long to prepare.

The PREMIER: They are ready now, and I expected to have had them ready by Wednesday.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is an additional argument in favour of the hon. gentleman making known his proposals at least as early as Tuesday next.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I understood the Premier to say just now that it was the custom of the Treasury to treat money voted on the Estimates as authorised expenditure.

The PREMIER: It is the practice of the Imperial Parliament also. You will find it in "May."

Mr. NORTON: It may be; but I am referring to the hon. gentleman's statement that it has been the practice here all through. I find, on reference to the Acts passed in 1879, there were three Appropriation Bills passed for votes of £100,000 on account.

The PREMIER: We take it all in one.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Look at the difference in the expenditure now.

Mr. NORTON: The expenditure at that time was more than £1,000,000 a year less than it is now. I think the expenditure for last year was £1,100,000 in excess of what it was in the year 1883. I do not like to trust my memory, but I think I am right in saying that. In 1881 there were passed Appropriation Bills, Nos. 1 and 2, for Supply on account before the final Act; and in 1882 there were also two votes on account. Now, it is clear that it has not been the custom here all along, as the hon. gentleman has stated. The difference is that the hon. gentleman certainly treats the money as appropriated when it is not appropriated. As I have said, the difference between 1883 and last year was over £1,100,000.

The PREMIER: Not on account annually voted; that is to say, the interest.

Mr. NORTON: A great deal of the expenditure for interest has been incurred through the hon. gentleman himself and his £10,000,000 loan. What I rose more particularly to point out was that during the time the late Government were in office they asked for the modest sum of £100,000 on account at the beginning of the session in July. They asked for another vote of £100,000 on account later on, and on two occasions they asked for votes on account three times in the session, and then when the session was wound up sufficient was appropriated for the whole amount; so that it is just as well to look into the hon. gentleman's statements when they are made in that offhand way, because they might mislead the hon. gentleman himself. They did not mislead me, and I looked at the different Acts because my own recollection told me that the McLlwraith Government had been in the habit of asking for votes on account in that way. If the Government are going to treat money voted on the Estimates in this way they can go on spending the votes as we pass them, up to the last. If they treat them as if an Appropriation Act had been passed to authorise their expenditure—and we want to stop Supply—how are we going to act then? I can only say, for myself, that I very much regret that the Premier has thought it necessary to go on with Supply to-day instead of continuing the discussion on, or withdrawing from the position he took up in regard to, the Naval Force Bill. The hon. gentleman himself said a fortnight or three weeks ago that he did not expect to be able to go on with that Bill this session. Certain circumstances have since taken place which, in the hon. gentleman's opinion, have justified him in introducing it, but we know what those circumstances were. It is simply because it was decided on the part of the New South Wales Government to introduce the Bill in the New South Wales Parliament.

The PREMIER: That was not the circumstance.

Mr. NORTON: What have we to do with what Sir Henry Parkes does?

The PREMIER: What I said was that the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales had now agreed to the basis.

Mr. NORTON: I do not see why we should be asked to postpone the consideration of the Bill in order to see what the other colonies are going to do with it. Are we to be guided by what the other colonies do? Surely we know what our own minds are on the subject, and I do not think there is one member of the House, who has expressed his opinion as distinctly as the members on the Opposition side have done, who will be influenced in the smallest degree by what takes place in other colonies. The Bill ought to be gone on with until it is settled one way or the other. If the hon. gentleman thinks he can force it through, let him continue to try to force

it through, until he finds out whether he can or not. If he has any intention to withdraw it he ought to withdraw it at once. To keep it dangling before us is not only to waste the time of hon. members, but is preventing the work of the House from being gone on with. We have not advanced one single item since the Bill went into committee, and I do not see the slightest possibility of a single clause of the Bill being passed if we remain here for a whole month, sitting day after day and night after night. I do not think it is fair to hon. members to keep this subject dangling before us. The hon. gentleman, as has been pointed out before, went home on his own responsibility as the representative of the Government; he did not get the consent of Parliament before going; and the hon. gentleman has himself been obliged to admit that he went there for consultative purposes only. In spite of that, the hon. gentleman lays a Bill on the table and says the honour of Queensland is committed to its being passed. I say it is not committed, and, for my part, I shall continue to hold that opinion, and to act as I have done, whatever other members may do, and in spite of anything done in other parliaments. I am not going to be led by the nose by members of other parliaments. Surely we can form our own opinions and act upon them; and if the hon. gentleman thinks that any action taken in the other colonies will lead to a less determined attitude on the part of the Opposition, I am afraid he will be very much disappointed. In fairness, therefore, to hon. members, the Chief Secretary should have brought on that Bill again to-day, if he intends to bring it forward again, and let the question be settled, if possible.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

DIVISION OF RUNS.

Question—That £5,000 be granted for Division of Runs—put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he hoped, after what they had heard, that the Premier would see the expediency, even the propriety, of postponing the Estimates until the statement was made showing the financial position of the colony, which the hon. gentleman had promised to make within a few days. The Committee did not know what money they would have to deal with, or what their obligations might be. It was not fair to go on with the Estimates until they knew the position they were in. They must cut their coat according to their cloth, and if they found the supply of cloth was getting shorter, they might be compelled to wear short jackets instead of long-tailed coats. The Estimates should not be gone on with until they had from the Premier that statement which he said he would be able to make to the Committee at the latest by next Wednesday. In the meantime they might as well go on with the Naval Defence Bill, which stood next on the business-paper.

The PREMIER said the Government did not propose to deal with the Naval Force Bill that evening. He said last evening, when moving the Chairman out of the chair, that the Government proposed to make the further consideration of that Bill an Order of the Day for Tuesday. The Government wished to consider the matter, and to state distinctly what course they proposed to adopt with regard to it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then let us adjourn till Tuesday.

Mr. NORTON said another reason why they should adjourn was that the Minister in charge of the department told the Committee that he did not think the sum asked for would be sufficient

to work the Lands Department for a year. That was an admission of considerable importance. Another thing was that since those Estimates had been put before them, a number of Civil servants in connection with the Lands Department had been dismissed, while their salaries, no doubt, still remained there. With regard to the Naval Force Bill he could not see why the Premier should not decide at once what stand he intended to take, and state his position plainly to them. So far as the Opposition side of the Committee was concerned they had been prepared to go on with the debate during the last two nights, but the hon. gentleman himself had counted the House out—a most extraordinary position for a Government to take. The hon. gentleman would find that the Opposition had made their minds up, and he thought under the circumstances the Government should decide on what they intended to do. If the object was to keep on with other matters, with the view of finding out what other parliaments would do—

The PREMIER: No; that is not the intention.

Mr. NORTON: I hope it is not.

The PREMIER said that was not the intention. The Government would be prepared to do what they considered right irrespective of the action of other Parliaments. In any case they would be no further forward in that respect by Tuesday than they were now, because the only Parliament that would be considering it was that of New South Wales, and they did not meet until Tuesday. As soon as the House met on Tuesday he would be prepared to state what were the intentions of the Government. In the meantime, of course, the importance of getting on with Supply was obvious. Whatever conclusion the Government might come to, it was necessary that Supply should be granted to carry on the government of the country.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Government had been able to carry on very well with £250,000, and considering the period it had lasted, they could go on very well for another week. He thought the statement of the Premier, and the serious aspect he had cast upon the position of the colony financially—

The PREMIER: In what way?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman's remarks had thrown a new light, or rather a dark shadow, upon their financial affairs, and he thought they should get a financial statement from him before they proceeded further with the Estimates. They had been given to understand by the hon. gentleman that a large sum would be required on the Supplementary Estimates, but the statement was so vague that they must wait until they could get further information upon it. No harm could arise from the Estimates standing over until Tuesday or whenever the Premier could give them the statement he had promised, but which he was not then in a position to give.

The PREMIER said one excuse was as good as another when members wanted to obstruct. The hon. member had stated that he (the Premier) had thrown new light on the financial position in the statement he had just made. What was there new in it? Surely everybody knew that every year money was spent in addition to what was voted in the Estimates-in-Chief. For a good many years it had been the practice not to ask the House to sanction that expenditure until after the money had been spent. The same expenditure was going on now; there must necessarily be further expenditure than that provided for on the Estimates, and when the Government knew—before the Committee of Supply had risen—of

expenditure that must be made, they were bound to give the information. There were many additional expenses that had arisen, such as those connected with the rabbit question, the Melbourne Exhibition, the Croydon Gold Field, and one or two other matters, in which the expenditure was urgent and suddenly arising. Under those circumstances the Government were bound to ask for the money as soon as they could. He had said that there were several matters that would have to be provided for on the Supplementary Estimates for the current year. What lurid light did that throw upon the financial position of the colony? The only thing new in it was that the Government would give the information earlier than it was sometimes given.

The HON. G. THORN: Election expenses.

The PREMIER said that that was another matter the Government felt bound to ask the House to vote before the session closed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think any exception could be taken to what the hon. gentleman had stated with regard to an amount of money being required on the Supplementary Estimates for the current year. He did not take any exception to that. The hon. gentleman was also quite right in saying that unforeseen expenditure was always arising. It came in without any action of the Government at all, and it had always been the practice everywhere to make allowance for that. Sometimes the expenditure was very heavy and sometimes light; but always heavier with Governments that were extravagant than with Governments that were economical. What he wanted to ask the hon. gentleman was, where the money was to come from to pay the expenses of the departments for which no money had yet been voted. The sum required for the departments that had yet to undergo the ordeal of criticism in that Committee amounted in round numbers to £1,033,000, involving an expenditure of about £82,000 a month. They were now at the end of the fifth month of the financial year; the expenditure for that period amounted to £410,000, and where was the £150,000 over and above the £250,000, voted on account, to come from? He hoped the hon. gentleman did not mean to use the money voted for Public Instruction, or for the Administration of Justice, to pay the salaries of Civil servants in the Lands Department, the Works Department, or in the Post Office.

The PREMIER: Certainly not.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then where was it to come from? If the hon. gentleman did not use the money voted for other departments, he had none. Of course, he might draw upon loan, but that also was not a correct thing to do—to draw loan money to pay the salaries of Civil servants. He did not see any other source from which the money was to come until it was voted. That was his reason for urging that the hon. gentleman should make his financial proposals as quickly as possible, so that they might know what position they were in. He was afraid their financial position was not quite so bright as they were told it was three months ago.

The PREMIER: Yes, it is.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he should be very glad to hear that statement made by the hon. gentleman authoritatively. Of course, he should take the Treasurer's financial statement, whatever it might be, as an authoritative one, but he did not place much dependence upon interjections across the table. Referring to the Estimates under consideration, he saw that the number of commissioners for dividing runs was reduced from nine to seven,

and he wished to know from the Minister for Lands the reason for that reduction. Was it because they did not do their work thoroughly and well, or was it because there was less work for them to do? If the latter, he (Mr. Macrossan) would like to know the reason for it, as he was not present the other night when the discussion took place on the vote.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said that the reason why the number of land commissioners had been reduced from seven to five was because one of those gentlemen was appointed as successor to the gentleman who had been appointed Under Secretary for Agriculture, and who was land commissioner for Moreton. The other gentleman was the one whose name was mentioned the other night, Mr. Paul, whose services had been dispensed with. Of course very considerable progress had been made in the work of dividing the runs—554 having been divided—and that provided a very much larger number of grazing and agricultural farms than were needed for some time. The gentleman who had been appointed to succeed the Under Secretary for Agriculture accepted the office at £100 less than his predecessor, and the dismissal of Mr. Paul accounted for the remainder of the reduction.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he understood the hon. gentleman to say the Under Secretary for Agriculture was a commissioner for the division of runs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he alluded to Mr. McLean, who was inspecting commissioner in the settled districts, and land commissioner for the Moreton district.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was always an advocate for economy wherever it could be practised, but he thought the reduction made was practising economy at the expense of income. They had always been led to believe that the application of the Land Act to the pastoral districts would increase the revenue, inasmuch as the division of the runs led to an increase in the rent. Well, was it any reason, because they had 550 odd runs divided, that they were to stop at that? Should they not go on dividing them as much as possible? They could not have too much land thrown open for selection, either as grazing or agricultural farms. If the land was there to be taken up, and it was not taken up, at any rate the revenue was increased by the increase of rent. The run being divided, the pastoral tenant, as far as he could see, paid an increased rent for the portion which was allotted to him, and the portion he did not get he held on yearly license at the former rental; so that there must be an increase in the revenue. If by slackening off the division of runs on the score of economy they saved £1,400 and lost £10,000, he really could not see that there was any real economy in it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that, so far as land had been dealt with and resumed under the Act, there was an increase of rent from the pastoral tenants. In that respect he admitted it would be a loss if they did not proceed with the work, but he supposed his hon. colleague, the present Minister for Works, had seen the necessity for filling the vacancy which had arisen in another department, and had considered that one of those gentlemen would fill it well; and in the meantime the vacancy caused by his removal had not been filled up. The Minister for Works had already given his reason for dispensing with the services of Mr. Paul.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no objection to one of the commissioners being appointed in the place of Mr. McLean, and he would say nothing about the dismissal of Mr.

Paul, because he did not understand the merits of that business; but, as the hon. gentleman admitted that the division of runs would lead to an increase of revenue, why was the division of runs delayed? Was it that they had too much revenue to dispose of? He had been under the impression for some time that they had too little revenue from the Lands Department. Was the division of runs delayed through any influence brought to bear on the late Minister for Lands by pastoral lessees? It surely could not have been through any influence brought to bear upon him by the Colonial Treasurer because he had too much revenue. Why, then, was the division not pushed on faster?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think any hon. member would charge him with delaying the division of the runs in the interests of the lessees. He thought that five commissioners would be enough to push on the work now, because the best parts of the country, which were likely to be first required for settlement, had been already dealt with. There was a great deal of inferior leased land to be dealt with yet, but he did not consider the work sufficiently important to be pushed on as before. The commissioners had had to be decreased by two, one by transfer to another office, and one by his services being dispensed with, and he did not think it necessary to fill up the vacancies. Five commissioners would go on with the work rapidly enough. The increases of rent were larger in proportion on the runs dealt with than on those which were yet to be dealt with.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: How do you know that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: From the character of the country. He had sufficient knowledge of the different districts to know that they would bear a higher rent. Those portions of the colony which would bear higher rents were first dealt with, and they were the portions of the colony that required to be first dealt with.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they had a bigger question than that to consider—the question of the financial position of the colony. They had better come back to that. They could not go on with the Estimates until they knew what their financial position was. They had already given the Government, in votes which had been made use of in the way which the hon. gentleman said had been the practice theretofore, and which he supposed, therefore, was approved by Parliament, nearly six months' Supply on the basis of expenditure shown by the Estimates. The Government had had something like £1,100,000, so they could not complain that they had been badly treated.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that with the entrance of the leader of the Opposition had commenced plain definite obstruction. They had been proceeding quietly and intelligently with the Estimates, and neither the hon. gentleman, though he was a very clever gentleman, nor anybody else could show why their proceedings should be interrupted, because the hon. gentleman alone held that the Premier should now give certain information which he had promised to give at a stated time. Obstruction was quite right within certain limits, but when it was pushed to the extent the hon. the leader of the Opposition pushed it, it was impossible for the Government to govern the colony. They had been going on very quietly when the hon. gentleman came in and started an entirely irrelevant question. Now what was the sense of that?

Mr. BLACK said he always listened with a great deal of amusement to the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, and who assumed to be the exponent of the opinions of the other side of

the House next to the Premier. The hon. member had stated the leader of the Opposition was the only member on that side who held the opinion that the Committee and the country generally should know something more about the disastrous financial position of the colony than they knew at the present time. Now, he could assure the hon. member that he (Mr. Black) entirely endorsed the view of the hon. the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. W. BROOKES: So you would anything he said.

Mr. BLACK said that was a matter of opinion. He did not always agree with what fell from the leader of the Opposition. Sometimes he agreed with what the hon. junior member for North Brisbane said, but sometimes that hon. member got rabid; he got on his hobby-horse and laid down the law. The hon. member laid down the laws of propriety sometimes, yet no hon. member in that Committee was more ready to transgress them when it suited his purpose. He had a great liking for the hon. junior member for North Brisbane. He was a homely old gentleman, with whom it gave him the greatest pleasure to have a few minutes' conversation outside the House. He was a most entertaining old gentleman. He did not use the word "old" in any sense of odium, because he (Mr. Black) was approaching an age which might shortly be called old. But the hon. member was old and experienced; he was old in parliamentary tactics, and he was artful as well as old. He was the most amusing and entertaining gentleman on that side of the Committee, and he esteemed him for the many good qualities which he possessed. There were many points of unison between the hon. member and himself; they were like each other.

Mr. WHITE: Mr. Fraser,—Is this attending to the business of the country? The country has to pay for this twaddle.

Mr. BLACK said he would refer to the hon. member for Stanley directly. That hon. member had not been in the House long enough to know what real business meant. He was a blind follower—one of those gentlemen to whom that celebrated article in the *Telegraph* the other night especially referred. He was returned to vote, and that was all.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Is the hon. member for Mackay speaking to the question?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot say that the hon. member for Mackay is speaking to the question. There is very little relevant to the question before the Committee in his remarks.

Mr. MOREHEAD said although he admitted at once that the Chairman was a gentleman of very considerable ability, and was held in very high respect by hon. members of the Committee, he did not know that he went in for occultism. Perhaps he might be a Buddhist, and could ascertain from some, to them, unknown quantity, what the hon. member for Mackay was about to lead up to by the argument he was using. The whole financial position of the colony could be discussed under the vote before them.

Mr. BLACK said he of course bowed to the ruling of the Chairman, although the Chairman did not interfere when the hon. member for Stanley was interrupting him as he (Mr. Black) was just at the commencement of a most important question bearing upon the subject before the Committee. He was about to say that that celebrated article should have advised the Premier, not only to insist upon the straight voting of the party behind him, but to bring in a measure by which voting by proxy should be made law. That was really the tendency of that now cele-

brated article—an article which had done more than anything else to open the eyes of the country to the policy which would be adopted by the present Government and the party behind them if they had the power to do so. After the hon. gentleman, in his dual capacity as Premier and Treasurer, had said that they had not only very large unauthorised expenditure for the past year to provide for, but also a considerable additional expenditure for the current year, they had a right to know before they went any further in voting Supply what the ways and means of the country really were. What was the use of their voting large sums of money unless the Government could show them from what source of revenue they proposed to derive the money to meet those votes? They had a right to demand that information. Had they no right to demand that a full statement of the financial position of the colony should be made, now that they saw it was in such a serious condition? In connection with the Estimates they were now discussing—those relating to the lands—there was one vote for the establishment of a department of agriculture. Were they justified in passing that vote, which was in the opinion of many hon. gentlemen unnecessary—a vote for which no justification had been given up to the present time? Were they justified in voting unlimited sums of money unless the Government would give them some assurance that the revenue would be sufficient to meet those votes? His contention was that the Committee was not justified in voting one single shilling more until the true financial position of the colony had been laid before them. That was Friday night—a night which was considered by many hon. members as a sort of off-night of the session. If they looked around the Chamber they would see that many hon. members had gone home, and there was a comparatively thin Committee. It was not a night on which it was usual to transact any business of very great importance, and they all knew the serious waste of time that the Government had plunged them into during the week—a waste of time caused by the obstinacy of the Premier.

The PREMIER: Not one minute has been wasted by the Government.

Mr. BLACK said the waste of time had not been caused by the Opposition. Notwithstanding that the Opposition side of the Committee were willing to proceed with business, the Government actually took their supporters out of the Committee on two consecutive nights, so as to prevent the Defence Bill being discussed, as it probably would have been if those members had remained to transact the business of the country. Friday night was not a night on which such an important question as the finances of the country should be discussed, and failing the full discussion of the finances of the country, he contended that the Committee had a perfect right to refuse to vote any further Supply. The hon. the Treasurer had expressed his intention of laying the financial position of the country before the Committee on Monday next.

The PREMIER: I did not say so. I said I would bring the Supplementary Estimates down on Monday, and would make a statement on Tuesday—certainly on Wednesday.

Mr. BLACK said that if it was to be Monday, that enforced his contention that they should not proceed any further with business till the financial position of the country was before them. If it was not to be till Tuesday he would suggest that it would be better to adjourn till Tuesday next; but until they understood what funds they had for voting further supplies they were perfectly justified in not allowing any further Estimates to go through.

The PREMIER said he would ask the hon. member why on Tuesday evening last it would have been perfectly correct, according to what hon. members then said, to go on with Committee of Supply, and why on that—Friday—evening it would be highly objectionable to do so?

Mr. MOREHEAD said that until they knew the exact financial position of the colony they were not inclined to go on with the Estimates.

The PREMIER: You mean that you will obstruct.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier might use any term he liked. He had told the hon. member the standpoint from which the Opposition objected to going any further.

The PREMIER: Why has that arisen since Tuesday?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Principally, if not entirely, from the statement the hon. member made to-night.

The PREMIER: We were told before this evening what you were going to do.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know whether the hon. member invented his information or where he got it; but he gave the flattest contradiction to that statement.

The PREMIER: We knew this afternoon what your programme was, and we knew that you had to find a pretext.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that hon. members opposite must evolve programmes out of their inner consciousness; and they must have known that it was an honest course likely to be pursued in opposition to them.

The PREMIER: Not an honest course.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that no united action had been agreed upon by the Opposition till the Premier made his statement; and anyone who made any assertion to the opposite was stating what he could pledge his honour was not a fact.

Mr. McMASTER: I was told this afternoon when I got to the top of the stairs.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had nothing to do with what the hon. member was told at the top of the stairs. He, as leader of the Opposition, was telling what was the fact with regard to their action.

The PREMIER: What are the new reasons that have arisen since the House met?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had created the united opposition on the particular point at issue. The hon. gentleman had stated that the present obstruction to the passage of the Estimates was organised early in the afternoon, and that he knew it; and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said he was informed of the programme on the top of the stairs. He denied *in toto* the accuracy of either statement.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that for the past month members on the other side had expressed their anxiety to pass the Estimates and go to the country; but now they refused point-blank to go on with the Estimates, because they had made up their minds that the Naval Force Bill should not pass. He supposed that if the Government withdrew that Bill the Opposition would condescend to allow the Estimates to pass. He did not know whether the members on the Opposition side really recognised the position they had taken up. They seemed to think they were pleasing the country by the attitude they were taking up, but they were doing nothing of the sort. People outside were laughing at them. In two places that day he was met by men in very good positions, and they asked him what the Government meant to do. The question was asked, "Do they mean to allow those men on the

Opposition side to rule the country?" Because they did not want the Naval Force Bill to pass the Opposition would not allow anything else to be done. Arguments had been used—or rather, statements had been made—to show that the measure ought to be withdrawn now, and introduced at some future time. But supposing the present Opposition came into power next year—there was nothing improbable in that—and the party who would then be in opposition resorted to the tactics now adopted by hon. members opposite, how would legislation be gone on with? The Bill would not pass then, and they would be in the same position six months hence as now. He supposed hon. members opposite would then bring forward different arguments; they would then recognise the fact that the colony was in some way connected with the mother-country, and would be anxious to pass the Bill. At present, however, they took up a dog-in-the-manger position, and because the Government would not do as they desired, they would not allow business to proceed at all. He did not expect they would take his advice; but he thought they might as well let the Minister for Lands get through with his Estimates, because then some progress would be made, and they would have plenty of opportunities afterwards of talking about the Naval Force Bill. Of course, they were in a better position than the Ministry, because sixteen members must be supplied from the Government side to make a quorum, while two members could keep up the opposition on the other side. He made that statement because a good many people outside were under the impression that the Government side ought to fight the Opposition.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You generally run away.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they were perfectly willing to fight on fair terms, but it was not very fair for the Opposition to use all the forms to obstruct the Estimates because of their opposition to the Naval Force Bill.

Mr. HAMILTON: We never knocked under when we were in power.

The PREMIER: "When we were in power"! The country has not sunk to that depth of degradation yet.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he admired the leader of the Opposition for many things, but he wished the hon. member would rise to the honourable position he occupied as leader of the Opposition. He had not done so in the past, but he could do so if he liked. For the leader of the Opposition to make an exhibition of himself as he did sometimes, was not dignified; it not only made some of his own followers vexed, but really made him (Mr. Macfarlane) feel vexed many a time. It was not a pleasant thing to see the leader of the Opposition taking up the position he did sometimes. Instead of meeting the arguments put forth from that side of the Committee, the hon. member simply ran them down with ridicule. That was not an honourable position to occupy, and he (Mr. Macfarlane) hoped that the hon. member would in future show himself equal to the high position he held as leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was very much obliged to the hon. member. He knew that when medicine was administered either to the individual or to the State it was somewhat nauseous and unpleasant to the party to whom it was administered. Still the medicine, drastic though it might be, was, he believed, useful to the State, and certainly, in many cases, to the individual. No doubt the remarks he had made and the position he had taken up had been very unpleasant to the Government, and he would not

say for one moment that it was not his intention that they should be so. He would not deny that he had not used hurried words to hon. members opposite, but he had tried to tell the truth to them and the country. With respect to the statement of the hon. member for Ipswich, that the Opposition had barred progress in regard to the public business, he had a great respect for the hon. member, but he thought he ought to be more careful in making an assertion of that sort, and should first refer to what had actually taken place. If the hon. member would take the trouble to look at page vii. of the Estimates he would find how much of the Estimates the Opposition had allowed to pass without any very serious obstruction, or rather opposition.

The PREMIER: No serious debate, but a good deal of obstruction.

Mr. MOREHEAD said of course the hon. gentleman always provided the vinegar for the salad; there was never any oil came from him. Without any serious opposition, or, as the hon. gentleman said, without any serious debate, they had placed at the disposal of the Government a sum of £1,186,432. They did not, however, propose to let the Government have the balance of the £2,208,879 without any debate, so that that complaint would be removed.

The PREMIER: The Committee have not voted £1,186,432.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Does the hon. gentleman exclude the schedules?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that excluding the schedules, which amounted to £309,289, they had voted nearly £900,000. But even the schedule amounts could be stopped if the Opposition chose to take such an extreme step. The sum of £900,000 had been voted without, the hon. gentleman said, any serious debate, but with a good deal of obstruction. He (Mr. Morehead) did not know whether the terms in which the Premier addressed members on that side of the Committee were calculated to help the progress of the Estimates or of any business introduced by the Government. The hon. gentleman was not content with making speeches which were very often not of a pleasant nature, but sitting in his place he interjected continually the most offensive language. He did that no less than five minutes ago. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, made the interjection, "When we were in power"—speaking of members on that side of the Committee—such and such a thing took place, and the hon. gentleman twice repeated "We have not sunk to that depth of degradation yet." If the hon. gentleman considered the colony would be sunk to a depth of degradation by members on that side of the Committee holding the reins of government, he must have not only a very low estimate of them, but also a very high estimate of himself. What right had he, as leader of the House, to use such language towards any member in that Chamber? So far as he (Mr. Morehead) could see, there was no human probability of the Estimates going any further until they had the statement they had asked for from the Premier. They had given good and sufficient reasons for asking for that, and they had shown incontestably that the Opposition had been exceedingly generous in the way in which they had granted Supply up to the present time. They had in no way tried to hamper the Government, as far as the Estimates were concerned; but they were determined to keep their proper control over the purse-strings of the colony. They were determined, before they granted any more money, to know how they stood. They had made up their minds to that, and he did not

think it was a position from which they were likely to be moved, either by the prayers of the hon. member for Ipswich or the objurgations of the Premier.

The PREMIER said he would like to know what had happened since last Tuesday evening that they should not go on with the Estimates. Then hon. members on the opposite side of the Committee wished to proceed with the Estimates. Now when the Government proposed to do that, they would not go on with them.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You will have to go on without them.

The PREMIER said it was, of course, a very difficult thing to deal with people who were not serious. Parliamentary government in most countries was carried on by people imbued with some sense of their duty to the country—with the sense that they were engaged in serious work; and when one found a number of people sitting on one side, nominally led by a person who did not appear to have any sense of what his serious duty was, or any sense of what the functions of Parliament were, it was embarrassing. It was a new position, he would admit. There were always new things happening in the world, although Solomon had said there was nothing new under the sun. It was a new thing to find a gentleman, apparently in the position of leader of a party, and surrounded by gentlemen who ordinarily had a large amount of common sense, and a sense of responsibility and duty, conduct himself in a way which showed that he had apparently no sense whatever of the business which they were met there to transact. That was not a circus, and any hon. member who thought that Parliament was simply a circus where the members were performers to disport themselves with the view of getting applause from an unthinking audience, was entirely mistaken. It was a place where they were met for serious business. He would admit it was a very difficult position to be met in the way he had indicated. A great many curious things had no doubt happened in the Parliaments of the colony, and in the Imperial Parliament, but he did not know of any instance, until the present, where a gentleman occupying the position apparently of leader of a party, had turned the whole matter into a burlesque, and declined entirely to take a serious view of the situation. The destinies of Queensland depended upon the Parliament of Queensland, and they met there for the direction of those destinies, but if members brought the whole thing into derision what were they to do? The hon. member had told them "We shall not go on with the Estimates." Well, of course, the proper interpretation of that was "We shall obstruct business, and by that means we can prevent the House from going on with Estimates." That was an admitted fact, and it would be better to put it in that way, because after all it was the majority that ruled and not the minority. Perhaps the hon. member would think he had spoken unkindly and roughly. Perhaps he had, and perhaps he had not; but he was quite certain that he had not said anything more unkind than the occasion deserved. He had every desire that there should be two parties in the House, but he desired there should be an Opposition actuated by serious motives. He desired that there should always be two parties in the House, because it was very undesirable that one party should always be in power; but there ought to be another party, which was a serious party, and capable of being entrusted with the reins of government when the occasion arose; and nothing could be more lamentable than to think that instead of that serious party there were merely a number of gentlemen who apparently considered that the business of

people on one side of the House was to disport themselves for their own amusement to the discredit of the colony, and in such a manner as to bring upon themselves the contempt of all reflecting people. He thought he had said nothing more severe than the occasion deserved.

Mr. BLACK : It is not a bit severe.

The PREMIER : He was disposed to think, with the member for Mackay, that what he had said was not severe a bit, considering the occasion.

Mr. BLACK : You are a good actor.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should like to be allowed, after the severe castigation he had received, to say a word or two. Now, if the hon. gentleman believed what he had said, and if he thought the opinion of the country as regarded him was such as he had expressed, then he must believe him to be of a very inferior class of mind, and believe that the gentlemen who honoured him with the position of leader of the Opposition were a very second-class article indeed. If the hon. gentleman held that opinion, and he believed that that was the opinion of the colony, his opportunity of getting rid of him, and those who supported him, was very easy. The remedy lay with himself. If he held that he (Mr. Morehead) was, as it were, a privileged buffoon, which was practically what he tried to set before the Committee; if he thoroughly believed that, then he had the remedy in his own hands—to get Supply, which had never been refused, and dissolve the House, as he had been repeatedly asked to do. They were quite prepared to go to the country and be dealt with at the hands of the constituencies of the colony. They had never shrunk from that position, but the hon. gentleman had. Time after time it had been put before him that the issue between the two parties could be dealt with in that way. He admitted at once that he had never set himself up to be a Colossus, as the Premier had. He had never for one moment occupied the position that the hon. gentleman had on the other side of the House, and he hoped he would never have a subservient set of tools following him. He had always been associated with men who it was certainly his pride and pleasure to consult, and whose views were worth considering, and in many cases worthy of acceptance in preference to his own. He had never set himself up as a small deity. He had never held himself up as the only leader and the only statesman in the colony. He had never occupied any one of those positions. Could the Premier say the same thing? Could he say for one moment that he had not surrounded himself, except in the case of one gentleman—the Minister for Works, who, for some reason, he was afraid of—with anything else than the most facile tools, men with but little ability, and with certainly not strength of mind to assist the Premier. He did not aspire to occupy such a position. He was quite content as he was. He dared say he was fairly well respected, and for what his abilities were worth he had given them as far as he could to the country. He certainly had never travelled home to England at the expense of the State, and if he had, he had never travelled on the higher scale in the way the Premier did. He thought he could have run the business for less than £1,400, and he thought that before they had done with the Estimates they would have to know how that expenditure was incurred. He had certainly not during his career in that House ever cost the country one shilling expense when he was Postmaster-General, and the hon. the Premier must remember that the surroundings of his own dwelling were pretty glassy, and plenty of stones would be thrown at him. Now, the hon. gentleman, he

was quite certain, was jealous of his (Mr. Morehead's) humanity—of his being nearer akin to all that was human, and he dared say something even divine—than he was himself. The hon. gentleman was annoyed that he had many friends, and that he had few. He had plenty, but as regarded the hon. gentleman, although he had flesh and blood in a way, his blood was very white. His sympathy with human nature was very small indeed, and the hon. gentleman knew it and winced at it.

The PREMIER : I am not a good boon companion.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should think the hon. gentleman was not a good companion in any respect, but when he had the audacity to get up and make the gross personal attack he had upon him, he had a right to retaliate, and he was perfectly willing to see the hon. gentleman through with the business. So long as he retained the respect of the gentlemen on his side of the House he did not care one iota what the opinion of the Premier was, and, as he had told him before, if he wished to test the question and discover whether he was going to lead the House, let him appeal to the constituencies. Why did he not do that?

The PREMIER : There can be no election until the rolls are ready.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had told him, only last night, that the session would not be over for several months yet.

The PREMIER : Indeed !

Mr. MOREHEAD : Yes, that was what the hon. gentleman said.

The PREMIER : I said, unless something was done. The five years do not expire until next October.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was quite well aware of that, but the hon. gentleman could now pass his Estimates and prorogue the House, and go to the constituencies.

Mr. MACFARLANE : You will not let him pass the Estimates.

Mr. MOREHEAD : The hon. member for Ipswich was wrong altogether. The hon. gentleman's memory was at fault. The Opposition were perfectly willing to go on with Supply, on condition that that was all they should do before they went to the country.

The PREMIER : Why not begin now ?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman might think he was only fit for a circus, but he was not going to give in to him and give him Supply. The hon. gentleman would get no Supply from the Opposition until they settled the naval defence business—that imperialistic measure of the imperialistic Premier. He knew why the Premier was so bitter against him, and it was because the hon. gentleman was a worshipper at the Imperial throne, and he (Mr. Morehead) was an Australian.

The PREMIER : Not a bit more than I am.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he begged the hon. gentleman's pardon; the hon. gentleman was a Welshman, and there was a vast difference, thank God, between a Welshman and an Australian. He was an Australian, and the Premier was a Welshman and an Imperialist. The hon. gentleman resented and bitterly felt the truth of the remarks which had fallen from him and from other members on the Opposition side, as to how his reputation as a great Liberal suffered at home by his toadying to Lord Salisbury and the Tory party, which had been the curse of Great Britain.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he rose to a point of order. What was the question before the Committee?

The PREMIER: Abuse of the Premier, I think.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is the vote for the Division of Runs.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the Chairman ruled that that was the question—

Mr. W. BROOKES: I have another question to ask, if you will have the goodness to sit down.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You must sit down yourself. I am in possession of the Chair.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I have another question to ask, Mr. Fraser.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Chair! Chair!

Mr. W. BROOKES: I want to ask a question, Mr. Fraser.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member could not ask it until he had finished, and he had better sit down. The Chairman had ruled that the question before the Committee was the "Division of Runs." The Premier had been allowed, without any interruption on the part of the Chairman, to pile as much abuse on his (Mr. Morehead's) head as he liked—and he admitted that the hon. gentleman was a past-master at abuse—but when he attempted to retaliate, at the instance of the Premier's colleague for North Brisbane, he was suppressed and brought back to the question of the division of runs. That was not the question before the Committee. The question before the Committee was the fiscal policy of the Government, and in dealing with that question he would deal with the head of the Government.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I shall rise to a point of order.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should deal with the head of the Government irrespective of the interference of the illustrious shuttlecock behind him, who did not appear to know his own mind for three minutes together. He cared nothing for that hon. member's points of order.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Then I do rise to a point of order. Is the question before the Committee the fiscal policy of the Government or the vote for the division of runs?

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is the vote for the division of runs.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, as the question appeared to be a mixed one, and the discussion had become slightly heated, owing to the conduct of the Premier and the interference of his colleague, fogleman, or shuttlecock, or whatever he called him, he begged to move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the leader of the Opposition evidently thought that he had got rid of him, but he could assure the hon. gentleman that he had not, and he would be a thorn in the hon. gentleman's flesh yet. He had been waiting with a good deal of self-suppression for an opportunity to say what he was going to say now. In what he was about to say he was actuated by a real desire for the welfare of the leader of the Opposition. He would recommend the close attention of the hon. gentleman to a remark which had fallen from the senior member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane. The hon. member for Ipswich had pointed out that twice that day he had had the extraordinary conduct of the leader of the Opposition brought before him.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he rose to a point of order. He wanted to ask whether the question before the Committee was the conduct of the leader of the Opposition or the vote for the division of runs?

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do now leave the chair.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said if that were so, he wished to ask had the conduct of the leader of the Opposition any connection with the question that the Chairman leave the chair? If the Chairman ruled that it had, they would have a very general discussion.

Mr. W. BROOKES said hon. members were not going to catch him in that way. He was calling the profound and serious attention of the leader of the Opposition to the fact that, little as he might think of his gymnastics in that Committee, people outside were paying very considerable attention to him. Would the hon. gentleman believe him when he told him that there were a great many persons who looked upon him with every desire to make allowance for him, and with every disposition to acknowledge his great ability—and he (Mr. Brookes) was one of them—but at the same time there was a seemingly insurmountable indurable tendency in that gentleman rather to prefer to "make the groundlings laugh, than to be cautious lest he should make the judicious grieve!" The hon. gentleman could think over that when he got home. He would like to know what the leader of the Opposition meant by the persistent vituperation and vilification with which he had sternly pursued the Premier during the last three years. The hon. gentleman might well want a new dictionary, and he should have the last edition of the "Slang Dictionary," to furnish him with a new vocabulary to enable him to express what he really only professed as his sincere opinion of the Premier. Let him tell the hon. gentleman that the people of the colony reading *Hansard* and the Press reports of their debates were perfectly able to a certain extent to form a just comparison between the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Government.

Mr. STEVENSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was glad to hear the hon. member for Normanby speak, as he knew now in what direction that hon. gentleman was going. It was obvious to the meanest capacity that the parliamentary conduct of the Premier showed to advantage as against that of the leader of the Opposition. There could be no question about it. Why did he say that? To vex the leader of the Opposition? Nothing of the kind. He valued the hon. member's efforts on behalf of the colony; he had done a good deal for the colony; but there was no one gentleman who ever stood on the floor of the House who had talked greater balderdash and rubbish than the leader of the Opposition. His great object seemed to be to "tickle the ears of the groundlings." He would not say where the groundlings were, but they were somewhere, and the hon. member knew where they were. And when the hon. member talked about the Premier having a lot of followers who had surrendered to him their principles, where was the common sense in that?

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is the fact.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Could not he (Mr. Brookes) use a similar jibe against the leader of the Opposition? Did they not know what would follow when the hon. member sat down, and one of his followers rose to speak? The Estimates had been before the Committee since 7 o'clock, and yet the leader of the Opposition continued to assert that the question before them was not the Estimates, but the fiscal condition of the colony. There was not a shadow of rational foundation for such an assertion. It was only a euphemism, and the hon. gentleman might as well have said, "I will not allow any business to be done unless it is done according to my liking";

and he was in that supported by a small number of hon. members. Could the government of the colony be conducted on such a narrow policy? That was what it was, and the Premier was never more correct and forcible than in what he said just now. Until the leader of the Opposition laid aside those illustrations of speech which were the peculiar characteristic—he was using the hon. member's own phrase—of a privileged buffoon—until he laid aside that levity and that buffoonery, which he imagined was wit—they would never get on with business. He might tell the leader of the Opposition that he could conceive of circumstances under which he would be glad to see him sitting there as leader of the Government; and he would like to educate him in order to fit him for that position. It would be a tough job, and he should have to break him thoroughly in. The hon. member knew exactly what he meant. He possessed admirable qualifications, and his cheerfulness and vivacity were most excellent qualities. There might be some deficiency of those qualities in the Premier, but they were conspicuous in the leader of the Opposition. But what was the use of stopping all business that night on the spurious plea which was urged, with evident insincerity, of the rotten state of the finances of the colony? They were not speaking according to their own solid convictions in abasing the credit of the colony. It was the duty of the leader of the Opposition, as it was the duty of the Premier, to help to sustain the credit of the colony. He would as soon believe an article in the *Financial News*—a paper entirely in the interests of sordid money-grubbing brokers—as anything that fell from the Opposition with reference to the finances of the colony. The people saw that; everybody who read in *Hansard* the speeches of hon. gentlemen on the opposite side knew that that could not be true or the colony would not last six months. The members of the Opposition would sing another tune if they were seated on the Government side of the House. All they had said and done had been said and done with a distinct purpose, and he now charged them with not being sincere in their wish to stop the Estimates in order to discuss the fiscal condition of the colony. Did they suppose they were more interested in the fiscal position of the colony than hon. members on the Government side were? Were they the bankers of the colony? Were they the only persons to whom the fiscal position of the colony was of any moment? What nonsense it was to say that! He wanted to know when the time would come when both sides of the House would combine for the real welfare of the colony. There were two sides to all questions, he knew, and he would allow the utmost latitude to the Opposition. He was not declaiming against any latitude that had been availed of by them. The sum and substance of his allegation against the Opposition, concentrated as it was in the leader of the Opposition, was that they and he had been doing a great deal of what he (Mr. Brookes) regarded as unworthy of the Assembly.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down was always allowed a great deal of latitude in that Chamber. They had a great deal of respect for him, partly on account of his age, partly on account of his eccentricity, partly on account of his parliamentary experience, and partly because they knew he was good-intentioned. The hon. member sat behind the Premier, and one of his peculiar eccentricities was that he listened to the Premier pouring out abuse after abuse of the most virulent kind against the leader of the Opposition, and against the Opposition as a whole, and the hon. member enjoyed it, and never thought of raising a point of order while it was going on. He listened to it with approval, he presumed; but the moment the leader of the Opposi-

tion or anyone else got up to retaliate on the Premier the hon. member discovered that there was a point of order. That eccentricity, although they allowed it to go on as far as the hon. member carried it, was a very unfair one. The hon. member should be so eccentric as occasionally to call the Premier to order, because there was not a member of that House who had used worse language than the Premier had done during the present session. He had never heard a Minister of the Crown, but one, before he had heard the present leader of the Government, use the words to a political opponent, "deliberate liar."

The PREMIER: I never used those words.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said in the other instance in which he heard that term used, it was used by a member of the party, who was a Minister of the Crown at the time, and he was obliged to apologise for it afterwards. But the hon. gentleman did not make any apology.

The PREMIER: I never used those words.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had never before heard a Minister of the Crown call his opponents parliamentary cowards, because they were resorting to what the hon. gentleman called obstruction, and yet Ministers of the Crown a few years ago sat for six weeks under obstruction.

The PREMIER: What did they say?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They did not call their opponents parliamentary cowards, because they were simply using the forms of the House which were permitted to the meanest and smallest member to use for the purpose for which they were intended.

The PREMIER: I do not remember that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: There were a great many other things the hon. gentleman did not remember. His memory was a blank when it suited him; but he could remember things that occurred years ago.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What about the letter to Pring?

The PREMIER: *Hansard* is there.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was talking about the hon. gentleman's bad language, and about the refusal of his colleague and his supporters to call him to order, when they ought to have done so. The hon. gentleman was not even satisfied with calling his opponents parliamentary cowards.

The PREMIER: I never used the expression.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said because hon. members did not agree with the measure the hon. gentleman had brought forward—the Naval Defence Bill—he accused them of being disloyal, and many other such epithets. An evening or two ago, when he (Mr. Macrossan) was not present, he called them "Chicago dynamitards." He defied the records of *Hansard* to produce worse language than had been used by that hon. gentleman that session.

The PREMIER: Why don't you quote *Hansard*?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And there was not a single member on the other side of the Committee who dared to get up and call him to order. Why? Because every man of them had been returned, according to the order of the Government, to obey that one will. There was only one will on the other side, and that one will must be obeyed. That will had to be followed no matter where it went, and no matter how it meandered from this policy to that—no matter how flagitious it might be—never a man on the other side attempted to get up and call the hon. gentleman to order.

Mr. McMASTER: That is not true.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley said that was not true. The hon. member had a very defective memory and a very inventive imagination also. He imagined things that never occurred, and forgot letters he had written.

Mr. McMASTER: Nothing of the sort.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said they would have the truth of that out when they came to discuss the Estimates a little further ahead.

Mr. McMASTER: I am quite prepared.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They would see how far the hon. gentleman's memory would carry him. The hon. member for North Brisbane also said that it was only an excuse, a pretence, to discuss the financial policy of the Government under the head of "Division of Runs." He (Mr. Macrossan) was discussing the financial policy of the Government very fairly under "Division of Runs" when he was interrupted. Then the hon. gentleman asked seriously were not members on the Government side as interested as the Opposition in the financial policy of the Government? Yes, they were, but there was not a man amongst them outside the Government benches, except the ex-Treasurer, who had the ability and the intelligence to discuss the financial position of the country. The ex-Treasurer and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government were the only two who were able to do so, and that was the reason why the finances of the country were in their present condition. Had hon. members opposite been intelligent men, such as men returned as members of Parliament were supposed to be, probably they would have been able to avoid the financial pit they had fallen into in the last two years.

Under the "Division of Runs" he was trying to get information from the Minister for Lands which, according to his view, affected very seriously the financial position of the colony. He was trying to find out why it was the Government did not go on with the division of runs. Why, instead of increasing the number of commissioners for the division of runs, they had decreased the number, it being admitted by the present Minister for Lands that the division of runs would increase the revenue of the colony. He wanted to find out why, if that policy would increase the revenue of the colony, it was not carried out. The ex-Minister for Lands then got up and said that he (Mr. Macrossan) had charged him with being influenced by the squatters. He did nothing of the kind. He simply asked the hon. member whether it was the influence of the squatters that prevented him from going on with the division of runs. Of course he knew that the squatters had no influence with the hon. gentleman, or if they had, they would not attempt to exercise it in that direction. But the hon. gentleman drew a red herring across the trail, and then a discussion arose upon another point, in consequence of his having done so. Now, as soon as the question that the Chairman leave the chair was disposed of, and they got back to the question of division of runs, he (Mr. Macrossan) would discuss the financial position of the colony. He was determined to get all the information he wanted, before they went any further. In regard to the relations that were supposed to exist between the leader of the Opposition and the head of the Government, and the statement made that it had been agreed upon by the Opposition side of the House to stop Supply when the House met that afternoon, all he could say was, that if such an agreement had been made by the Opposition, he was not aware of it. He knew it had been spoken of since the Premier had made the statement that he did. But there was no such agreement, as far as he

knew, amongst the members of the Opposition, and he thought that, if there had been, he would have been informed of it quite as soon as anybody on the other side of the Committee. So that whatever hon. members might have heard was simply surmise, or what, in their opinion—or the opinion of intelligent men—ought to have been done.

The PREMIER said he had heard before lunch that it was the fixed intention of the Opposition to obstruct Supply that afternoon. He got his information from the source where such information ordinarily came from. He thought at the time that there must be some mistake about it, because he gave the Opposition credit for more sense. However, he rose more particularly to refer to some statements made by the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. Without going into detail he would say that the hon. gentleman had put words into his mouth, as he often did, that he had never uttered.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Which are in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER said his answer to that statement had always been—Point them out in *Hansard*.

Mr. HAMILTON: He alters them afterwards.

The PREMIER said that if they were in *Hansard*, no doubt he had used them. He said, "Point them out in *Hansard*;" that was the best answer to such a statement. The hon. gentleman had also made use of the old threadbare argument about what he called dictation on the part of the Government. That was a very old story, but he thought it must be apparent to everyone under whose will hon. members opposite were acting just now. It was very apparent that they were moving simply as the hon. member for Townsville pulled the wires, and it was just as well that the public should know it. That had been apparent to the House for weeks past, and more especially during the last two weeks. He did not object in the least to the hon. member for Townsville leading the Opposition; he certainly had a more serious sense of that position than the present leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he must compliment the hon. the Premier on the magnificent way in which he could turn a political somersault. A few minutes ago he (Mr. Morehead) was the unfortunate individual who was described as a sort of "Lord of Misrule," who did all the damage to the Opposition side of the House. Now, in a few short minutes afterwards, the hon. the Premier said that for the last fortnight he had seen that the hon. member for Townsville was leading that side of the House.

The PREMIER: He is pulling the wires.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the hon. gentleman was very much mistaken if he thought that remark hurt his (Mr. Morehead's) feelings, because he would say without hesitation, that the most able man on that side of the Committee was the hon. member for Townsville; but to say that that hon. gentleman had been assuming any position that he did not occupy was to say what was not the case. No doubt the hon. the Premier was smarting under the sharp reproof administered by the hon. member for Townsville. What had been the Premier's career during the past three weeks? He need go no further back than last night, and deal with the extraordinary language the hon. gentleman had made use of. The hon. gentleman must remember well when he used the words "deliberate liar," and he must remember well the degrading outcome of the debate that arose over that unfortunate expression. That particular discussion had

had one good result: it would prevent the hon. leader of the Government from attempting anything like the *clôture* in that House. That hon. gentleman had used worse language, and had used it in a more cold-blooded and deliberate way, during the present Parliament than all the other members of the House put together. Every quotation made use of by the hon. member for Townsville was correct. The hon. the Premier said, "Show it to me in *Hansard*," but there were many things the hon. gentleman said in the House which could not be found in the revised *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: Take the original *Hansard*.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the original *Hansard* would bear out every word that had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville.

The PREMIER: Show it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman last night said of that side of the House that they had no regard for the respectability or the reputation of this colony.

The PREMIER: Wrong again; I said your conduct would affect the opinion in Great Britain as to the respectability and reputation—

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman might qualify it in that way—that the language used by hon. members on that side who differed from him would have the effect in Great Britain of shaking their faith in the respectability and reputation of the colony, and also might materially affect their pecuniary credit. Now, would the hon. gentleman explain how it was, unless the inhabitants of Great Britain were of a better class and of a more highly sensitive nature than the inhabitants of Queensland, they would be differently affected by the language hon. members on that side had made use of?

The PREMIER: I did not say the language you made use of; I said your actions.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It does not matter whether it is the actions or the language.

The PREMIER: They do not care two straws what you say, only what you do.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman last night, in a very aggressive way, interjected, when he (Mr. Morehead) had drawn a comparison, "That is about as truthful as the remarks generally made by that hon. gentleman." Now, could there be anything more wantonly and intentionally offensive than such words made use of by the Premier of the colony? He (Mr. Morehead) at once replied that the hon. gentleman was a master of vituperation and an adept at lying. Those words were quoted in that morning's *Courier*, but the gross statement made by the hon. gentlemen in the first instance was not quoted—"as truthful as the usual statements made by the hon. member."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: He immediately corrected himself, and said "as correct."

Mr. MOREHEAD: He did not. I read the words in this morning's *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: I did not even finish the word. I began to say it, and I corrected myself.

Mr. MOREHEAD: If the hon. gentleman began to say it he intended to say it.

The PREMIER: I did; but I corrected myself.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman did not correct himself. The hon. the Premier, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, was leader of the House, and ought to be a model of deportment. He ought, at any rate, to conduct himself as well as other members conducted themselves; and the language he

had used during the session—the expressions, "deliberate liar," "Chicago dynamiters," "parliamentary cowards"—made use of by the Premier, were enough in themselves to lead hon. members on that side to use extremely strong language to him. With regard to the hon. junior member for North Brisbane, it was not necessary to bother much about him. If that hon. gentleman cross-examined himself and thought for a minute or two over what he had said to him (Mr. Morehead) outside the House with regard to his conduct inside, he would say "Peccavi."

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had put in his mouth three expressions—"Deliberate liar," "parliamentary cowards," and "Chicago dynamiters." He had once during the present session used the expression "deliberate liar," not with reference to any member of the House; that the hon. member knew full well. He had never used the expression "parliamentary cowards," though he might have used it; and he had never used the expression "Chicago dynamiters." He had said that the language of some members on the other side would have been better suited to a convention of dynamitards at Chicago than to members of a legislature owing allegiance to the British Crown, and he did not withdraw in the least from his statement. Hon. members when they affected to quote should quote correctly. Now, he admitted that his language ought to be a model to the House—that he ought not to transgress the rules of decorum; and he would admit that the obligation was more incumbent upon him than on any other member of the House. But he was human, and there were limits to human endurance; and hon. members on the other side knew already—and some of them took advantage of the knowledge—that at any time they could irritate him and make him lose his temper if they would condescend so low as to get up and deliberately misquote him. He had seen a member on the other side get up with a *Hansard* in his hand and pretend to quote a statement he (the Premier) had made, and as a matter of fact he was reading from a speech he (the Premier) had made; but he was reading from a quotation of another member, which he (the Premier) had quoted to refute. Not very long ago a member got up and divided a sentence into two parts in such a manner as to entirely alter the meaning of it. Now, any member on that side who would condescend so low could always succeed in irritating him by doing that; and he did not believe his temper would ever be good enough to stand statements of that kind being made against him. He thought he had a tolerable amount of endurance, and could submit to a good deal; he thought the general opinion was rather that he stood too much, but he certainly could not submit to being deliberately misquoted—deliberately misrepresented—without getting angry. If a member got up and said "I am quoting the Premier's words," and said something entirely different, he could not refrain from becoming irritated.

Mr. HAMILTON: Who did that?

The PREMIER: Some hon. members who did that he did not notice; but any member on the other side of the House, with one or two exceptions, who would condescend so low, could always succeed in making him lose his temper. However, it was not worth while, he supposed, discussing his getting out of temper. Sometimes it was well to be angry. But that was not worth discussing, neither was it worth discussing whether the hon. junior member for North Brisbane was eccentric or not. The sooner they disposed of the motion before them, and returned to the vote of "Division of Runs," the better,

Mr. DICKSON said it was very evident that the speeches made on both sides of the Committee were not conducive to business, and speaking on behalf of the outside public he did not think the electors were particularly interested in the epithets which were bandied from side to side of the Committee. Members had a higher duty to perform than that, and he was very sorry to see the tone and character of the Parliament of Queensland degenerating as it had appeared to be during the past two or three nights. It was time they addressed themselves seriously to the affairs of the country; and the picked men who had been sent there to express the opinions of the country and deal with matters of legislation ought to attend to their duties in a manner which would command the respect of their constituents. He should be sorry to the last degree to see the general opinion of the representatives of the people in the Assembly of Queensland lowered. He did not think any good would be done by attempting to proceed with business that evening, as he could see clearly they had reached that state of feverishness that a continuation of the debate would simply lead to personalities which would create ill-feeling. He had risen to deprecate the tone of the debate, and to suggest to the Premier that the wiser course would be to adjourn the debate until Monday or Tuesday, and then be prepared to state definitely what he intended to do with the Naval Defence Bill, because that was at the root of the whole matter. There was no shutting their eyes to the fact that the Opposition had been greatly strengthened since the introduction of that Bill, by the course the Government had adopted in trying to force it upon them at the end of the session. The Premier would do well to consider the obstruction he was likely to meet with, and the position and the age of Parliament, and the general condition of affairs in connection with the approaching elections. If they sat there till midnight, there would not be one single sentence of weight uttered worthy of being recorded in *Hansard*. Seeing that they were in that condition, which was the result of two or three nights of altercation, the Premier ought to adjourn the debate, and definitely state on Tuesday what he intended to do, and upon his dictum would doubtless depend the conduct of affairs next week. He made that recommendation as a mediator between both parties. They were not doing any good to the country by continuing an altercation which was derogatory to both sides; and words of heat were uttered in the course of the debate, which, instead of being recorded in *Hansard*, ought to be expunged. There was no good to be done to the country by reminding an hon. member of what he might possibly wish to have forgotten. They were not affording a spectacle which was creditable to their Parliament in the eyes of the electors of the colony. If the Premier would accept his counsel in the matter the end of Parliament would be in view, but if he intended to press contentious matter upon a reluctant minority even, there was no saying when the session would close. However, the Premier would be the judge of his own action; but, in the meantime, he would advise him to adjourn the House until Tuesday, by which time they would have cooled down, and the hon. gentleman should then be prepared to state definitely what he was prepared to do with the Naval Defence Bill, which was really at the bottom of the present state of things.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think the hon. member who had just sat down was speaking for himself; but when he said they could not reasonably discuss anything that came before the Committee during the evening, he (Mr. Macrossan) was quite prepared to say that he would go on discussing the item

on the Estimates. On the other hand, he was quite prepared to take the advice given by the hon. member as being perfectly sound. They had lost a great deal of time over the Naval Defence Bill, and if that Bill was continued to be forced by the Government they would lose a great deal more time. They had already lost four or five parliamentary sittings over that measure, and had lost a good many over the Thane's Creek railway, after it was shown plainly, to any man who understood parliamentary tactics, that it was impossible to pass it. It was simply dogged obstinacy on the part of the Premier, when that hon. gentleman saw that there was a strong minority opposed to any particular thing, to attempt to pass it. In ordinary matters of legislation the minority always gave way, but it was when they came to extraordinary matters of legislation that the minority adopted a style of defence which they were justified in adopting under the Standing Orders, and by adopting which they could defeat anything the Government attempted to do. He was not quite certain whether the hon. member for Enoggera was altogether correct in saying that the outside public were not concerned in the epithets which hon. members chose to throw at each other across the floor. He thought the outside public were extremely concerned in the character and conduct of the business in that Committee and the language that hon. members used. It was a matter of great importance to the outside public, and when the Premier rose, as he did two or three minutes ago, and accused one or more hon. members of deliberately misquoting him—of reading from one statement a quotation which was not his but somebody else's—the outside public would see that it was a very strange assembly.

The PREMIER: This is all in *Hansard*.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not believe a single member on either side of the Committee would do what the hon. gentleman said had been done knowingly. Every member was liable to be mistaken and liable to say things that he probably would rather have left unsaid. Every hon. member who rose to quote from *Hansard* or to quote from any other document, parliamentary paper, or otherwise, he believed, quoted it correctly, but it was one thing to make a mistake and another to make a deliberate misstatement. If the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government would tell him that he did not use the words "deliberate liar," "Chicago dynamiters," or "parliamentary cowards," he (Mr. Macrossan) would withdraw what he had said.

Mr. SALKELD: The Premier explained the sense in which he used those words.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had heard the Premier use the term "deliberate liar."

The PREMIER: Not applied to any member of this Committee.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman applied the term to the person who invented a certain statement, and that statement was afterwards proved to be the Premier's own. The first member who spoke about the clôtüre was the leader of the Government to the leader of the Opposition. That was the inventor of the clôtüre; therefore if the inventor of that rumour was a deliberate liar, the charge rebounded on the hon. member himself. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) had given some good advice, but he sometimes lost his temper. It was not very many nights since he called the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes,

inferentially, a fiddler and buffoon. That hon. gentleman certainly had before that annoyed him by calling him "Pecksniff," and a boneless politician. He believed that if they set themselves to real business and dropped epithets they would get on much better. The Premier said he was human. They were all human, and all likely to lose their tempers and to use language a little more powerful than they would use in ordinary conversation. The hon. member also said that he was often irritated; but he irritated others as often as he was irritated himself; and he must take things as they came. When they made parliamentary war, as they had done lately, they did not do it by throwing roses at each other. When they were carrying on the ordinary business of legislation as it should be carried on, they kept within the bounds of parliamentary decorum and used parliamentary language, but when they irritated each other they got a little beyond parliamentary decorum, and Mr. Chairman was sometimes puzzled to tell whether they were in order or not. However, he thought that if they went to a division on the motion before the Committee they might be able to get back to the question of Supply, the particular item being the Division of Runs, and on that question he wanted to discuss the financial position of the colony. That was what he started to do immediately after 7 o'clock, but had been prevented from doing by the discussion which had been going on ever since. That discussion had been carried on by both sides, and he supposed they were miserable sinners all round.

Mr. WHITE said that in the stonewalling tactics pursued by the Opposition the hon. member for Townsville was the undercurrent, and the leader of the Opposition exhibited the froth on the top. It was patent to everybody, and would be seen by the readers of *Hansard*, that in continuing the stonewalling they were only, as it were, committing suicide, because the leader of the Opposition had only the support of his own blind followers in the position he had taken up. Hon. members opposite had so many redeeming qualities individually that he could not help liking them in spite of their evil ones; therefore he would hesitate a long time before saying anything to hurt their feelings. He thought he would say no more just now.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he wanted to call attention to an expression used by the hon. member for Townsville, but before doing so he would refer to the speech made by the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson. That hon. member gave some good advice—but what did it mean? It meant that if the Government fell in with the views of the Opposition all would be peace and quietness. The hon. member for Townsville said he wanted to deal with the financial policy of the country; he also said that the followers of the Premier—the one-man Government—were returned to follow that one particular man, not to exercise in an independent way their individual convictions, but to do as they were told.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I said the Government organ said so.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that perhaps the hon. member for Townsville was the writer of that leader; at any rate, seeing how often the hon. member had repeated it that night he could only come to the conclusion that he was of that opinion. The hon. member said those who supported the Government were returned to do as they were told. One hon. member on the Government side said they were never asked to do so; and he (Mr. Macfarlane) could say that the Premier had never once during the four years he had been in power asked him to support a Bill brought in by the Government. How did

the hon. member's statement tally with the action he (Mr. Macfarlane) had taken during the last four years? Had he supported every Bill the Premier had brought forward? He had opposed the Premier in many things. The idea of being returned simply as voting machines, to do as they were told! Did hon. members opposite do as they were told? He guessed they did. They were never divided. There was far more independence on the Government side than on the other side; there always had been and always would be. He hoped they would not be taunted in that way again. The hon. member also said there was not a man on the Government side, with the exception of the Premier and the ex-Treasurer who understood or could discuss the financial position of the colony. Could the hon. member for Townsville do it? How many members on that side could do it? How did he know that members on the Government side could not? Did they not understand finance as well as the hon. member did? There were perhaps as many business men on the Government side as on the other, perhaps as many successful men of business—men who could conduct their own affairs, and look after their own finances. Why, then, should they be charged with not being able to discuss the finances of the colony? The finances of a country were certainly more complicated than those of a private business, and it required men of a great grasp of mind to deal with them, but was that a reason why they should be charged with not being able to discuss the financial policy of the colony? The thing was preposterous.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then why do you not discuss it when you have the chance?

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had discussed it every year since he had been in the House. Members on his side had dared to differ from the Government on a good many things, and he hoped they would do so again. The hon. member for Townsville, a long time ago, said the Premier had a moral twist. He (Mr. Macfarlane) thought the hon. member must have stolen that; the hon. member himself had that moral twist now, as was shown by his remarks respecting the reduction of the number of dividing commissioners from seven to five. The hon. member stated that the more runs there were divided the more income there would be, but if he had been a good financier he would have understood that, as a good part of the runs had been divided, there was no use for seven commissioners, and that the land could not be taken up as fast as they could divide the runs. No financier would keep seven commissioners when five could do the work. But perhaps the hon. member would explain that when he discussed the financial policy of the Government.

Mr. STEVENSON said they had heard the hon. member who last spoke describe himself very well, and in describing himself he described the members for Ipswich generally, as he had told the Committee those members were very good at looking after their own affairs. The Committee could quite understand that. No member who came from Ipswich had any idea beyond looking after Ipswich and his own affairs. According to report, the hon. member's colleague, Mr. Salkeld, was looking after a billet. They were told that as soon as the House was up that hon. member would get the billet of railway arbitrator. They knew that the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, looked after Ipswich very well, and in looking after Ipswich he looked after himself. The junior member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, had accused members on that side of the Committee of being insincere. How had the hon. member shown his sincerity with regard to the

Australasian Naval Force Bill? In the first instance he joined with the Opposition in strenuously opposing that measure, and now he was supporting the Government in their endeavours to get it passed by Parliament. The hon. member also compared the Premier with the leader of the Opposition, and said the former had done a great many things for the colony. They knew what the Premier had done for the colony. He had brought in and passed a good many Bills, which were of no use to the colony; he went home to England as the self-appointed representative of Queensland at the Colonial Conference. For that the colony had to pay a good round sum—no less than £1,400. His services had not been of that value to the country. But to come to the question raised by the Opposition, he (Mr. Stevenson) thought they were perfectly justified in asking the Premier to let them know the financial position of the country at the present time before they went any further with Supply. The hon. gentleman had told them that he could appropriate the votes as they were passed without any Appropriation Bill. That was a very good reason why they should not go any further with the Estimates until they were sure the hon. gentleman could not spend the money without an Appropriation Bill being passed by Parliament. They were also justified in taking up the position they were doing until the Premier withdrew the Naval Force Bill. He (Mr. Stevenson) did not agree with the suggestion made by the ex-Treasurer with respect to the words which had been bandied about that evening from one side of the Committee to the other; he did not think they should be expunged from *Hansard*. He did not think any words used in debate should be expunged. Far too many were expunged now. The Premier did quite enough of that on his own account, and it was to be hoped that the suggestion of the hon. member for Enoggera would not be accepted; no debate should be wiped out of *Hansard*. Of course they knew perfectly well that that could not be done, and he only wondered that such a suggestion should have been made by the ex-Treasurer. The Premier was entirely responsible for the state of things that had occurred. He had taken up a position he had no right to occupy, and he had taken up that position simply to gratify his overweening conceit. He went home as the self-appointed representative of Queensland and made promises which he had no right to make, and which the country was not in any way bound to carry out. Probably the hon. gentleman had pledged himself, not only at the Conference, but also privately. Perhaps when making after-dinner speeches when he had dined with some dukes, marquises, or earls, he pledged himself to do certain things, and he now found that, notwithstanding his large majority, the minority was so strong that he could not carry out his promises. He had got up a tree he ought not to have got up, and now found he would have to come down. The hon. member for Ipswich had said that the advice of the hon. member for Enoggera was tantamount to advising the Premier to give in to the Opposition. Well, the hon. gentleman would have to give in to the Opposition in that matter, and he would act wisely if he withdrew the Naval Force Bill, and simply went on with the real business of the country. If he withdrew that measure and made his statement with regard to the financial position of the colony, the Opposition would no doubt assist him in every legitimate way to pass the Estimates. He had been informed since he rose to speak that the junior member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, was not to be the Railway Arbitrator, so he would withdraw the remarks he had made with reference to him.

Mr. SALKELD said he regretted that the junior member for North Brisbane had risen to points of order and interrupted the member for Mackay. He would prefer, of course, to hear the leader of the Opposition speaking, because he had more wit about him, but he liked to hear the member for Mackay discussing the personal qualities of members on the Government side, and all that nonsense, because the country would know really who was obstructing the business. The member for Mackay had charged the Premier with counting out the House. Was not that calculated to mislead members? There was every intention on the part of the Government to do business, but members of the Opposition would not allow them to do anything. He wished to refer to a remark of his colleague, Mr. Macfarlane, which had been quoted by the member for Normanby. The hon. gentleman said hon. members on that side were capable of looking after their own business, and the member for Normanby had taken that up, and twisted the remark into the statement that the members for Ipswich were capable of looking after the affairs of Ipswich, and did look after them. He could not help thinking that the hon. member had intentionally twisted the meaning of his colleague's remarks. The hon. member also said that the junior member for Ipswich was looking for a lost billet, and said he had asked for the office of Railway Arbitrator, but apparently the leader of the Opposition had set him right. He did not know whether the leader of the Opposition had told him about the half-guinea.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I explained to the hon. member what you told me.

Mr. SALKELD said he must say that, up to the present time, whatever the reports in the newspapers might be, whatever the hon. member for Townsville might think, he had nothing whatever to do with the report that had been circulated with reference to his occupying the position of Railway Arbitrator. With reference to the advice given by the member for Enoggera, he believed it to be thoroughly bad. It meant only one thing—that whenever hon. members opposite were irritated the Government should give way to them. Well, in that case he thought they would be very often irritated. Whenever they wanted their own way, they would become irritated. Referring again to the question of his appointment as Railway Arbitrator, he would say that he had never asked for that or any other position, or for any position for any relative of his, nor was he likely to do so. He had made a remark to the Minister for Works that there were a number of cases half tried, and asked when the railway arbitrator was to be appointed, and he got the reply that nothing had been decided. He hoped hon. members would consent to proceed with business and pass the Estimates. With regard to the remarks that had been made with reference to Parliament being moribund, he could only say that if they had not passed the Redistribution Bill hon. members could have taken no objection to business being proceeded with. Another session might have been held and a great many measures introduced and passed. If hon. members opposite would not consent to cease obstructing, and go on with the legitimate business of the country, his advice to the Government would be to sit it out.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Morehead, Stevenson, Donaldson, Macrossan, Murphy, Lissner, Palmer, Norton, Adams, Black, Chubb, and Hamilton.

NOES, 21.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Moreton, Dutton, Lumley Hill, Buckland, Grimes, Sheridan, White, Foxton, Wakefield, Annear, Macfarlane, Smyth, S. W. Brooks, McMaster, W. Brookes, Salkeld, Bailey, and Bulcock.

Question resolved in the negative.

The PREMIER said he was afraid that no useful purpose would be served by continuing the debate that evening. He was very sorry for it, but he believed it to be the fact. He would therefore move that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported no progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Monday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. I hope to bring down the Supplementary Estimates on Monday, and I hope we shall make some progress in Committee of Supply on that day also. Then probably I shall be able to say when I shall be able to make my Supplementary Financial Statement. I think, however, it will be as well that the Supplementary Estimates should be in the hands of hon. members for a couple of days before I do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the Premier should have made that statement at first. If he had done so he would probably have saved the whole of the unpleasant debate this evening. We should have those papers in hand before we go any further.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at half-past 9 o'clock.