

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 29 JULY 1880**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 29 July, 1880.

Formal Business.—Schmaling's Land Orders.—Press Telegrams.—Queensland Iron.—Case of Samuel Lewis.—Select Committees.—Mail Contract—committee.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3 o'clock.

## FORMAL BUSINESS.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH, in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing the number of letters sent by post from Brisbane and the other ports of call of the Torres Straits mail steamers, during the first six months of this year, to all countries and places beyond the Australian colonies and New Zealand, specifying the number sent from each port, and the mail route by which they were sent—

asked permission to amend the motion by substituting "each of the first six months" for "the first six months."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said a formal motion could not be amended. It had so been decided this session already.

The SPEAKER: It is quite competent for the mover of a resolution to make a verbal amendment, but it must be by consent of the House.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: This is not by consent.

Motion put and passed.

## SCHMALING'S LAND ORDERS.

Mr. SIMPSON said that, before moving the motion standing in his name, he had to ask the permission of the House to make a slight amendment, which was to put the name of Mr. Stevens in the place of Mr. Hill, who did not wish to serve on the committee. He then moved—

1. That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the circumstances connected with Christian Schmaling's Land Orders, as disclosed by the Correspondence laid before the House on the 10th July last.

2. That such Committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House, and consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Dickson, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Kates, Mr. Amlhurst, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Morehead, and Mover.

He had hoped that this matter would have been allowed to go as a formal motion, and thought it would have been better if such had been the case. As, however, it was not so allowed he must say a few words before sitting down. In some papers concerning Christian Schmaling's land orders, ordered to be printed on the 10th of July last year, there were some very strange documents, and in the last number, 30, there were some conclusions drawn by Mr. Hume, the Land Commissioner who carried out the inquiry. He was sorry to have to mention in connection with those papers an hon. member of the House, but he must do so because he was very closely connected with the whole of the papers, as to which Mr. Hume said—

"In conclusion, I draw attention to the fact that the evidence is very conflicting, and that, considering a fraud amounting to a felony appears to have been committed by an unknown person, no adequate efforts to bring him to justice appear to have been made by the police."

That was a very serious charge, and the person to whom it pointed, whoever it was, ought to have an opportunity of clearing himself, and it was with this wish that he brought the documents under the notice of the House. Mr. Hume went on to say that "in consequence of being thus defrauded" the hon. senior member for Toowoomba, who was the member who was mixed up in these papers, "states he has lost £60." Further on Mr. Hume said—

"I think it right to bring under your notice that Mr. Groom, in a conversation after he had given his evidence, told me he had been informed in Toowoomba that this investigation had been instituted by you, at my instigation, with a view to do him an injury."

In that paragraph the hon. senior member for Toowoomba distinctly accused a member of the Ministry with instigating urgent proceedings with a view to his injury. Mr. Hume continued—

"I pointed out its only object was to ascertain what circumstances had led to the stoppage of the land orders, and to do justice to their holders, who at present could not utilise them."

In consequence of this a certain Christian Schmaling had not been able to use the land orders that the law gave him, and which he had a perfect right to use. He (Mr. Simpson) would now briefly point out a few discrepancies that appeared in these documents. This Christian Schmaling distinctly swore that he called upon the senior hon. member for Toowoomba on four different occasions in reference to these land orders, and that he did not receive them. He further swore that in June, 1875, he again called, making in all five times, and the senior hon. member for Toowoomba then told him that he had given the orders to another man. Mr. Groom said that Schmaling called only once, and that was at the end of July. Here was a very serious discrepancy: one of the two was evidently very much in the wrong, and he thought it was due to the innocent party, be he whom he might, to have the matter cleared up. Mr.

McIntyre in one part of his evidence said that he bought the land orders for £47 10s., and some months afterwards resold them at exactly the same price. Mr. Groom said that he gave £60 for them. Here, again, was a considerable discrepancy. Mr. Groom in these papers gave three distinct accounts of the transaction, each one varying from the other in a very considerable degree. In No. 8 of the papers, Mr. Groom confessed to having sold these orders to Mr. McIntyre by auction, he believed, for the sum of £47 10s. Mr. Groom said that by his books and receipt this was paid to Christian Schmaling; so that in his first account he seemed to believe that he sold the orders through Mr. McIntyre, at auction, for £47 10s. In No. 10 of the same papers Mr. Groom said that he had the papers in his possession for—he (Mr. Simpson) took it—one day only; that upon the second day after receiving them he gave them away to the wrong men. In the third account which Mr. Groom furnished, he said—

"Schmaling's land orders came up to me accompanied by a letter saying they were sent at his request, they remaining in my possession some three weeks."

So, in the first place, he said Mr. McIntyre sold these land orders by auction; in the second place, that he had them in his possession one day; and in his third account, that he had them in his possession some three weeks. These were, in such a matter of business as this, rather serious discrepancies. He had no doubt that they were quite capable of explanation, and he thought that if Mr. Groom could explain them fairly, then there was another man who ought to be punished according to law. In No. 10 of the papers Mr. Groom said, "I have now given you the facts of the case." Well, he (Mr. Simpson) would like to know which of the three versions were the facts of the case; for, seeing that they had three distinct versions, they could not all be the facts. Then, again, in No. 10, Mr. Groom said, "I drew up a large number of applications for Germans who were applying for their land orders." Well, the total number of land orders that passed through the hon. member's name during that twelve months consisted of four, so that Mr. Groom seemed to consider four a considerable number—in fact, so many that they were sufficient to confuse him in giving them out again. Then there was something very strange about the receipt. In No. 8 Mr. Groom seemed to say that a Sergeant Downie had seen that receipt. In No. 10 it was stated that the receipt was signed by Schmaling; in No. 27 no less than three persons, as far as he could judge—someone named Henderson, a Mr. Hemmant, and the police magistrate—had seen that receipt; but, in all the papers, every one of them denied ever having seen that receipt or having any knowledge of it whatever. He thought these discrepancies sufficiently wide to call for some inquiry; and if a fraud amounting to a felony had been committed, he thought it showed a very considerable amount of carelessness on the part of those looking after these matters that no adequate efforts to bring the offender to justice had been made by the police. Referring to the first page of that return—the list of all papers and correspondence accompanying the returns—on No. 12 there was a note that the document had apparently been torn off there. He did not know whether that might have been the missing receipt, but if it ever existed it did not seem to be forthcoming then. He should very shortly run through the documents, and make a few comments, in the order in which they came through, not in the order of events exactly. In No. 4, dated July 27th, 1875, it seemed to him that that was the first time that the police had any knowledge that those land orders had gone astray. He would

call hon. members' attention to the fact that, from a document further on, it would appear that they were absolutely and positively sold on the 7th of June. On the 2nd of August, Mr. Edward Pechey telegraphed to the Immigration Agent saying that Schmaling had not received his land orders. That was very nearly two months after the orders had been sold by Mr. Groom, and five weeks after the time that Schmaling swore that he had discovered to Mr. Groom that they were lost. It seemed very strange that Mr. Groom, during this interval, knowing that he had sold them to Mr. McIntyre, had never gone and made any inquiry from him, for not only had this time elapsed, but it was on the 29th September following that the first inquiry seemed to have been made of Mr. McIntyre. In No. 6 they had the fact that the land orders were posted to "W. H. Groom, Esq., M.L.A., Toowoomba," from Brisbane. Upon inquiry by the Inspector of Police at Toowoomba, Mr. Groom acknowledged that he had received those land orders upon the 7th June, two days after they were posted; so that it was very clear that these papers were traced to Mr. Groom's hands. In No. 8, Mr. Groom, upon further inquiry by the police, the date being a couple of days after, said that they were sold (by auction, he believed) for £47 10s. Then they came to No. 10, which was a very important paper in that series, being the first considerable document in which Mr. Groom gave his version of the facts of the case. Mr. Groom said that he drew up a large number of applications for Germans who were applying for their land orders; whereas the fact appeared that he only drew up, and received, four orders during the whole period of twelve months. Mr. Groom said that on 7th June a man called at his office and asked him if he had any land orders for Schmaling, and he replied, "Yes, two had come from Brisbane that morning." That letter was dated 30th August, 1875. The hon. member seemed to have a very distinct and clear recollection of events and particulars. Mr. Groom continued: "I at once gave him the land orders and he signed the receipt for them." Those land orders were therefore received by Mr. Groom on the 5th June, and on the 7th—within two days—he seemed to have had an applicant for them and gave them out. Schmaling then asked him to buy the orders, and he told him that he was not buying land orders, but said that Mr. McIntyre was. He (Schmaling) asked him to go to McIntyre's and see what he would give for them. He went to McIntyre's and sold them for £47 10s. and handed him the money. On the 6th August Mr. Groom seemed to be under the idea that those orders had been sold by auction; on the 30th he was quite clear in his mind that Mr. McIntyre paid him the cash down and he handed the money to Schmaling. Then, "about seven weeks after," or about the very end of July, "an elderly man called at the office and inquired if I had received any land orders, and was informed that I had none for that name;" but on examining a drawer in his private office table, found, with other papers referring to land orders, the receipt "in form" of Schmaling's land orders, and he explained that someone had seven weeks previously obtained the land orders in his name; and Mr. Groom had shown Schmaling a receipt at that time. About the 8th July, according to Mr. Groom's own version, the fact that he had given the order to the wrong man was patent to his mind; but he seemed not to have made that effort, which in the end eventuated in the recovery of those orders, until the 27th September, which was a period of two full months. He (Mr. Simpson) had nothing to say upon Mr. Groom's opinion that he was hardly used in that matter, about the money or otherwise;

but when he went on to say that the names of Germans were often so much alike that any person in the hurry of business might fall into the same error as he had, he could only have dealt, during the whole of that period of twelve months, with four land orders, coming from the Immigration Office in Brisbane, and that the confusion in his mind was confusion entirely with regard to four names, two of those names being Schmaling. That was Mr. Groom's first letter, written within a short time of the whole event, and giving what he declared to be the facts of the case. He need not trouble hon. members any more till they came to No. 1, when Mr. Groom wrote another letter, on the 17th February, 1879—a very considerable time having elapsed—in which he said—

"In reply to your inquiries *in re* Christian Schmaling's land orders, I have the honour to state that I have no reason to doubt that the Christian Schmaling in whose possession the land orders are now is the rightful owner. I have in vain sought for the man who first got them from me, and by whom I am a loser of the £60 paid for their recovery."

On the 1st April, 1879, he seemed, for reasons which did not appear, to have considered it necessary, in consequence of the inquiry made on account of Schmaling's complaint, to have made a statement at the Toowoomba Public Lands Office, and he (Mr. Simpson) could not help saying that that statement was entirely at variance with his two former statements. He there stated that these orders remained in his possession some three weeks, whereas the fact was that they remained in his possession two days, and that fact seemed to have been very clear to his mind on a former occasion. He then spoke of the receipt which was afterwards sent down to Mr. Hemmant. Everyone, so far as the inquiry had gone, seemed to deny any knowledge whatever of that receipt, and Mr. Groom was the only one who spoke of it. He said that the police took it down to Highfields for the purpose of identification, and the police whom he asserted took the document to Highfields deny any knowledge of it whatever. He then said that he took him to Mr. McIntyre who bought the orders, but he did not remember what he paid for them. Then, again, he said that about three weeks or a month afterwards the real Christian Schmaling called on him, and he (Mr. Groom) told him what had occurred, and again showed him the receipt. Previous to this he had no recollection of ever having seen him at all. This Christian Schmaling swore positively that he called upon five different occasions, in the course of a very short period of time, upon Mr. Groom, and Mr. Groom said that he showed the receipt of the Police Magistrate at Toowoomba also. Mr. Hemmant then told him he would impound the orders in order to give him (Mr. Groom) an opportunity of ascertaining who had committed the fraud. So that it was quite evident that Mr. Hemmant agreed with Mr. Groom that a fraud amounting to a felony had been perpetrated by some one. Finding from legal advice that he was legally responsible for the money or orders, Mr. Groom went to Mr. McIntyre, bought back the orders, and handed them over to the real Christian Schmaling. It seemed to him (Mr. Simpson) very strange that Mr. Groom should have taken so long in going to Mr. McIntyre, and that when he did go how it was that he suddenly seemed to be aware that the Christian Schmaling, for whom he bought back the land orders at a loss, as he said himself, of £60, was the real Christian Schmaling. He (Mr. Simpson) thought he ought to have taken that trouble at a very much earlier period. Mr. McIntyre states—

"On the 7th June, 1875, Mr. Groom sold two land orders, Nos. 202-203, to me for the sum of £17 10s. 1880—R

cash. On the 29th September following he came to my office and bought them back for the same sum, cash—telling Mr. Duncan McIntyre, my father, there was some trouble over the matter, and therefore he wanted them back. No one was with Mr. Groom."

It seemed a very strange proceeding on the part of a very clever man like Mr. Groom, and one that certainly left him open to slight suspicion if he acted in this way. If he had taken the real Christian Schmaling with him to have been identified by Mr. McIntyre it would have been better, but he went secretly, and seemed to have been actuated by an idea that some trouble was brewing over this matter, and it was only when he came to that conclusion that he acted at all. He (Mr. Simpson) was very sorry to draw these conclusions, but they were evident to his mind, and it was only fair to give the hon. member a good opportunity of clearing himself and showing that he was very much injured. The police, they would see in No. 29, denied any knowledge whatever of the receipt. They never recollected to have seen it, and if it had been in existence they must have seen it. He would conclude by showing how very much this Christian Schmaling's sworn evidence disagreed with the statement of the senior member for Toowoomba. He swore that about a fortnight after making the application, or about the 26th April, 1875, he went to Mr. Groom and asked for the land orders, and Mr. Groom told him he had not received them. Then he said that he went three times afterwards and received the same reply. Here were four distinct occasions upon which Schmaling swore that he went to Mr. Groom and asked him for the land orders and always with the same reply. In June, 1875, he went again to Mr. Groom, and was told that a person calling himself "Christian Schmaling" had asked for the land orders and got them. He (Mr. Simpson) could not help repeating that it seemed very strange that a man of Mr. Groom's intelligence should not know this individual who had called upon him on five distinct occasions, and he could not help thinking that if Mr. Groom did not know this man, then Christian Schmaling must have sworn very falsely. Schmaling says—

"About the end of September Mr. Groom met me in the street and informed me my land orders were in his office, and were at my disposal; I then went there and got them from him, signing a paper at the same time; when I asked Mr. Groom to write for the land orders I saw and spoke to him in his office, and also when I went there on three occasions he said he had not got them: I never told him to sell them or in any way dispose of them."

So that there is a clear contradiction of Mr. Groom in saying that he asked him to sell them. In conclusion, he agreed with the commissioner who had the looking after of these papers. It seemed to him (Mr. Simpson) that there was something wrong there, and he thought the police should have been put upon the trail of the matter a long time ago, and someone was to blame that it had not been done sooner. This thing had gone on from time to time, and eventually the evidence was got out piecemeal—when some portions of it had been lost, and the opportunity for an inquiry had passed; but he thought it would be a disgrace to allow those documents to remain upon the records of that House, and no further notice be taken.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he called out "not formal" to this motion, because he conceived there were certain rules which ought to govern a House of Parliament in the appointment of a select committee. Select committees ought not to be appointed to gratify the private grudge of members, but to purposes that would conduce to the public interest. The hon. member ought surely to have given some reason why this select committee should be appointed to inquire into a matter which it appeared

had actually been inquired into a year ago by the Land Commissioner, whose report was to the effect that some further inquiry might have been made by the police. Was this House going to sit as a branch of the Detective Department? Were they to appoint committees whenever an officer said that there was something to be investigated in the nature of an offence? Was this the kind of work to be performed by a Legislative Assembly? It would be better for the hon. gentleman, if he wanted really, as he said, to further the ends of justice, to communicate with the department he had mentioned. A select committee of the House was not the proper means to make an investigation such as that; and he was quite certain that the hon. member could not find any precedent for a select committee being appointed for any such purposes as he had intimated in his own speech. The rest of his speech seemed to be an attack upon a political and personal enemy of his own—

Mr. SIMPSON; I object to the hon. member. He is not in order in imputing motives to me.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he would repeat that the rest of the hon. member's speech seemed to be an attack upon a personal and political opponent of his own, and he would repeat that a select committee was not the tribunal to try one member of the House because another had a grudge against him. It was degrading to the House to ask for the appointment of a select committee to enable one man to gratify a grudge against another. Political institutions would be brought into contempt if they allowed their power to be made use of for any such purpose. The hon. member did not give any reason whatever for this investigation. What advantage to the public would it be to investigate this matter after so long a lapse of time? Here was a thing twelve months old and no inquiry was instituted when the facts were fresh; but when there was a little excitement in the political world the hon. member got up in his place and asked the House to appoint a select committee for the purpose of enabling one hon. member to blacken another's character. He (Mr. Griffith) did not know anything about the facts of the case: he had only read the papers cursorily, and had formed no opinion upon them, nor would it be right to anticipate the decision of the committee supposing one were formed; but it was a very singular thing that this motion should have been made. They were come to a very pretty pass indeed if, when politics were a little warm, members of the House who were not so particular about the way in which they exercised their powers as others were, brought forward resolutions for the purpose suggested by the hon. member. What the conclusion of such a select committee might be it was contrary to the privileges of the House to suggest, but it was a singular thing that the hon. member should want an investigation: he had no right to ask for one unless for a purpose beneficial to the colony. And what was the sort of investigation he asked for? He made an attack upon a member of the House who was a personal and political enemy of his own at the present time, and then he asked the House to appoint a committee, the majority of whom consisted of gentlemen of strong political antagonism to the gentleman upon whom the committee was to sit. The result, of course, would be a foregone conclusion. What the hon. member desired was, to be able to report and place upon the records of the House the condemnation of another member. That was the only object that could be attained by the committee. Some hon. members might not see an objection to that sort of thing, but he confessed he had had some experience of parliamentary government in this and other colonies for some

years, and he had never heard of a select committee being appointed for anything of the kind. He had heard of a select committee appointed to inquire into the conduct of a member of Parliament in circumstances where the public interests were concerned, but this was not one of that kind. He judged from the hon. member's speech that he had a great objection to the member for Toowoomba, and that he wanted to appoint a select committee to be able to bring up a condemnatory report. How far was party feeling going to carry hon. members on the other side of the House? Of course, this was to be a party question. The majority of the House was to appoint a select committee consisting of themselves, and when the conclusion for which the hon. mover desired was attained it would be duly reported. He (Mr. Griffith) protested against the whole thing. No reason had been given to justify the committee. There were the papers on the subject upon the table, and the only result would be that the committee would read the papers and bring up its conclusion upon them. He remembered a committee once, in this House, attempting, instead of considering the matters referred to it, to vilify other members; but they did not gain much by it—they only wrote themselves down as persons who used the powers of the House to gratify their personal animosity. No select committee, he repeated, should be appointed, unless for the public gain, and there had been no pretence of showing that there was any excuse for the resolution now proposed.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he thought there was very good reason for an inquiry into the matter. By the disclosures made the senior member for Toowoomba (Mr. Groom) lay under a very serious imputation. A more extraordinary address than that delivered by the leader of the Opposition he had never heard. He could not understand why, because the hon. member (Mr. Groom) sat on the opposite side of the House, he should be a personal and political enemy of hon. members on this side. He (Mr. Hill) was politically opposed to hon. members opposite, but there were some of them with whom, he sincerely trusted, he was not on terms of personal enmity, and if their character was called in question in any way he, for one, should be anxious to see it cleared. He did not allow his political opinions to carry him so far as to regard every individual on the opposite benches with direct personal animosity. Having declined to sit on the committee he was at liberty to express his opinion on the papers submitted, and he considered that the committee would be much to the public benefit; and he should be glad if the hon. member could clear himself from the imputations contained in the papers. Some of the disclosures were of an extraordinary nature. The latter part of No. 27 struck him, in connection with other things he had heard, as particularly strange—namely, that the pretended Schmaling could write while the real one could not. He should like very much to see the matter further investigated, and did not know why it was not done before. The inquiry was quite justifiable. As to its being a party question, that was the leader of the Opposition's usual little game. What had the matter to do with party? He did not suppose the Ministry would put it to their followers in that light. For his own part, he should vote on the question as his conscience and judgment dictated.

Mr. DICKSON said it would have been as well if the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) had previously consulted with the gentlemen nominated to serve on the committee. He observed his name amongst them, and he wished to say that he should distinctly decline to act. Being in that position he felt at liberty to make a few

observations on the subject. From remarks made, it seemed that some hon. members had already arrived at a foregone conclusion upon it. The last speaker said the inquiry would serve to clear the character of a member of the House. As far as he (Mr. Dickson) had read the correspondence, he did not see that any suspicion rested on the character of any member in connection with the matter. For that reason the inquiry was unnecessary. If the hon. member whose name appeared in the correspondence felt his character in any way implicated it was his duty to invite an inquiry of this nature. The House had much more important business before it, and hon. members must have much leisure on their hands if they could afford to serve on a committee of that sort. The facts transpired several years ago, and Mr. Hume, after the inquiry at Toowoomba, placed the matter very fairly in his report to the Minister for Lands. From what he knew of the case, he could not see that any injury had accrued to the public interest. There had been no loss to the Treasury, and the land orders ultimately reached their proper destination. It was only where interests were involved, as between a man and the public, where the intervention of the House was required in the shape of an inquiry by a select committee. Nothing had been disclosed to justify the appointment of a committee for the purpose specified, and he declined to serve on the committee because his time could be more profitably occupied in other matters calling for immediate attention.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said that at the beginning of the session an attack unparalleled in the history of any Parliament was made on the character of certain gentlemen, and a select committee was appointed for the very purpose of clearing them, if possible, of the imputations made against them. It was strange, therefore, to hear members of the Opposition declaring against the appointment of the committee now asked for. In the papers before them there was the strongest possible evidence of a series of actions which, to say the least, were most questionable. He would not, however, pass judgment before seeing the report and evidence of the select committee, lest he should be following the course of the leader of the Opposition, which was not only discreditable but worse. He had no wish to prejudge the case, but would only say that the evidence contained in the papers was sufficient to make it absolutely necessary that the matter should be carefully considered by a select committee of the House. It was, indeed, imperative that the House should take it in hand. Was it likely that the hon. member (Mr. Groom) would himself take the initiative and ask for further evidence to criminate himself? The hon. member would be a great fool to do anything of the kind. Some very ugly disclosures had been made in which a member of the House was concerned, and it was incumbent upon the House to see that the matter was sifted to the bottom. If the hon. member was cleared, well and good; but it would surprise more than one hon. member if he did not come out of it with a character rather worse, even, than it was at present.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he was sorry the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) had not talked the matter over with him before bringing the motion forward, as he might have persuaded him to let those past matters lie in oblivion. He did not see the utility of the House granting an inquiry for such a purpose. No public benefit was to be gained by it, and he was convinced that for the good of the country and the progress of public business it would be much better if those personal animosities were left outside the House.

By the way they were going on, he felt that little by little they were gradually losing the respect of the constituencies. He should certainly vote against the motion.

Mr. NORTON said that personally he had very little sympathy with any charges made directly or indirectly against hon. members, and he regretted that this matter had been brought forward at all. If action was to have been taken it would have been far better, as suggested by the leader of the Opposition, to have been taken through a detective officer. He never heard those charges made against hon. members without experiencing a feeling of shame that hon. members should feel it their duty to make them. At the same time, now that the motion had been brought forward and the charge made, it was perhaps desirable that a select committee should be appointed, and if the question came to a division he should vote in favour of it. He hoped with all his heart that the hon. member would be able to clear himself entirely from the stigma placed upon him by the motion having been brought forward and the correspondence published. He fully sympathised with the hon. member.

The HON. J. DOUGLAS said that at an earlier stage of the session they heard the words, "sleek hypocrisy" spoken by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. Certainly, they had heard a fine specimen of it to-night in the speech of the mover of the resolution (Mr. Simpson). He was not familiar with the circumstances of Christopher Schmaling's case further than that gained by cursorily perusing the papers some time ago; but according to the hon. member's own statement, it was, if anything at all, a criminal charge—either that or nothing; and, if so, it ought not to be pre-judged here, but carefully tried in the proper court for charges of that nature. He would go further, and say that if they were to pursue that sort of procedure against any member of the House, based upon such evidence, he should feel very much tempted to ask for a committee to inquire into certain land transactions with which the mover of the resolution was connected—transactions which some hon. members thought of a very equivocal nature. There were equally as good grounds for an inquiry in the one case as in the other. There were passages in his own life, and no doubt of every other hon. member of the House, some of the details of which would hardly bear investigation. Some of them had no doubt run in unbranded stray cattle under circumstances which, when inquired into, would not exactly redound to their credit. There was no need for hon. members to constitute themselves into a committee of espionage of that kind, and he hoped the motion would be indignantly rejected.

Mr. GARRICK said there ought to be some fair ground for an inquiry of that kind. If they were to bring private matters within the sphere of a select committee, the whole of any hon. member's history might be raked up on some frivolous pretence and sat in judgment upon by his political enemies. Hon. members might say what they pleased; but would any of them like to be judged by a body the majority of whom belonged to the opposite side of the House? Would the decision of such a committee receive the approbation of the public? With regard to the chief representative institution in the world—the House of Commons—it had been declared by men above suspicion, by judges, and others entitled to speak, that on the question of election petitions the decisions of the committee of even that august body were not reliable. Would any hon. member like to have a charge brought against him by a gentleman sitting opposite, and to be tried by a majority selected from the same

side? Apart from that, it was not fair to inquire into matters of that kind. If an hon. member did anything inimical to the public interests, then he came within their jurisdiction. But they had not charge of men's private characters. They were there to protect the commonwealth. Did the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) see to what a length that sort of thing could be carried? The House might be turned into an inquisition, and become a place of public torture. The hon. member was, it was clear, a very strong political opponent of the gentleman whom he wished to place on his trial. He had recently read a speech by the hon. member in the *Dalby Herald*, attracted to it by its length, and hoping to find in it something instructive or entertaining; but there was nothing in the speech except strong personal references to the hon. member (Mr. Groom) and to the newspaper of which he was the editor. This motion was, without doubt, the outcome of personal feeling. During the opening speech the Minister for Lands plainly expressed his acquiescence in some of the remarks made, and he was very sorry to see it; but it was certain that the Minister for Lands and the hon. member attacked were not friends. In a matter of that kind the Minister for Lands ought to have occupied perfectly neutral ground. The whole matter was clearly outside the jurisdiction of the House, and if they began inquiries of that kind no one could predict where the end would be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) had told them a little about "sleek hypocrisy," but he had heard more of it to-night from the Opposition side of the House than at any other period of the session—indeed, hypocrisy was scarcely the word, and he might if he chose apply to it a much stronger and suitable name. To hear the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) who, the first day the House met, charged members of the Government with fraud and dishonesty, stand up and defend an hon. member even after papers had been produced in which there were circumstances of grave suspicion, was to hear a most extraordinary species of hypocrisy. He did not intend to speak now of the Schmaling case, not having seen the papers till this afternoon; but, on looking them over cursorily, he saw enough to convince him that it was better for the accused person himself that there should be an inquiry. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson) had several times said during the debate on the foul charges of fraud and robbery, that Ministers ought to be pleased to have an opportunity of clearing their characters from the remarks made outside against them. On the same grounds the hon. member (Mr. Groom) ought also to be glad of a similar opportunity of clearing his character. He should be sorry to see that hon. member come out of the inquiry with his character blackened more than it was at present;—he would far rather see him come out of it the other way. The motion was not made for political or personal reasons, as intimated by the Opposition, but because the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) believed it would be for the public good. Anybody reading the papers would at once ask himself, "Would Mr. Groom ever have been in possession of Schmaling's land orders had he not been a member of Parliament?" And the answer must be in the negative. If, as was said, this was a matter for detectives and police, it was hon. gentlemen on the other side who should have instituted the proceedings, because it was under them that the Schmaling case took place, and not under the present Government; and when they remembered the expressions made use of privately by the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) regarding the hon. member for Toowoomba—

Mr. DOUGLAS: What does the hon. gentleman refer to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman was too much in the habit of interrupting members while addressing the House. If he would have patience he would tell him what he said on a former occasion privately—

Mr. DOUGLAS: I object to that. The hon. gentleman has no business to say such a thing.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of making a personal explanation afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When it was rumoured that the hon. member for Toowoomba was about to be nominated Chairman of Committees by the present Government, the hon. gentleman made it his business to go round Brisbane and ask—

Mr. DOUGLAS: I did not. I must give a direct contradiction to the statement now made, which impugns my personal honour.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can produce the man who will say that you did.

Mr. DOUGLAS: You cannot.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was trying to sheet home to the hon. gentleman some of the "sleek hypocrisy" of which he was continually guilty in the House—the word should be even stronger. This discussion ought to stand as a warning to members of Parliament, and prevent them from trafficking or dealing in any way with Crown lands in their capacity as members. Hon. members could see what had resulted in Victoria from the practice of members of Parliament attending the Lands Office and using their influence as members on behalf of their constituents and others who employed them. The sooner members were debarred from acting as land agents, or having any dealings through the Lands Office as members, the better it would be for the State. After all that had been said this evening, it would be better for the hon. member (Mr. Groom) himself that the inquiry should take place. He (Mr. Macrossan) should vote for the motion, and at the same time, without hypocrisy, express a hope that the hon. member would come out clear, and be able to prove that the statements he had made in these papers were true to the very letter.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he quite agreed with the Minister for Works that members of Parliament should not be employed as land agents. That practice had reached such a pitch of corruption in New South Wales that it had to be put down by a resolution of the House. He, however, very much doubted the assertion of the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) that he had brought forward the motion for the public good; there was an undercurrent of virulence and spite in the hon. member's speech that actually insulted him, and no doubt also insulted the House. At the present rate of going on there would be no member of Parliament directly who would not be reputed a robber, villain, scoundrel, hangman, or something of the kind. He never half learned the villain he was until he became a member of the House. He was quite satisfied that this motion had been brought forward out of personal spite. He had not gone into the merits of the case, but he regarded it broadly as a private personal transaction with which the House had nothing to do. If there was anything wrong, the parties had their remedy at law. If the hon. member wanted to hold up a looking-glass to reflect the blotches in the faces or characters of hon. members, it would be a charitable proceeding on his part to hold it up first to his own. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) did not care what blotches the hon. member might find in others so long as he had a clear conscience himself, but while

the hon. member was reading those papers he would have done well to consider whether he had clean fingers himself. Was it not notorious that the hon. member had carried a copy of the Land Act about in his pocket in the same way as insolvents carried a copy of the Insolvency Act, and that he knew the clauses which enabled him to keep just within the letter of the law better than he knew the Lord's prayer—his copy was so much handled and thumbed about that it got spoiled and he had to get another one. He was sorry that the hon. member for Clermont should have finished his speech by stating as his opinion that if a committee inquired into the case he should be greatly mistaken if the character of the hon. member did not come out blacker than it was at the present moment. He had not the slightest doubt about the committee; but he objected to a personal enemy of the hon. member (Mr. Groom) being the chairman of the committee. If the hon. member would allow some independent member to put a motion of this kind, and let the committee be appointed by ballot, he should have no objection; and he had no doubt that the hon. member for Toowoomba, so far from shrinking from the inquiry would court it. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) was as faithful to his party as any other hon. member, and his view was that if anyone didn't like him he could keep the other side of the street. He supported the present Government because there was a gulf between him and the present Opposition which he could not step over, and if at any time he could not continue to support the Government he should have to resign. It did not follow from that that he had any personal enemy on the other side. There was no feeling of spite in his politics—he was old enough to be able to regard politics as a young lady regarded her gloves—to be put on and taken off as occasion required. He and the hon. member (Mr. Groom) had been political enemies for some two or three years; but he could not see a man unfairly attacked without defending him. When two dogs were fighting he always liked to see the little one win. The hon. member did not appear to have made out much of a case, though he had apparently studied it as carefully as he did that land at Dalby. He might as well tell the hon. member to his face that he regarded him as a clever man, but a vindictive man. Perhaps when the hon. member had been longer in the House he would get better, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) hoped he would not think any worse of him for having told him his mind. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) and the hon. member for Toowoomba had not spoken for twelve months, but he could not stand by and see the hon. member wronged.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he felt his position to be one of considerable delicacy, inasmuch as his name was on the committee. He might say, however, that when he consented to serve he had no idea of what the subject-matter of the investigation was to be. He was always willing to oblige an hon. member who had been kind enough to sit upon a committee which he had proposed; and therefore, as a matter of personal regard for the hon. member for Dalby, he had consented to sit on the committee. His reason for speaking now was to justify the vote which he should give if the motion went to a division. With regard to the merits of the case he was perfectly impartial, not knowing anything of the particulars. Having gathered from the remarks which had been made that the object of the inquiry was to attach some stigma to a member of the House, and having no intention of shirking the responsibility of investigating the matter, he should give a vote without stating any opinion as to the merits of the case, though he believed that it was quite probable that many of the circumstances apparently adverse to the hon. member for Toowoomba might appear in a much more

favourable light than some hon. members seemed to anticipate. He had learned for the first time this afternoon that the matter referred to occurred five years ago, and affected the private action of a private member of the House, and he could not, although he was a member of the committee, refrain from voting against the course which was proposed to be adopted. He hoped the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) would think better, and take the excellent advice which had been tendered to him by the hon. member for Stanley. It was an unwise thing, tending to lower the Chamber in the estimation of the public outside, to endeavour to cast obloquy upon the character of a member, especially in his private capacity. A great deal had been said by the Minister for Works with reference to what he described as charges of fraud and dishonesty levelled at the whole of the Government as a Government. He (Mr. Rutledge) distinctly denied the truth of that statement; but even if it were true, hon. members would recognise the very broad distinction between acts of the Government in their public capacity and when dealing with public money, and the acts of an individual in matters between himself and another. There was no parallel whatever between the two cases. As a member of the committee—having promised to sit—he felt himself rendered incapable of inquiring into the merits of the case at this stage; but he should not be guilty of any indelicacy in voting against a motion which might establish a precedent for the appointment of select committees for such a purpose as that proposed on the present occasion.

Mr. SIMPSON said that this being his first committee he had fallen into the error of not asking the proposed members of the committee to sit upon it and to go into the particulars of the case. It appeared that he ought to have asked their permission and told them all about it, though he should certainly never have thought of doing so. With the permission of the House, he would alter the motion so that the committee would be appointed by ballot, and he would ask hon. members to leave his name off.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That must be on.

Mr. SIMPSON said he was sorry to hear it, but he should take care to only be a member *pro forma*, and not sit. The leader of the Opposition had imputed to him (Mr. Simpson) improper motives, stating that his only object was to blacken the character of a personal and political enemy. He denied that statement, although perhaps it was very little use denying it as far as the hon. gentleman was concerned. At all events, the hon. gentleman should not have been the one to take that ground. Such strong language as that hon. member had used in condemnation of his political enemies had never been heard from him (Mr. Simpson). The hon. gentleman said "that members of this House and of the Government should have made a contract in connection with profit he regarded with horror. Conduct of this kind, even if beneficial to the interests of the colony, would have been a very grave scandal." Whatever, therefore, the hon. member might have to say about personal opponents, he should say nothing about the proper language to be used with regard to political opponents. The hon. gentleman not only imputed motives to the members of the Government, but also to members who were accustomed to sit on his own side of the House, saying that their conduct was in a political sense disreputable and dishonourable. The hon. gentleman had therefore no right to speak about political enmity, and as to personal enmity that was a matter between himself (Mr. Simpson) and his conscience. It mattered very little to him what were the opinions of the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Stanley—they were welcome to theirs and he would

keep his. The junior member for Toowoomba gave a most extraordinary reason why the House should not move in the matter—namely, that it was better to let the matter lie in oblivion. He did not see why—one of the two men was innocent, and it was very hard that the innocent one should have to remain under that stigma. He had made no attack beyond reading sworn testimony, and there was not a word he had spoken could be taken as a strong personal attack against a political opponent. The hon. member for Maryborough had confessed that he had been a rogue himself—

Mr. DOUGLAS: I did nothing of the kind.

Mr. SIMPSON: I call a cattle-duffer a rogue.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I call dummies rogues.

Mr. SIMPSON said if the hon. member for Maryborough liked to say he was a cattle-duffer let it be so. As to the other matter he (Mr. Simpson) had not confessed to it, and was not likely to, as he had not committed the offence. The hon. member for Moreton said that in a speech he (Mr. Simpson) made at Dalby he attacked Mr. Groom—

Mr. GARRICK: I said the editor of the *Chronicle*.

Mr. SIMPSON said he totally denied having attacked the editor of the *Chronicle*. He simply criticised letters from anonymous writers appearing in that paper, which he had a perfect right to do; and never made the slightest attack upon the editor of the paper either by imputation or otherwise. It showed to what lengths people would go when such things were raked up. The writers referred to told deliberate and known falsehoods about himself, and he would always expose such falsehoods when he found them. He would now leave the matter in the hands of the House, and if they decided that no committee was wanted he should acquiesce in the decision. He would therefore, with the permission of the House, make the alteration he had suggested in the motion, and move—

That a Select Committee of seven be appointed to inquire into and report upon the circumstances connected with Christian Schmaling's Land Orders, as disclosed by the Correspondence laid before the House on the 10th July last.

That such Committee be appointed by ballot, and have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House.

The Hon. G. THORN suggested that the hon. member should withdraw his motion. He would ask the hon. member to ponder well that old saying—

*"Qui vestrum immunis est a peccato, primus in eam jaciat lapidem."*

If he did not withdraw the motion, he would come to be very sorry for the course he had taken in the House to-day.

Question, as amended, put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Weld-Blundell, Norton, Hill, Stevens, Simpson, Feez, Morehead, Amhurst, Barnes, Cooper, Swanwick, and H. W. Palmer.

NOES, 20.

Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Beor, Rutledge, Meston, Bailey, Thompson, Davenport, Price, O'Sullivan, Beattie, Hendren, Kates, Kingsford, Fraser, Thorn, Miles, and Douglas.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

#### PRESS TELEGRAMS.

Mr. MESTON, in moving—

That, in the opinion of the House, the rates paid for the transmission of Press Telegrams in Queensland should be assimilated to those of the other colonies,—

said that he intended at first postponing the motion, thinking that the House was not in a good humour to deal with it; but subsequently had

come to the conclusion that it was better to bring it forward. It asked that the rates for Press telegrams should be the same as in the other colonies. At the present time the Press of the other colonies were obtaining intercolonial messages at the rate of 3s. per 100 words, whilst in this colony they had to pay at the rate of 8s., which was a material advantage on the side of the Press proprietors of the other colonies. It might be said that a considerable reduction in the receipts of the Telegraph Office would follow were the application agreed to; but so desirous were all newspapers in the colony to give their readers a fuller supply of telegraphic information, that he believed almost as much additional matter would pass through the Telegraph Office as would make up the deficiency. He contended for a reduction of the rates on the ground of the immense advantage that would be conferred upon the public by giving them an additional amount of telegraphic information. He was quite sure that if the reduction was made the public would derive material advantage. He did not think the additional work that would be given would seriously affect the cost of the Telegraphic Department, and he believed hon. members would be able to see the benefit the public would derive. He did not wish to make a long speech, but would leave it to the good sense of the House to say whether the reduction should be made.

The SPEAKER said that before he put the question he must point out that he had some doubt as to how far the motion conflicted with their Standing Orders. Seeing that it expressed the opinion that the charges for Press telegrams should be reduced, it might be held to be analogous to a motion for remission of duties payable to the Crown. He would put the question, but would leave it to the House to further consider the point that he had raised.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he intended taking the objection mentioned by the Speaker. The motion interfered in a direct manner with the tariff, and he would submit that it could not be brought forward in the way it had been. It would be the duty of the Government to oppose it.

The SPEAKER said that, according to Standing Order 202, no application should be made by a petition for any grant of public money, or for compounding any debts due to the Crown, or for the remission of duties payable by any person, unless it be recommended by the Crown. He was inclined to think that the rates payable to the Telegraph and Postal Service were in the nature of "duties payable by any person," and that as the motion virtually applied for a remission of such duties it could not be put, not having been recommended by the Crown.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he thought a distinction had been made between an abstract resolution affirming the desirability of a certain course being pursued, but not committing the country to it, and an ordinary resolution for the remission of duty, or for a grant of money. He remembered that, in the year 1872, a resolution came from the Upper House recommending that it was desirable that a survey should be made of a railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe, and it was decided that it could not be put; but on further consideration the Speaker came to a different conclusion, and a resolution was moved that the motion should be restored to the paper, and it was considered and dealt with.

Mr. THOMPSON said the rule appeared to be to discourage these abstract resolutions, but there was nothing to prevent them being put. "May's Practice" said—

"Such resolutions have been allowed upon the principle that, not being offered in a form in which a vote of the House for granting money or imposing a burden can be regularly agreed to, they are barren of results,

and are therefore to be regarded in the same light as any other abstract resolutions; but for that reason they are objectionable, and being also an evasion of wholesome rules they are discouraged as much as possible."

He did not think the House could absolutely refuse to allow the resolution, but they could discourage it, as he imagined had been done by the Speaker's ruling.

The SPEAKER said the hon. member for North Brisbane had referred to cases of such abstract resolutions having been previously put in the House, but he had not had time to look up the authorities. There was no doubt that it was not desirable to encourage these resolutions; but if the hon. member for Rosewood persisted in wishing the question to be put, he should take the view of the hon. member for Ipswich, and put it, looking on it as merely an abstract expression of opinion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that before the Speaker gave his decision he would refer him to the 18th section of the Constitution Act, which provided—

"It shall not be lawful for the Legislative Assembly to originate or pass any vote, resolution, or Bill, for the appropriation of any part of the said Consolidated Revenue Fund, or of any other tax or impost, to any purpose which shall not have been recommended by message of the Governor to said Legislative Assembly during the session in which such vote, resolution, or Bill shall be passed."

He presumed it would not be disputed that the tariff of the telegraph office was an impost. The motion interfered with it, and not having been recommended could not be put.

The SPEAKER said the resolution was an abstract one expressing the opinion that a reduction of the rates charged for Press telegrams should be made. If the hon. member for Rosewood was desirous of having the question put, he should decide, on the authority quoted by the hon. member for Ipswich, that, being merely an abstract expression of opinion of the House, it might be put. It would be, perhaps, well for the hon. member for Rosewood to consider whether it would not serve his purpose to raise the discussion in a more formal manner, as he could do when the Estimates for the Telegraph Department came on for consideration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was another way open to the hon. member, and that was to move that an address be presented to the Administrator of the Government asking him to recommend the reduction by message.

Mr. MESTON said that all he desired was to have an expression of opinion from hon. members as to whether it was desirable that the rates charged for transmission of Press telegrams in this colony should be assimilated to those of the other colonies. He did not wish to commit the Postmaster-General by his motion in any way.

Mr. DAVENPORT said that as the hon. member for Rosewood had asked for an expression of opinion on the desirability of assimilating the telegraph charges in this colony to those of the other colonies, he (Mr. Davenport) must say that, considering the statement made by the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) on the second day of the session, that there was at present a deficiency in the postal and telegraph services of £120,000, he should certainly vote against the motion. He thought that if any change was made the revenue from those two services ought to be increased in the present unfavourable financial position of the colony.

Mr. THORN said that he would point out to the hon. member in charge of the motion that it would be better for him to adopt the course recommended by the hon. Colonial Secretary, and move that a message be brought down from the Administrator of the Government. He would

remind hon. members that there was an excessive length of telegraph line in this colony, and that in addition to the loss to the department which would be incurred by a reduction in the rates, the increased business which it was said that reduction would cause would entail doubling or trebling the staffs at the repeating stations, and thus involve an expense which was not justifiable at the present time.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) thought the hon. member for Rosewood had not exactly worded his motion as he intended. The hon. member led the House to infer by the statistics he quoted that the Press in this colony paid 8s. per hundred words; but the fact was that the Telegraph Department charged no more than 4s. for every hundred words, as the Press enjoyed the privilege of getting their business done at one-half of that charged to the ordinary public. What the hon. member proposed might be very well in Victoria, where the telegraph lines were comparatively short and where the Government could afford to be very liberal; but in this colony it was different. At the same time, the Telegraph Department had been very liberal to the Press—so liberal, in fact, that if the proposed reduction was made they would, taking the length of their lines into consideration, be doing more than any other colony was doing. At present the department was being worked at a loss, but if the hon. member had shown that by reducing the rates the business would be so increased as to protect the department from any loss of revenue, there was no doubt that the present head of the Postal and Telegraph Department would be the first to give the proposition a favourable consideration. The Press was most liberally treated in this colony, as not only were their telegrams transmitted at half cost, but—and this was not done in any other part of the world—their papers were carried free of cost all over the colony. As a matter of simple expression of opinion of the House he was willing to let the matter go, but the hon. member had not shown any reason why greater privileges should be conferred on the Press than were enjoyed at the present time. As a fact, the telegraph charges in this colony were smaller than in any other part of the world; for instance, a Press message could be sent from Brisbane to Normanton for 4s. 2d. which in America would cost 16s.

Mr. GROOM said that although he did not ask for any reduction of the present rates, the sums at present paid for telegrams for newspapers were very large. First of all proprietors of papers had to subscribe to the Press Agency, and then perhaps a message of 1,000 words or more might be sent to them, whilst it was not every paper that could afford to furnish the telegraphic information which the public were so anxious to get. Whilst he did not propose any reduction of the charges, there could be no doubt that if a reduction was made he should be in a position, as the proprietor of a newspaper, to give a great deal more information. At the present rate charged for telegraph messages, unless a newspaper had a very large number of advertisements it would not pay it to furnish its readers with messages of 500 or 1,000 words, whilst if the charge was reduced country newspapers could give their readers long telegraph reports of what was going on in Parliament. At present there was, no doubt, a great deal of surplus matter sent to newspapers that might be very well dispensed with, but if the charges were reduced that objection would not have the same weight. It was not right, perhaps, to speak of the shop, but he believed that if the charges were reduced he should be able to give more telegraph information to his sub-

scribers. At present his account for telegrams amounted to £200 a year, and, although he did not begrudge it, it was nevertheless a large amount to pay. As an instance of what could be done with reduced charges, he would mention a case that occurred lately where the Melbourne *Argus* and *Age* newspapers forwarded to the Sydney *Evening News*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *South Australian Register* a full report of the result of the polling for the general election, so that those papers were able to publish it the following morning. Supposing that had been wired to Brisbane the cost would have been something enormous, as first there would have been the charges between Melbourne and Sydney, and then between New South Wales and here. It was not surprising, therefore, that in the other colonies a much larger amount of information could be spread by means of the telegraph. In the present financial condition of the colony he did not think that any reduction was advisable, but at the same time he believed that any deficiency that would arise from a reduction would be more than made up by the extended telegrams that would be sent.

Mr. DOUGLAS said there was a great deal of sense in what had fallen from the hon. member for Toowoomba. For his part he did not feel disposed, in the present condition of the finances, to sacrifice any portion of the revenue, but if after examination into the matter by the experts of the Telegraph Department it was found that a reduction of charges would conduce to an increase of business, then it would be absolutely desirable to make the reductions, as the public would gain the benefit of additional information. He thought the mover of the resolution, especially after the expression of opinion by the hon. member who had just spoken, should leave the matter in the hands of the Government. He quite agreed with what had been said by the Premier about the immense distances messages were sent in this colony at a very small cost, and he did not think there was any country where the charges were lower. The hon. member for Rosewood, having ventilated the question, might very well withdraw the motion, on the understanding that the Government would give the matter their consideration, and give the House some information when the Financial Statement was made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he should like to know whether the hon. member would withdraw his motion? He would point out, in reply to the hon. member for Toowoomba, that newspaper proprietors could save a great deal of money by not publishing such a lot of useless telegrams. There was a great deal of rubbish dished up every morning in the shape of telegrams: they had heard, for example, a great deal lately of Mr. and Mrs. Greer being shot in Melbourne. What did people in Queensland care about Mr. and Mrs. Greer? Why should they be asked to reduce the tariff in order to get more information of that kind, which did not concern them at all? He believed they would be treated to less of such rubbish if the tariff were increased.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he would rather support a motion for increasing the tariff, for what they lost in one way they would gain in another. With regard to the Telegraph Department being worked at a loss, he believed there were many useless offices throughout the country, and some of them might be done away with. He was satisfied that if the price were increased there would be fewer telegrams sent and the revenue would not be increased. He would instance the Sunday trains to show that the reduction of rates did not necessarily decrease the revenue. After the reduction of fares the

traffic increased until there was actually an increase of revenue. Perhaps after the expression of opinion that had been given it would be well for the hon. member to withdraw the motion, now that he had gained his point.

The PREMIER said the hon. member who made the motion ought to give some explanation. He understood that the hon. member's object was to reduce the price of intercolonial telegrams. The House had been discussing quite another matter.

Mr. MESTON said the motion was probably rather ambiguous. His object was, that intercolonial rates here should be assimilated to those of the other colonies. He wanted to obtain messages from the other colonies at the same price at which the other colonies obtained their messages from each other. He quite concurred with what the Colonial Secretary said as to worthless telegrams; but when a newspaper proprietor received a telegram he had no alternative but to accept it, and, moreover, to pay for it. Proprietors were continually writing to their agents to be careful about sending so many worthless telegrams, but still they came. He did not think if the reduction were made there would be a falling off in the revenue; and newspapers would be able to supply three times the amount of telegraphic information to the public. The Postmaster-General was in favour of a reduction; and his (Mr. Meston's) object was to get an expression of opinion on the subject. He hoped the Postmaster-General would consider the advisability of the reduction, and see whether it could be made without deterioration to the revenue of the Telegraph Department. The Premier had referred to the low rates for sending telegrams in the colony and to the carrying of papers free; but that was merely for the convenience of the public. If the Government charged for carrying the papers, proprietors would have to charge postage to their subscribers; so that the public would suffer and not the newspaper proprietors. He would now withdraw the motion, hoping it would receive the consideration of the Postmaster-General.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

#### QUEENSLAND IRON.

Mr. HENDREN moved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an address to the Administrator of the Government, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the next Supplementary Estimates the sum of £5,000, as a bonus to be given to the person or company who will first produce 500 tons good marketable iron, smelted from ores raised in Queensland, said bonus to be paid in the following manner, viz.:—£2,500 to be paid on the production of the first 250 tons of such iron, and the balance (£2,500) to be paid on production of the remaining 250 tons of such iron, whether or not said quantities of iron be produced from one and the same mine, or by different parties from a different mine.

It would be remembered that last session he placed on the business paper a motion similar to the one just read, when there was a free discussion on the matter. That motion was brought forward in the month of June, when the price of iron was very low. He (Mr. Hendren) was complimented by hon. members on that occasion on having made out a good case; but on account of the depressed state of the times and the condition of the iron market he was persuaded to withdraw his motion with a view to bringing it forward at a more judicious time. The Premier, in speaking on that occasion, admitted that the notion was a good one, and said that if the iron were not produced the money would not require to be paid; but he said, as a reason for not supporting the motion, that he had that day received a telegram offering to supply the Queensland Government with steel rails

at £5 3s. a-ton for eight years. Matters were different now, and steel rails were worth £10 10s. or £11 a-ton in England, and the bonus he asked for 500 tons of iron was nothing more than would have to be paid for that quantity of steel in England; only the bonus was for iron, not steel. In West Moreton and other parts of the colony there was plenty of ironstone, plenty of coal and timber, and the production of iron was an industry worth encouraging in its infancy, for it would settle and find work for numbers of people where iron abounded. People in one part of the colony might produce one half the quantity and receive half the bonus; and other people in another part of the colony might produce the other half, and receive the other half of the bonus. When he introduced the motion last session he made a very good case out, in the course of which he quoted from an article on iron, and he might as well refer again to that quotation, which was as follows:—

"It is evident that something must be done to afford employment, if we hope to retain the population settled in the districts; and, without wishing to trench on the vexed question of Protection *versus* Free-trade, it may be asked whether the time has not arrived when an effort should be made to develop the riches lying at our feet. We have, in West Moreton and elsewhere, an apparently unlimited store of iron-ore, coal, and lime, and if we may take the opinion of experts, each is of excellent quality. Why should we not smelt all the iron required in the colony? Indeed, the arguments in favour of this scarcely require statement. A smelting establishment would turn into wealth deposits of iron-ore which are now valueless. It would give employment, not only to the men engaged in it, but to coal-miners, quarrymen, and labourers; and these in turn, besides contributing their quota to the revenue, would help to support the baker, the butcher, the grocer, the draper, and, in fact, every industry in the colony. Such works have proved remunerative in New South Wales at a considerable distance from the seaboard."

There was no use taking up the time of the House further in reading extracts, because hon. members knew perfectly well that the encouragement of the industry would probably be the means of utilising the ores which were at present lying useless. He would leave the motion in the hands of the House.

The PREMIER said circumstances had altered since the hon. member brought forward his motion last session. He did not see what chance there was of the bonus being obtained by bringing iron-ore to the perfection required. If he thought the motion would have the effect of encouraging and establishing the industry he would agree to it at once; but he was perfectly satisfied that it would be inoperative, and if the £5,000 were placed on the Supplementary Estimates the sum would not be claimed. He did not think the bonus too great to offer for the establishment of an industry of the kind if there was any probability of the money being claimed; but there was not the slightest chance of anyone claiming the bonus. The hon. gentleman had brought forward the motion in pretty much the same terms as last session, and he (the Premier) would give a reply similar to that which he gave on that occasion. He supposed all the hon. gentleman wanted was the expression of the opinion of the House as to the iron-smelting industry in the colony. This, however, was not the proper time for moving such a motion, which, even if carried, would have no practical effect, and, though he would not oppose it on division, he saw no likelihood that it would be practically useful.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he thanked the hon. the Premier for the encouragement that he gave to the motion of the member for Bundanba with regard to the bonus for iron. The objection that the Premier raised amounted after all to nothing. It was not an objection, nor did he think it was intended to be one. The objection was that it

was possible that the vote might lapse when put on the Estimates, because advantage could not be taken of it within a year. Of course, if the thing was allowed to go on it would be in the hands of the people, and he was glad that such a statement was made, because people would then know that if advantage was not taken of it within that time it would lapse. He thought it was well to give encouragement to those who had money to spare, so long as they were not extravagant. Notwithstanding the depression of the colony there was some capital, and they wanted some little speculation of that kind; and the objection made by the Premier was, in fact, giving the people authority to go on with the matter at once. He had seen motions of that kind carried, and sums put on the Supplementary Estimates that did not lapse within a year, nor did he think that there would be any necessity for this lapsing. Supposing what was wanted was given in the shape of land bonuses, what necessity would there be for it to lapse? The cotton bonus that was given in this colony some years ago was the cause of the great settlement in West Moreton. There was no settlement worthy of the name before that cotton bonus was given; and land—and when he said "land" he meant revenue—was not taken up in such quantities since the bonus was discontinued; so that they had now lost far more than they had gained. There were a great many people out of employment at the present time, and this encouragement would keep many of them from leaving the colony. It was possible that it might be objected to this motion that it would be a failure—that is, that parties who enlisted in a speculation of this kind would fail; but even granting, for the sake of argument, that they would fail, it would not be a failure for the colony—it would give an immense deal of employment, and keep the people in the colony. The hon. member for Toowoomba once obtained a bonus for a cotton factory. On the strength of that bonus a factory was established in Ipswich, and it had kept a great deal of money in the colony and given a great deal of employment. At the time that this factory was started the understanding by the Act was, that when there were a certain number of yards manufactured they were to get 1,000 acres of land. The factory had been in operation for two or three years, and after manufacturing some thousands and thousands of yards of cloth and blankets they had never got a shilling or an acre of land yet. Would it not be fair to ask Ministers, at the present time, for any reason why this factory had not got a bonus?

The PREMIER: They have got it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN understood that they had applied for land at Allora, and they did not get it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because they were not entitled to it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he might tell the Minister for Lands that that company had great struggles and were crippled in their resources for want of money. Many of the persons who had been supporting it had been very enthusiastic and patriotic, and had actually spent money out of pocket to keep the thing going. He wanted to know how it was that they could not get the land that they wanted? He was glad that the opportunity had occurred to him of bringing this matter before the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the Ipswich Woollen Company had within the past week been informed that 1,000 acres of land in the neighbourhood of Dalby, which they selected, had been granted.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was very glad to hear it, but it would have been a good deal in the

pockets of those enterprising proprietors if they could have had the land they requested at Allora. He was happy to say the factory was going on well, and the proprietors were not so much in debt as they expected they would be. If they were allowed to use this land as they wished, he was sure they would soon be out of debt. From the view the Premier took of the motion, he was satisfied that he did not oppose its spirit; but in committee, of course, some alterations would have to be made, because, according to the terms of it at present, the ore might be sent to New South Wales or anywhere else. If the Premier would allow the motion to go into committee they could soon amend it there, and, he was perfectly satisfied, it would be a beneficial motion to the country at large.

The HON. J. DOUGLAS said it would be a grand thing indeed if they succeeded in establishing a manufactory of iron in Queensland, as he had no doubt they would do, some day. There were localities in the colony where there was abundance of iron ore in close proximity to coal, and those were the conditions under which iron could be produced to advantage. He was afraid that the production of this industry required an amount of capital which could scarcely be supposed to be available at the present time. He would be very glad indeed to see it, but the amount mentioned in the resolution was, he feared, hardly sufficient to induce men able to back such an enterprise to come forward with the funds necessary to commence it; still, he did not see why they could not do something in that direction, and he should support the spirit of the resolution and give his vote for going into committee upon it. There was something, of course, against the mere fact of placing £5,000 upon the Estimates, because, even although it might not be claimed at the end of the year, it went to swell the account. It might be possible, however, to pass a resolution authorising the Government to offer a reward, and, if the conditions could be complied with, it would follow as a necessary consequence that the vote would be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates for the next year if it was applied for. No inconvenience would arise from the fact, therefore, that it was placed upon the Supplementary Estimates of this year. There were several places in the colony at present where there was admirable iron ore in close proximity to coal, as he had stated; and the mere fact of offering a reward might direct some persons to begin to develop this industry. It was pretty well known that the home market of New South Wales was now being supplied from its native resources, and he hoped that the time might come before long when Queensland would be able to do the same thing. There was nothing unreasonable in that view, and they would be showing a wise discretion by offering them a considerable reward. This was the safest way of encouraging our local industries; they knew exactly what they spent; they did not commit themselves to an indefinite amount in the form of a protection tariff; and for those reasons he was of opinion they ought to encourage native industries by some such plan as these proposed bonuses. If the hon. member proposed this motion he would support it, and in the belief that they would in committee devise some form in which they might pledge themselves to the principle without increasing the Estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member would very likely, by-and-bye, say that the same reasons would apply to the motion of his own further down the paper, in which he proposed a bonus of £5,000 for the establishment of a manufactory for curing bacon. He (Mr. Palmer) presumed that if the present

motion went into committee, the member for Maryborough would claim the right to himself to insist that his proposition was of equal value. The objection that he had to this, however, was that they would be encumbering the Estimates with an amount of money not likely to be wanted during the year. From what he had heard he was not sure that New South Wales might be quoted as an example. He had an idea that with every facility there—with iron ore, with coal in immediate contiguity, with lime within reasonable distance—at the Fitzroy Iron-works they had never been able to produce iron at a price to compete with that at which it could be imported. The amount of capital required to turn out 500 tons of iron was something much greater than the hon. member seemed to suppose, for it could not be done, as was once suggested in the matter of sugar, by smelting it in iron pots. The capital which would be required to procure the plant to smelt 500 tons of iron would be out of all proportion to the amount mentioned. It was therefore utterly useless, as even if they had the ore, and coal, and lime in propinquity in Queensland, smelters would not come for a bonus of £5,000—such a sum would be a mere bagatelle. As a matter of principle he objected to allowing motions of this sort to go into committee, because he had always noticed when the House agreed to let any question of the kind get there the mover of the motion thought he had a right to press it through, and if it did not go through he considered himself deeply injured. For himself, he would rather have met the question with a direct veto, but the feeling of the House seemed to be that they might go into committee on it. The Premier had said he had no wish to divide upon the question, so that anything he (Mr. Palmer) might say in the way of warning and protest against the uselessness of a motion which would lead to no tangible benefit was of no purpose whatever. As it was, the Estimates would be encumbered with this sum, and other persons would be encouraged to bring forward useless motions. If they had this £5,000 granted as a bonus for iron, and £5,000 granted for the curing of bacon—which, after all, would probably be the curing of a pig to send to some exhibition in a remote part of the world—why should they not have a bonus of £5,000 for frozen meat? In fact, if the motion were passed there would be twenty others of a similar kind, all specimens of impracticable and utterly useless legislation.

Mr. ARCHER said that if this motion went to a division he should oppose it on the grounds indicated by the hon. member for Maryborough—namely, that the industry concerned was one that required an enormous capital; and as this country could not find the enormous capital for such a purpose, the motion was, to say the least, premature. It would be a real loss to the country if capital was invested at the present time in the production of iron, for people could not, he believed, make a profitable speculation of it. In that case, the capital invested was a direct loss to the country, because if it had not been employed in such a channel it might have been devoted to some useful purpose. It was no use in saying that it could be made remunerative. Any country which had to pay 10 per cent. for its money, and give good security even then to the banks, gave proof that the capital was not sufficient for the requirements of the country. It was only in densely populated countries like England, where capital accumulated in such amounts that you could get it for 3 and 4 per cent., that people went into speculations of this kind; and if people had to borrow money and take it from the small fund already existing, that money would be taken from useful channels and

put into channels, such as in New South Wales, for instance, had proved to be opposite to prosperous. Besides, as the Colonial Secretary had pointed out, what was £5,000 for the establishment of an iron factory? It was a mere drop in the bucket. It was perfectly useless to attempt to establish an iron factory for £5,000, or for £50,000, because manufacturers would have to compete with disadvantages such as dearth of labour, and they would have to employ the best machinery and appliances they could procure. He protested, therefore, against the withdrawal of capital for any unprofitable speculation of this kind. Money had no value unless it reproduced itself, and if it was withdrawn for the purposes of unprofitable speculation it was not the owner of the money only who lost, but the entire country. He should therefore be obliged, if the motion went to a division, to vote against it, and if it passed through committee he hoped no poor silly man would be tempted by the offer of £5,000 to go into the manufacture of iron.

Mr. GROOM said if they did not make a commencement in the establishment of local industries in the colony he did not know where the population would get employment in Queensland. A motion of this kind should commend itself, not only to members of the House, but to the public at large outside. He had always himself taken a warm interest in the offering of bonuses for the establishment of native industries, and he was glad to see that the Woollen Factory of Ipswich was likely to become a permanent industry in the colony, and to give employment, as it had done, to persons who would not otherwise find it. He was surprised to hear the speech of the hon. member for Blackall, because he had some remembrance that when he himself introduced a motion for a bonus for woollen factories the hon. member gave his support. The hon. member seemed to think that, so far as capital was concerned, an inducement should not be offered to invest in industries of the kind. But was that a sound argument? If they had not imposed a protective duty of £5 per ton on sugar would that industry be in the profitable position which it was now—so profitable that not only could Queensland supply herself, but could export £200,000 worth of sugar per annum? There might be some force in the argument of the Colonial Secretary that it was no use to encumber the Estimates with funds which would lapse, but they might apply to this motion the same principle as was applied to the motion respecting rust in wheat, respecting which the legislature confirmed the desirableness of offering a reward, on the condition that the amount would not be placed on the Estimates until the parties themselves were in a position to claim it. In that case it would be offered, and the Estimates would not be burdened, and the Treasurer would not be hampered. Believing it was necessary to offer every possible inducement for the establishment of native industries, he should support the motion. The Colonial Secretary referred to the Fitzroy Ironworks, but, on the other hand, he (Mr. Groom) might mention the Lithgow works, which, as far as he knew, had proved a success. Similar things could be done in some of the mountain recesses of Queensland. Some time ago a sample of iron ore, found on the Main Range, was sent to England for analysis, and a most favourable report was sent out as to the percentage of metal it contained. If they did not begin to establish industries of that kind, he failed to see how they were to give permanent employment to the population. They must look to the vast numbers of children at school, as well as to the adults, and then the important question stared them in the face—how were they to find employment for them? Of course, they could not all be employed on the ironworks, but to establish

ironworks would be one of the first steps in a right direction. With that view he would move the following amendment.—That all the words after "that" be omitted, with a view of inserting the following:—

The House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That this House recognises the importance of establishing local industries.
2. That this House will offer the sum of £5,000 as a Bonus to be given to the person or company who will first produce 500 tons good marketable iron, smelted from ores raised in Queensland, said Bonus to be paid in the following manner, viz.:—£2,500 to be paid on the production of the first 250 tons of such iron, and the balance (£2,500) to be paid on production of the remaining 250 tons of such iron, whether or not said quantities of iron be produced from one and the same mine, or by different parties from a different mine.
3. That an address be presented to the Administrator of the Government, praying His Excellency to issue a proclamation offering the foregoing reward.

There could be no harm in passing a resolution of that kind. He was sorry to hear the hon. member (Mr. Archer) say they would be inducing persons to invest capital in the colony at a loss. With the amount of accumulated capital in England at present, he felt confident that money would easily be forthcoming to open iron mines and works in the colony. What would the prosperous iron trade of England have been had people been deterred from speculation through fear of losing their capital? There was an abundance of iron, particularly in the northern districts, and as there was plenty of coal as well there was no reason why the industry should not be permanently established as soon as it could get a fair start. It was the duty of the House to recognise the importance of establishing industries, especially in order to give employment to the rising generation.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was glad to see the amendment put, because it met all the objections raised by the Colonial Secretary. The bonus might be offered in the same way as that for the cure of rust in wheat. From the weight attached to the words of the hon. member (Mr. Archer) he feared that the remarks made by him might frighten people from going into any speculation of the kind. The hon. member stated that payable iron-works could not be started without an outlay of £50,000 or £100,000. Without wishing any disrespect to the hon. gentleman, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) did not believe it. There was a man in Ipswich, a blacksmith by trade, a clever and energetic man, who was actually smelting iron out of his earnings gained at his own trade. That man, Mr. Shillito, had supplied the Corporation with iron pipes made in his own little backyard. Every requisite for the industry was to be found in the immediate vicinity of Ipswich—mountains of lime, mountains of coal, and mountains of iron; and he had often heard the late Mr. O'Reilly say that an attempt at smelting might be made with a capital of a very few pounds. It discouraged speculation to say that the works would cost from £50,000 to £100,000. The hon. member's idea of investment of capital was, also, not his idea. Capital had been drawn away from various investments in the colony, and put into banks where it was allowed to accumulate at compound interest. The consequence was that there was no speculation going on in the country. A capitalist who left his money in a bank was not a good colonist. Supposing a man with a capital of £5,000 or £10,000 started in an affair of this sort, and at the end of five or ten years found that he had made very little profit, yet it had been profitable to those working under him and to the country by the increased consumption of dutiable goods,

and the saving of immigration by keeping the people in the colony. On the other hand, the man who invested his money in a bank did no good to anybody but himself. He hoped the resolution, as amended, would pass: and if next year there was a "stonewalling" match to take place, the letters of those competing for the bonus—as those about rust in wheat—would make half a day's good reading for the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. MESTON said he voted last year for the motion, and should vote for it again, believing that the establishment of iron manufactories would be compatible with the resources of the colony. They had an unlimited supply of coal, iron, and lime. He was not one of those who believed that bonuses would have the effect of permanently establishing an industry, and he had no recollection of anything of the kind having ever been done. True, the Ipswich Woollen Factory had been started by the encouragement given to it by a bonus of money and land; but the most successful encouragement afforded to that industry would have been the imposition of a duty on imported woollens. They might encourage the manufacture of iron by offering a bonus, but it would be utterly impossible to establish it successfully unless there was a protective duty on imported iron. Without protection they would find themselves in the same position as the early American iron manufacturers did. That manufacture flourished during the protection caused by the civil war. After it was withdrawn the British iron manufacturers, in order to recover their old monopoly, rushed in their iron at a less price than it cost them; and they succeeded. Great Britain would always look to her colonies as the natural market for her manufactures. If they succeeded in starting manufactures here by bonuses only, without protective duties, they would have the British manufacturers sending in their iron at less than cost, as they did in America, and with precisely the same result. He should vote for the bonus as a preliminary to the establishment of the iron manufactory: the protective duty would be a matter for subsequent consideration.

Mr. THOMPSON said he had always supported the motion, and intended to do so again. It was quite true that the old and expensive method of iron smelting involved an expenditure of something like £100,000; but cheaper methods had been substituted, which were admirably adapted to the colony. Materials of all kinds were abundant, and they could not do wrong by affording the industry the encouragement sought. The object of an encouragement of this sort was not to set an industry permanently upon its legs, but to induce some person to try the experiment on condition that the country should bear a share of the first expense. In a new country the Government must necessarily go outside its ordinary functions to give encouragement to such enterprises, and thereby assist in the development of the resources of the country. There was no principle violated or wrong done by such an action, and it would be a very good thing indeed for the colony if an iron industry could be started on the terms proposed.

Mr. KINGSFORD said there seemed to be some little contradiction in the views of hon. members who had spoken. According to the terms of the motion the iron was to be smelted first and the bonus given afterwards, but several hon. members had spoken as though the iron industry was to be started by the bonus. The plan did not appear to him to be suited to the purpose, as the bonus would only be a crutch to prop the manufacturer up for a time and eventually cripple him. The better plan would be to

wait until some enterprising individual came forward and then find the necessary capital for him, charging him interest and securing the money by means of a mortgage. The Native Industry Act, which had been abolished about three years ago through the action of the Colonial Secretary, did very little good whilst it was in operation, and he was convinced now that if the principle of giving bonuses was approved it would only have the effect of exposing the country to no end of demands for bonuses for all sorts of boguses. The Government should always retain a certain amount of control over outlay of that kind.

Mr. FRASER said it was his intention to support the motion. He regarded that mode of encouraging new industries as the best and soundest one that this colony could adopt. Hon. members would bear in mind that the motion only contemplated the payment of a bonus when certain results had been attained. The hon. member for Blackall said that only countries where capital was to be had at 3 or 4 per cent. should encourage persons to enter into speculations of this kind; but, he would remind that hon. member that if England had remained inactive until capital had become so plentiful as that low rate of interest indicated, she would never have attained her present position. With regard to the large figure which the hon. member considered necessary to initiate an industry of this sort, the same remark would have applied equally well to the woollen industry which had been recently commenced. Anyone conversant with the manufacturing trade in Lancashire and Yorkshire knew that nothing short of £100,000 to £150,000 was of any use in starting a manufactory there; and yet, with something like one-fifth of that amount, the well-known manufactory at Ipswich had been started with every prospect of being, when the works were a little further extended, a splendid success. That was done without protection, and with only the stimulus of a bonus in prospect; and it was not the only industry which had been so established. The sugar industry was a complete success, and yet the protection in that case was of a very trivial kind. A bonus was given to the first man who introduced it, and though the result was not satisfactory to the individual, an important industry was started. Supposing the colony were to succeed in producing manufactured iron, it was not at all probable that the English manufacturers would rush their iron into our market at a loss to themselves. If they attempted such a thing they would not continue it long. It was far more likely that some of those experienced iron manufacturers with a superabundance of capital in England would come out to the colony and engage in the further development of the industry themselves.

Mr. HENDREN said he thanked the Colonial Treasurer for the manner in which he had expressed his views on the matter, and also other hon. members who had spoken. He was particularly grateful to the hon. member for Toowoomba for the amendment which he had sagaciously suggested, and he gladly accepted it. The remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Kingsford) reminded him of the old story he was taught in his childhood about Ishmael, whose "hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him." This was not a measure of protection, as the hon. member for Rosewood seemed to think, but only a measure to encourage the production of that which was to be obtained from our own soil. The amount offered (£5,000) was not sufficient to encourage any man of large or moderately large capital to incur the necessary first expenses simply for the purpose of getting the bonus; but it might induce capitalists to

start an industry which, once established, would pay for all time and do good permanently to the colony.

The amendment was agreed to, and the question, as amended, put and passed.

#### CASE OF SAMUEL LEWIS.

Mr. HENDREN moved—

That the Correspondence and Papers, laid on the table of this House on the 27th instant by the Colonial Secretary, having reference to the disrating of one Samuel Lewis, and his removal from Woogaroo Asylum to Sandy Gallop, be printed.

He brought this motion forward because he understood there was a great desire on the part of members of the House and of the public to know the decision of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Woogaroo Asylum, and to see the evidence taken by the committee. If what was reported was true, there must be an infernally bad lot of people inside of the Asylum, or else an extremely bad lot outside of or close to it. He wanted to get to the bottom of the matter. He was not there to support the man Lewis: if any blame was attachable to him let him bear it; but he liked to see fair play, and to have the public satisfied. If no injustice had been done the publication of the correspondence would give satisfaction to the public. The printing of the papers would not cost even as much as was incurred for the correspondence regarding a cure for rust in wheat, and would give more satisfaction in a certain direction.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he felt it his duty to oppose the motion. The correspondence had been laid upon the table, and any member who was anxious to see it could do so. It was about as useless a lot of correspondence as he had ever looked at. It was voluminous and of no public interest, and its printing would cost a lot of money, and it would, moreover, only cumber "Votes and Proceedings." He stretched a point to produce it, but thought the hon. member intended founding a motion upon it. He had no objection to the correspondence going before the Printing Committee; if after looking through it they decided to print it they might do so, but he would be no party to it being printed.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it would be almost impossible for him to let the motion, small as it might seem in the eyes of the Colonial Secretary, pass without saying something, because he believed that he had been unfortunately the cause of the man Lewis being unfairly used. He might at once say that the disrating of the man had sprung from the inquiry into the Woogaroo Asylum. He had shrunk from having anything to do with the calling of the correspondence, and the hon. mover would bear him out that he had asked for it without his (Mr. O'Sullivan's) knowledge or consent. He shrank from having anything to do with it, in mercy to the man. The man was a servant, and while carrying out the inquiry under the Board it became his (Mr. O'Sullivan's) duty to have him examined. He had never seen him until the day of the examination, and did not even know of his existence until then. Lewis gave what he believed to be very true evidence, and very damaging evidence, which would be found in the report of the select committee. He believed that the man was disrated through the evidence that he gave against Dr. Smith, the Surgeon-Superintendent of Woogaroo. Lewis was forced into giving that evidence—he did not volunteer it. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) examined him, and the weight of conducting the examination fell upon him. He might mention that he knew very well before the inquiry came on that he would have to examine some of the employés in the Asylum, and he thought—it was only natural, he supposed, that he should—

that if any damaging evidence was given against Dr. Smith by any of the employés the doctor could do as he liked with them afterwards, they being under his thumb. He was not sufficiently acquainted with the doctor to arrive at the conclusion that he would be above stooping to take revenge upon any of his subordinates, who gave conscientious evidence, and he accordingly demanded from the Colonial Secretary protection for any witnesses that he might have to call out of the Asylum. That protection was freely given by the hon. gentleman. The evidence given by the man brought some matters before the Board which were not expected, and it was disagreeable both to him (Mr. O'Sullivan) and the Board, because another party was implicated whose name he did not wish to come before the public. It appeared that from the day the man gave his testimony he could do nothing right, although he was previously the best of servants. He acquired his position by competitive examination: but he was hurled out of it, and was succeeded by a man who, he believed, could scarcely read or write, and who was put into the position without competition. The man Lewis was a very respectable person, and held excellent testimonials. The ostensible reason for disrating him was that he had been guilty of some irregularity on the railway eight or nine years ago. The unfortunate doctor, he believed, never stopped dogging the Colonial Secretary until he got his permission to disrate the man; and, through being disrated, Lewis had lost in salary and had also been deprived of his house, which was worth £25 a-year to him—altogether, he had lost £50 a-year, which was a lot to a man with a family. Outside influence was brought to bear from another colony on the doctor to do this. The Colonial Secretary did not know this, but, if ever the subject of the Woogaroo inquiry came before the House, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) should expose it. The man felt that he had been improperly and unfairly used, but of course to one in his position there was very little remedy, particularly if his superior was against him. The grievance that he had was that protection was promised to his witnesses by the Colonial Secretary, and he maintained the hon. gentleman had no right to let the doctor meddle with the man. Had it not been for the promise he should not have gone on with the inquiry. He would acknowledge that if a servant was blunt, honest, and gave his evidence in a manly way, he would injure himself and his family, and it was certain this man had injured himself through having done so. But this was holding out no encouragement to public servants to be honest and outspoken; it was rather encouraging the hypocrite, the rogue, and the vagabond. Unfortunately the doctor was one of those who thought well of the man who would "soap" him down, touch his hat to him, and perhaps put his tongue out behind his back, but the man who told the truth boldly was nobody in his estimation. The man felt annoyed, and that he had been improperly used, and he demanded an inquiry, which the hon. Colonial Secretary granted, and Mr. Pinnock and Captain Townley were appointed to hold the inquiry. The result of that inquiry, notwithstanding the man's testimonials and the character he had held previously, amounted to this—that he had been guilty of what Mr. Statham Lowe called "an irregularity;" or, in other words, of looking into documents. It was the evidence and documents connected with that inquiry which the hon. member for Bundamba wished to have printed, and there was no use having them laid on the table unless they were printed. He held that, although the man was a servant, he had some sort of a right, and although he was a poor man,

he ought not to be deprived of the right of having the documents printed, so as to let the country see what had really happened. The man's character had been blackened by his being disrated, and his character was all he had to depend on. As a warder at Sandy Gallop he did not know the day he might be kicked out, and then it would be thought by the public that he had been guilty of some great crime. The printing of the papers would not cost a great deal, and therefore he hoped the hon. Colonial Secretary would allow the motion to pass. He did not for one single moment question the right of that hon. gentleman to deal as he liked with the servants in his department, but he thought the hon. gentleman would confess that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had not over-coloured the circumstances of the case. It was not his intention at the present time to handle the management of the Board of Inquiry that was appointed to inquire into the Woogaroo Asylum. He did not blame the hon. gentleman for anything that had taken place in connection with that Board, as he was not in the colony at the time, nor was the dark cloud that hung over the proceedings of that Board the work of the hon. gentleman—it was the work of the then Under Colonial Secretary, who was a creature of the Surgeon-Superintendent. He promised, when the Press of the colony broke out on him after the report of the Board was printed, to stop the torrent of abuse that was being heaped upon him, and in a letter that he wrote he asked the public to suspend their judgment until Parliament met, when he would be prepared to substantiate everything he had said. That time had not yet come, and he did not want to go into the matter that evening, nor would he. The work of conducting the inquiry had been thrown on his shoulders after a very long and heavy session of Parliament. He was thrown into it without payment and at the sacrifice of his own business, and all the consolation he received in the way of payment was abuse from the Press of the colony. He went into the matter; and, long as he had been a member of that House, the Woogaroo inquiry gave him a lesson he would never forget. He made some charges in the House not from any personal feeling, but from complaints that were made to him outside of the House, and he believed he was the only member of the House who was ever called upon to prove outside of the House charges which he had made inside of it, and he claimed his privilege of reply—he claimed the privileges that belonged to him as a member of Parliament. The hon. member for Rosewood had made a charge of smuggling against the Governor of the colony, but had not been called upon to prove it outside of the House, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan), after his twenty years' experience as a member, was sorry enough to have accepted the job of proving an impossibility. All he could say was that some of the members of the Board that was appointed would get his particular care before the session closed. He would openly assert that he would be able to prove to the House every charge that he had made against Dr. Smith. He would go no further now, but would take it as a great favour if the hon. Colonial Secretary would allow the papers to be printed for the sake of the unfortunate man, who had to get his living and support a family. He had no personal feeling in the matter. He had supported the hon. gentleman ever since he had been a member of Parliament, for he believed there was a sort of similarity between their Irish tempers—although, of course, the hon. gentleman was his superior—that would always draw them together. The hon. gentleman would pitch into a man, but was like the Irishman who after hitting a man with a stick gave him money to buy a plaster. He wished the hon. gentleman

to understand that what had been done to Lewis was a personal insult to himself, as when the hon. gentleman promised him protection for the witnesses he examined he ought to have given it. At the same time he would admit that, after the evidence given by Lewis at the inquiry, that witness and the doctor could not have lived at the same place together. The shifting of the man to Sandy Gallop was in itself nothing, but the reduction of his wages was a most serious matter. He was satisfied it would have been better for the man if the papers had not come before the House, as he was sure that in the course of a little time the good nature of the Colonial Secretary would come back to him and the man would not be allowed to suffer for having given truthful evidence before the Board. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the man personally had nothing whatever to do with the papers being brought forward, but was sorry that they had been laid on the table, as he was well aware that in these hard times it was better to be disrated than to be dismissed altogether. He mentioned that, as it might be thought that the hon. member for Bundamba had been prompted to bring the matter forward.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that by way of a Ministerial explanation he was bound to say a few words. The hon. member for Stanley had stated the case very fairly and truly, but had made one mistake in saying that the man was reduced and put back to his original rank in consequence of the evidence he gave before the Board. It was nothing of the sort; the man was originally a warder, and was next employed as a clerk until some considerable time afterwards, when Dr. Smith discovered that he had been found reading letters at the Railway Offices at Toowoomba that he had no right to read, and came to the conclusion that such a man should not be employed as a clerk. On that ground he was put back as a warder, and on no other. Had the doctor got him disrated for the reasons stated by the hon. member he (the Colonial Secretary) would have made it hot for him. The man was extremely insolent to Dr. Smith, and he suspended him; an inquiry was held, and the man had been very justly and properly punished. The doctor did not dismiss him. After the appeal made by the hon. member, he had no objection to have the printing of the papers left to the Printing Committee.

The SPEAKER, in reply to a remark from the hon. member for Stanley, said it was not the practice of the Printing Committee to deal with matters of that kind.

Question put and passed.

#### SELECT COMMITTEES.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the motion standing in his name purported to give expression to the opinion of the House in connection with the practice of select committees. He was somewhat doubtful whether the motion as it stood was exactly in accordance with the privileges of select committees; but he made use of the terms of the motion simply to raise the question, and was in no way anxious to embarrass the action of committees, or place any restraint on them inconsistent with their position as independent bodies of inquiry. He was anxious to draw attention to the usages of Parliament in connection with the subject. The question had arisen out of the consideration of the petition of Mr. Hemmant, which was lately referred to the investigation of a select committee. Application was made by some gentleman connected with the Press for leave to be present at the examination of the witnesses. The Select Committee having consulted, exercised the rights they possessed under

the Standing Orders, and came to the decision that they would not admit the public. That was unquestionably within the rights of the Committee. He now called attention to the matter, not for the purpose of questioning that right, but to draw attention to what he understood to be the usage of Parliament rather than to the law as embodied in the Standing Orders. Public utility also pointed to the admission of strangers in an inquiry instituted before a committee of that kind. All inquiries now-a-days which were not for some good reason constituted as secret inquiries were better conducted in the full light of day. The Press were admitted to the deliberations of the Assembly, except when they pleased to impose some restraint, which was very rarely indeed; and it was for the advantage of those whom they served that all they said or did should be known and appreciated. Similarly, the action of committees ought to be placed on something like the same footing; but, as a matter of fact, their practice had been rather to make the proceedings of committees secret—at any rate, during the time an investigation took place. That, he thought, had had not a little to do with the fact that the investigation of select committees had not been looked upon with any very great interest. People were not inclined to wade through a lengthy collection of evidence when it was embodied in a blue-book; but they would be more likely to take interest in investigations if they were entitled to do so through the agency of the Press. During the time he was in office, when any commissions were appointed by Government, he always endeavoured to give publicity by inviting the Press on the occasion of taking evidence, for it was only through the agency of the Press that the full benefits of such an investigation could be made available to the public, and it would be wise for committees to exercise their discretion in the matter. He did not wish to impugn their discretion, but would point to the fact that it was certainly within the functions of committees to admit the public. That was recognised by the House of Commons, though it had not hitherto been the practice in the colony; and it was quite in accordance with the principles of their parliamentary proceedings that, while they reserved to themselves the right at any time to eject strangers from their proceedings and make them private, still as a matter of practice and utility it had been found better that the public should have free access, so far as that access could be obtained in accordance with the convenience of the building and the rooms in which they assembled. With regard to the recognised procedure in the Imperial Parliament, he found in the last edition of "May" the following paragraph:—

"When a select committee of the House of Lords are examining witnesses, strangers are rarely allowed to be present; but in the Commons, the presence of strangers is generally permitted. Their exclusion, however, may be ordered at any time, and continued as long as the committee may think fit. When they are deliberating, it is the invariable practice to exclude all strangers, in order that the committee may be exposed to no interruption or restraint."

That practice held good in spite of the standing orders of the House of Commons, which were similar to those under which they were governed. Under those standing orders strangers were prohibited, and an injunction placed upon any person publishing the proceedings connected with select committees. Nevertheless, it was not the less a fact that investigations before the select committees of the House of Commons were attended by the public. There were conveniences which were not possessed in Queensland. He had himself been present on several occasions at these investigations, which were attended by a large number of persons, and were quite as open as

the proceedings of the law courts, or any investigation of a similar kind. It would not be questioned that the proceedings of select committees of the House of Commons might be and often were conducted in the presence of the public, and there could be no doubt whatever that such committees retained to themselves the right of at any time signifying their wish either to deliberate in private, or for any good reason, not necessarily explained, but existing, to secure the absence of strangers. He would also point to the usage of the House of Commons at the present time in connection with the presence of strangers. And he imagined the practice of select committees was exactly that of the House itself: their privileges were the same, and the usages of the House to a great extent appertained to the usages of select committees. Unquestionably, from very ancient times, the House reserved to itself the right of ejecting strangers. At page 249 of "May" he found—

"By the standing orders of the Commons, the Sergeant-at-Arms is directed,—

"From time to time to take into his custody any stranger or strangers that he shall see, or who may be reported to him to be, in any part of the House or gallery appropriated to the members of this House, and also any stranger who, having been admitted into any other part of the House or gallery, shall misconduct himself, or shall not withdraw when strangers are directed to withdraw, while the House, or any committee of the whole House, is sitting; and that no person so taken into custody be discharged out of custody without the special order of the House." And it is also ordered, "That no member of this House do presume to bring any stranger into any part of the House or gallery appropriated to the members of this House, while the House, or a committee of the whole House, is sitting."

In the history of parliamentary usage there were many interesting matters which he did not propose to refer to now. Suffice it to say, those usages had been perpetuated wherever representative assemblies had been constituted, either in the colonies or in America. In Congress and in the Senate very much the same procedure obtained. In many of the State legislatures of the United States provision was made for their proceedings taking place in public; in other legislatures there was no such provision; but their usage was pretty much that of the House of Commons. The Senate of the United States for a long time held its sessions in secret conclave. That was done away with, and it was only when the Senate was exercising its executive functions that it sat in secret. Its public sittings had only taken place of late years. That was the position of deliberative assemblies in the United States. There had lately been some changes with reference to the presence of strangers in the House of Commons. He would read what "May" said on the subject:—

"And in compliance with the general orders of the House, the Sergeant has accordingly taken strangers into custody who have come irregularly into the House, or have misconducted themselves there. According to ancient usage, the exclusion of strangers could at any time be enforced without an order of the House; for, on a member taking notice of their presence, the Speaker was obliged to order them to withdraw without putting a question. Nor did the recognition of their presence, by the Standing Orders of 1845, supersede the ancient usage, which was founded upon the principle of their entire exclusion. On the 18th May, 1849, a member took notice that strangers were present who were ordered to withdraw. The doors were accordingly closed for upwards of two hours and no report of the debates during that time appeared in the newspapers. Strangers were re-admitted without any order of the Speaker. And again on the 8th June, in the same year, strangers were ordered to withdraw. The revival of this exceptional practice led to the appointment of a committee, which unanimously declared against any alteration of the rules of the House. It was not until the 23rd May, 1870, that strangers were again ordered to withdraw, in order to avoid publicity being given to a debate upon the Contagious Diseases

Act. This led to further discussion; but the House still adhered to the old rule of exclusion, which was again enforced on the 18th March, 1872.

"At length, however, the extreme inconvenience of such a rule forced itself upon the serious attention of the House, and on the 3rd May, 1875, it was resolved:— 'That if at any other sittings of the House, or in committee, any member shall take notice that strangers are present, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman (as the case may be), shall forthwith put the question that strangers be ordered to withdraw, without permitting any debate or amendment: Provided that Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman, may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of strangers from any part of the House.'

"This resolution was not made a standing order; but on the 3rd March, 1876, when notice was taken of the presence of strangers, Mr. Speaker, instead of directing them to withdraw, put the question in pursuance of the resolution. On Monday, the 6th, he called the attention of the House to this proceeding, and explained that he had considered himself bound to follow the practice prescribed by that resolution until otherwise instructed by that House; but he thought it proper to give the House an opportunity of further declaring its purpose, and determining whether that resolution should be permanent. Again, on the 19th July in the same year, notice being taken that strangers were present, Mr. Speaker reminded the House of the resolution of the 31st May, 1875, and stated that he had on a previous occasion during the present session explained that he considered himself bound to follow the practice prescribed by that resolution until otherwise instructed by the House; and that as no such instruction had since been given, he should proceed to put the question, in pursuance of that resolution. And on the 12th April, 1878, during a debate upon the murder of the Earl of Leitrim, notice being taken that strangers were present, Mr. Speaker put the question for their withdrawal, which was affirmed by a large majority. And, again, the same course was pursued on the 22nd May in the same year; but, as no second teller could be found for the motion, the Speaker declared that the Noes had it. It must be observed, however, that an order for the withdrawal of strangers does not extend to the ladies' gallery, which is not supposed to be within the House. Ladies can therefore only be informed of the subject of debate, and left to withdraw or not at their own discretion."

That being the latest modern precedents as to the withdrawal of strangers from the House of Commons, he had to submit that in dealing with the subject of the withdrawal of strangers from the House of Assembly, or from a select committee, they should be guided by the same principles as were embodied in the precedents. Just before leaving this subject he would refer to a curious commentary on the matter he had come upon on that subject in "Hatsell's Proceedings of the House of Commons," in which there occurred these quaint remarks—

"When a member in his place takes notice to the Speaker of strangers being in the House or gallery, it is the Speaker's duty immediately to order the Sergeant to execute the orders of the House, and to clear the House of all except members, and this, without permitting any debate or question to be moved upon the execution of the order. It very seldom happens that this can be done without a violent struggle from some quarter of the House, that strangers may remain: Members often move for the order to be read, endeavour to explain it and debate upon it, and the House as often runs into great heats upon this subject, but in a short time the confusion subsides, and the dispute ends by clearing the House; for, if one member insists upon it, the Speaker must enforce the order, and the House must be cleared."

If any one member insisted upon it the House must adhere to the rule. In connection with this there was this amusing note—

"In 'Grey's Debates,' Vol. III., p. 222, is the following entry—'Some ladies were in the gallery peeping over the gentlemen's shoulders. The Speaker spying them called out, 'What borough do these ladies serve for?' To which Sir William Coventry replied, 'They serve for the Speaker's Chamber.' Sir Thomas Littleton said, 'Perhaps the Speaker may mistake them for gentlemen with fine sleeves, dressed like ladies.' Says the Speaker, 'I am sure I saw petticoats.' This was on the 1st June, 1675, and shows that though they were at that time admitted into the House of Lords, it was not customary for ladies to attend the debates in the House of Commons."

He would now simply refer to the proceedings the other day of the Select Committee on this matter of Mr. Hemmant's petition. He observed that in England the other day a case occurred similar to what they had in their own case. A committee of the House of Commons had been appointed on the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, which had excited a good deal of interest, and the very same question had been raised. He found in the *Times* of June 2nd a short paragraph to this effect:—

"THE BRADLAUGH COMMITTEE: The committee appointed to consider the oath of allegiance in connection with Mr. Bradlaugh met yesterday. All the members of the committee were present. Mr. Walpole was appointed chairman. A discussion ensued as to whether Mr. Bradlaugh should be allowed to be represented by counsel, but it was intimated that he declined to retain counsel. In these circumstances it was decided Mr. Bradlaugh should be allowed to attend; and, if necessary, take part in the proceedings. The committee also discussed the question of admitting the Press to the committee. This was opposed by several members, but in the end it was resolved the proceedings should be conducted in public. The committee adjourned till to-day, when the first witness, Sir Eiskine May, will be examined."

Then he found in the *Times* of the 3rd June a lengthy report was given of the proceedings in the same case: the report occupied half a column of the *Times*. It was not clear from this report what decision was come to, but the committee had no objection to the admission of the public and the publication of what transpired in the committee. These seemed to him to be good precedents of the practice of the House of Commons, which was to admit the public to the proceedings of select committees. If his resolution transgressed in any way on the full liberty that ought to attach to the proceedings of every committee he should desire rather to withdraw it, if that were the opinion of the House, or submit to such modification of it as would retain the right of the committee to act according to rules of their own construction. He made these remarks, for while it was desirable in assemblies like their own that they should have the right to exclude strangers—and the House of Commons had never modified its standing orders on that point and retained the complete right to sit in private—he thought they should practically admit strangers; and that select committees should also admit strangers. Though that might appear an anomaly and a contradiction it was one of those anomalies which had been found to work well. He thought the committee in this and other cases would not be departing from good precedents if it admitted the public to its proceedings. The committee rooms they had were not suitable for the admission of a large number of the public, but the Press could be represented by reporters if it desired, and it would exercise a good control over the proceedings of the Committee. But the very fact that the proceedings were conducted in public and reported would attach an interest to them that they did not possess at the present time. Thereby the functions of inquiry by a select committee would be increased and utilised to an extent they were not at the present time. He did not know that an abstract motion of that kind would be carried. He did not intend to carry a motion that might in any way bind the select committees of the House, but he thought the House might express such an opinion as would lead to the conclusion that it saw no objection to the introduction of strangers at the proceedings before committees. It was true the motion was merely abstract, and there might on that account be some objection to it; but there would be this advantage in passing it that the attention would be directed to the principles of the Imperial Parliament, and they might be led to fol-

low the precedents that had been laid down for them in either countries where they had larger experience than they had in Queensland. For the purpose of giving expression to this opinion he would move the resolution that appeared in his name—

“That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the proceedings of the Select Committees, except when deliberating, should be open to the public.”

The SPEAKER: Before putting this question to the House, I must point out that although it is a mere abstract expression of opinion, and would not if passed override our Standing Orders 155 and 161; yet, from the speech of the hon. member for Maryborough, it would seem that he expects that its passage would permit the publication by the Press of evidence taken from day to day. I must direct his attention to the fact that Standing Order 161 absolutely prohibits any such publication. I think it right also to point out that since he has in his speech referred to the fact that a select committee of this House lately refused to permit a reporter for the Press to be present at their sittings, as a reason for bringing forward this motion at the present time, it means to a certain extent a vote of censure on that committee. It is for the House to consider whether it would be treating the committee with courtesy in passing such a resolution, which is, I believe, unprecedented. As it does not, however, propose to set aside our Standing Orders on the subject, I shall now put the question, leaving the points I have suggested to the consideration of the House.

Mr. DOUGLAS, in reference to the Standing Order which the Speaker had referred to, said there was no doubt it was quite precise and distinct, and that Parliament attached a similar power to committees as it did to the House of Commons, and he should be sorry to ask them to surrender any right that may be secured by such order or usage. But he had pointed out that while they adhered to the rule to exclude strangers, it was the custom in the House of Commons to admit strangers and to publish their proceedings. At one time it was difficult to get reports of the House of Commons for publication, and many of them had to be taken by stealth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the amount of erudition that had been showered upon them by the hon. member for Maryborough, and in which he so greatly delighted, was wonderful, and everyone who had heard him and his numerous quotations must have been convinced that the question of the admission of strangers was left entirely to the committee themselves. The hon. gentleman let the cat out of the bag to the House when he made it appear that it was in order to obtain an entrance for members of the Press to disseminate the knowledge at once. The 161st Standing Order was directly against that, and no resolution could override a standing order. It said that the evidence taken by any select committee should not be published by any member of such committee or by any other person. Did he suppose that they were stupid enough to pass a vote to enable what occurred in a select committee last week to be published?—that was his only object, and what would be the effect of it? His only object was to get the Press in to report piecemeal portions of the evidence that would suit him. It was extraordinary that it had never struck him before to admit strangers and the Press to a select committee. His object was to override a decision come to by a select committee last week, and to enable him and his party to publish the evidence before there had been an opportunity of examining or contradicting the witnesses. He ought to be ashamed of it. There was no neces-

1880—s

sity to alter the Standing Orders, and he hoped the House would have too much sense to pass such an abstract motion. It was an iniquitous motion, and had a low and mean object—to gratify private pique and spleen, and to enable the Press to report evidence piecemeal before there was an opportunity of examination and contradiction. He was mistaken if he thought the motion was going to pass, and he hoped a large majority would show that he could not carry it out.

Mr. MOREHEAD hoped the House would bear with him while he read what he believed was the precursor of the motion moved by the hon. member. It was from the *Telegraph* of the 24th instant—

“The Select Committee appointed to inquire and report upon the allegations contained in Mr. Hemmant’s petition met yesterday and commenced to take evidence. As the subject of inquiry is of great public interest we were anxious to give a *precis* of the evidence day by day, as it was taken. This is the only way in which a newspaper could deal exhaustively with such a subject.”

The *Telegraph* was, he had no doubt, a well conducted paper, but it was known to be hostile to the Administration for some time past, and they wished to have a reporter allowed to go in and take notes. He was to make a *precis* and the editor was to comment upon it, irrespective of the fact that if he had been admitted, as he might have been, he would have made himself liable to punishment for a breach of privilege for taking out of the Committee what he had heard. They knew it was difficult to get at a paper or an individual. If they were to allow the Press and the public to be present at all the private inquiries with their mouths agog, they knew very well they would go away and say everything to everybody. They had it in the paper itself that the intention was not to abide by the Standing Orders, but to fly quite in the face and at variance with them, and yet he filed a motion, he believed, in the handwriting of the leader of the Opposition, who seemed to shrink as he often did, and became the cat’s-paw of the hon. member for Brisbane, as he also often did, and justified it by no argument whatever. He tried to pander—and he (Mr. Morehead) used the word advisedly—to the public by attempting to show them that it was his intention that the people should be present at all the committees, knowing well that they were debarred by the Standing Orders. That was the way to get cheap popularity. If he would only put on spangles and glitter, the hon. member hoped to be taken for a second Beaconsfield; but they would strip off the spangles, and show him to be as great an impostor, politically, as ever was in the colony.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I rise to order, Sir, to ask if “impostor” is a proper word to apply to me.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Call him a duffer.

The SPEAKER said the hon. member must not make use of any term that was offensive to another hon. member.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would, then, withdraw it. The hon. member knew that he could not override the Standing Orders. The Speaker had ruled it, and they all knew it. He (Mr. Douglas) wanted to come prominently before the public, saying that the outside public were treated with great injustice. He believed the public took very little interest in any action of any committee. The Press wanted to colour it one way or another, and if reporters for the Press were allowed in, having instructions from their employers to colour the evidence in a certain way, it would be brought out in some coloured and one-sided way or another before the public. They had gone on for a great many years without any necessity for abne-

gating the Standing Orders, and there certainly was not a sufficient case made out by the hon. member for Maryborough now, except that he was one of those dolls made to dance by the leader of the Opposition. When the day came, as come some day it must, though he hoped it was far off, when that hon. gentleman came into power, he would no doubt sell the hon. member as he had sold many others. He had betrayed every party he had been connected with, and he (Mr. Morehead) would go further, and prophesy that there was no party he would not betray. He had not perhaps the lust for pay, but he had admitted the other day that he had a lust for power. He considered it right to say place and power, but dishonourable to say place and pay. The hon. gentleman sought power. He was a youthful politician, but he had greyheaded old politicians on the back benches behind him dancing at his beck and call. A second Pitt had not yet arisen, and he did not think he was likely to rise in the person of the member for North Brisbane. He saw near him the hon. member for Rockhampton who was bidding high to compete with him. He (Mr. Morehead) warned him to beware of that tricky member. Rockhampton was a strange constituency, and had returned some of the ablest, and some of the most contemptible—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep to the question.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would bring it all back again directly. He alluded to the hon. member for Blackall, and a late member for Rockhampton, and he would allude to one colleague of the present member. He would warn the member for North Brisbane of the company he was in, for he might be "hoist with his own petard." There was no doubt that the initiation of this motion rested with the leader of the Opposition. Why had he not the courage to bring it forward himself? There was hardly a member who did not know that he initiated it.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I initiated the measure, from the beginning to the end.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they had learned now that the leader of the Opposition was the secretary of the hon. member; and the two reminded him of Leach's picture of the skye terrier in *Punch*—there was no knowing which was the head and which was the tail. He contended that if the resolution passed it would be fatal to the Standing Orders.

Mr. GRIFFITH said this motion was initiated by the hon. member for Maryborough himself. The hon. member who had just sat down had said that he (Mr. Griffith) initiated it, but the fact was the hon. member for Maryborough told him a week ago that he was going to bring it forward; he (Mr. Griffith) asked him one day this week when he was going to introduce it, and he then, at that hon. member's request, sat down and wrote it out, and he was not ashamed of it. He looked upon it as one of the most important matters that had been brought before the House during the present session. The hon. gentleman had also accused him of stating in that House that he (Mr. Griffith) was actuated by a desire for place and power; but what he said was that there were some members who were actuated by a desire for place and power, and at the present time they might well desire it. He was not one of those who at the present time desired either place or power, but he repeated that there were members of the House to whom place and power at this time were of infinite importance. With regard to the motion itself, the Colonial Secretary worked himself quite into a rage about it. He (the Colonial Secretary) was always offen-

sive, but he (Mr. Griffith) wondered why on this occasion he had worked himself up into a passion simply because it was proposed to adopt the practice of the House of Commons and other legislative bodies. Was the hon. gentleman interested in preventing strangers from being present at select committees? Where was the occasion for all this rage and passion? He thought it was a matter that should be considered dispassionately. All the arguments used up to the present time in opposition to the motion were equally applicable to the admission of strangers to courts of justice. A select committee of that House was supposed to be a tribunal appointed to ascertain facts, and ever since judicial institutions had been established, as far as his reading went, one of the best safeguards for fairplay to all parties, in courts of justice or any other tribunal, was the publicity given to the proceedings. Why were strangers admitted to that Chamber? In order that their speeches and proceedings might have the sanction of publicity—that what they said should be under the eyes of the public, and that public opinion, which ultimately governed all things, should guide them and keep them in order if they were inclined to go astray. What was the objection to the admission of strangers to select committees? That the Press might unfairly report the evidence. That was a strange objection to make at this time of day. Was the Press interested in misrepresenting evidence? Surely, all the papers in the Press would not be equally interested in doing so; and if a committee thought it was undesirable that one portion of the evidence should be published before the inquiry was completed, an order to that effect could be given the same as was given in courts of justice, and that order would no doubt be observed. Why should the rule that seemed to have grown up in the colony to exclude strangers from select committees be allowed to continue when it had grown into disuse in all other parts of the world? He would point out, on the other hand, some advantages of admitting strangers to select committees—that was, if a committee sat for the purpose of finding out the truth. If a committee sat for the purpose of finding out as little as possible, or arriving at some particular conclusion, he could see every reason why strangers should be excluded; but if a committee sat with a view of finding out all that could be known, and getting as much information as possible, how was it to be obtained if the proceedings were confined to five or seven gentlemen, as the case might be, until the investigation was closed? The probable result would be, as had often happened when the report and evidence of a select committee were brought up, that a great deal of the truth had not been inquired into at all, and statements were made that the parties would not have dared to make if they knew there was a possibility that they would be contradicted before the investigation was concluded. It was said that the Standing Orders prohibited evidence taken before select committees being published;—so did the standing orders of the House of Commons and other legislatures; so did the Standing Orders prohibit the presence of strangers in the House. Their Standing Orders were no doubt passed for some wise purpose, but like many other matters in the constitution they were there for the purpose of being enforced when necessary, but not always to the letter. How was it they found a lengthy report of the proceedings of the Bradlaugh committee published in the *Times*, the other day? They had not heard that the editor of the *Times* had been punished for contempt for that, or that the committee authorised it to be published. How was it they had also received telegrams of the proceedings of that committee? There could be no better evidence that the practice of the House of Commons was

to allow strangers to be present at select committees, unless there was good reason to the contrary. In England the proceedings of committees were nominally secret, just as the proceedings of Parliament were nominally secret; but there was another committee appointed when secrecy was really desired, called a secret committee. That was a committee the proceedings of which were really not supposed to be published. It was stated in "May"—

"But when, in the opinion of the House, secrecy ought to be maintained, secret committees are appointed, whose inquiries are conducted throughout with closed doors; and it is the invariable practice for all members not on the committee to be excluded from the room throughout the whole of its proceedings."

Then there was this note from Lord Colchester's diary of March, 1797—a time when the proceedings of Parliament were kept much more secret than now, and when the advantages of publicity were not recognised as they were at the present time:—

"In the course of the debate on the Committee of Secrecy on the Bank of England, Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey both stated distinctly and expressly, and without contradiction, that the nature of committees of secrecy was only that it excluded from their proceedings all strangers; but that the members of the committee were not otherwise bound to individual secrecy out of the committee, than as their own sense of duty or propriety might suggest, according to the nature and object of their inquiry."

The theory of the hon. the Colonial Secretary and the hon. member for Mitchell would turn all select committees into secret committees, as they were appointed in England, because the extent of the publicity they would allow to be given to the proceedings of select committees here was exactly the same as that given to those of secret committees in 1797. Here they had got into the bad habit of making all committees secret, and that was the reason why committees were practically of little use, and why they were in such ill-odour and were regarded with suspicion. The practice was to say, not "what will the committee find out," but "who are the members of it." He cared very little who constituted a committee, if the public were admitted and the proceedings had the sanction of publicity. In that case the necessity for observing fairplay would be so great that it would matter little what was the composition of the committee. He did not think it was necessary to associate this motion with the proceedings of any particular select committee. The motion would not in the slightest degree operate as censure upon the proceedings of any committee. The House was simply asked to express an opinion, that as a general rule the proceedings of committees should be open to the public as they were in England; on the other hand, it was said the general rule should be different from what it was in England. Whether the general rule should be observed or departed from in any particular case would be a matter for the committee, and if their determination was reported to the House, and the House dissented, whatever further action was necessary would be taken. He had only to say, in conclusion, that the warnings of the hon. member for Mitchell were entirely wasted on that side of the House. They could trust one another on that side, and he hoped they would always be able to do so.

Mr. THOMPSON thought the motion had been brought forward at a very inopportune time. If they intended to make any alteration in the Standing Orders the time for doing so was when matters were quiescent—when there was no political excitement. That had been so much found to be the case that during the obstructive proceedings in the House

of Commons it had not been considered advisable to make any violent change to meet particular cases. If they looked at the matter a little closely they would see that really the House itself was in the very best possible position that it could be. They had in the Standing Orders, as had been pointed out, the same power as courts of justice to prevent the publication of evidence before the matter was ripe—while it was *sub judice*. An order of that sort was lately given in a celebrated case in Sydney, and, being violated by the Press, the editor or proprietor of the paper was committed for contempt. In this case the Committee was the judge, and he could not understand the object of hon. members opposite, unless it was to override the Standing Orders. If they wished to do that they should amend them. The hon. member said that they had got into the habit of excluding the public; but he (Mr. Thompson) denied it—they had got into no such habit. As a matter of fact, select committees were not interesting to the public. For the first time, he believed, the public had demanded admission, and the committee, acting within the powers it possessed, decided that on that occasion it was not advisable that the public should be admitted. There was the whole case; the committee had the power and had exercised it. What more was there to be said? There was a reason why a committee of the particular sort which led to this motion and discussion should be kept as quiet as possible, and that was that it was a matter in which the public were deeply interested, and in which great party excitement prevailed; and the effect of publishing from day to day little scraps of evidence with sensational headings would be to still further inflame the public mind. It was not desirable, if that inquiry was to take the form of a calm investigation, that the public should be inflamed by articles about it from day to day. The whole mischief of that accusation—for it was really an accusation—from the beginning till now, was that it had not been calmly gone about; and the more excitement there was over it the less confidence there would be in the decision when it was arrived at. There was greater reason for the committee excluding strangers than there was for the temporary suppression of newspaper reports in the court at Sydney in the great case of *Shepherd v. Dibbs*. Outside party altogether, it was of the utmost importance that that accusation should be tried as calmly as possible, and altogether outside party excitement. He very much regretted that the question had been brought forward at this particular time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member (Mr. Thompson) had dealt very ably with the general question, as far as regarded the admission of the general public to select committees, and also with regard to the particular question at issue as to the Select Committee now sitting on Mr. Hemmant's petition. No matter what disclaimer might be made by the hon. member (Mr. Griffith), it was quite certain that this abstract motion would never have been heard of had the Select Committee on Mr. Hemmant's petition not been sitting, and had they not acted as wisely and discretely as they did in not permitting the presence of reporters for the public Press. He intended to deal with one or two assertions made by the hon. members for North Brisbane and Maryborough, and he could not disabuse his mind of the idea that they were rather disingenuous in their arguments in drawing a comparison between the House of Commons and this Assembly. He (Mr. Macrossan) maintained that the practice was exactly the same in both cases, although the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) said that our committees were practically the same as the secret committees of the House of Commons. But

the secret committees of the House of Commons admitted no one but members of the committee and witnesses, while our committees admitted any or all of the fifty-five members of the House while the inquiry was going on. That assertion, therefore, was not correct. The hon. member (Mr. Douglas) in reading so many extracts from "May" might have gone a little farther, and told the House what was the practice with regard to the select committees of the House of Commons. Had he done so he would have found that they were extremely careful not to permit the evidence of those committees to reach the public until the inquiry was finished. So cautious were they that when witnesses got their printed evidence they were cautioned that it should not be made public, and they were only allowed to make merely verbal corrections. At page 413, "May" wrote—

"The evidence of the witnesses examined before a select committee is taken down in shorthand, and printed daily for the use of the members of the committee. In the Lords the printing is authorised by a special order of the House in each case: in the Commons it is done according to long-established practice. A copy of his own examination is also sent to each witness for his revision, with an instruction that he can only make verbal corrections, as corrections in substance must be effected by re-examination. The alterations should be confined to the correction of inaccuracies, or the necessary explanation of any answer, and are required to be in the handwriting of the witness himself, unless he is disabled by accident or infirmity, in which case they may be written by another person at his dictation. The corrected copy should be returned without delay to the committee clerk, who is to examine the corrections, and if any appear to be irregular he is to submit them to the Chairman. If the evidence be not returned, with corrections, in six days, or some other reasonable time, according to the circumstances, it will be printed in its original form. . . . Neither the members nor the witnesses to whom these copies are entrusted are at liberty to publish any part on of them until they have been reported to the House. On the 21st April, 1837, it was resolved by the Commons—'That, according to the undoubted privileges of this House, and for the due protection of the public interest, the evidence taken by any select committee of this House, and documents presented to such committee, and which have not been reported to the House, ought not to be published by any member of such committee, nor by any other person.'

Exceptions were also made to meet cases like the Bradlaugh inquiry, mentioned by the hon. member (Mr. Griffith). The motion, even if carried, would have no practical effect as far as the House was concerned, until the Standing Orders were altered. He hoped the motion would not be carried.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the Minister for Works had omitted to state that even after the evidence and report of the select committee had been sent up, it rested with the House to accept or reject the report, and it might be altogether discarded. The committee was merely a number of individuals told off to do special work to save the time of the House generally. When they had done their work, the House could deal with it as they thought fit.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member (Mr. Thompson) had told them that a court of justice could prevent the publication of evidence, as a select committee had a right to do by the Standing Orders. But in the case of a trial before a court of justice, it was not usual to comment on the evidence until the case was finished. In the case now under discussion an order of that kind would not be of the slightest use, for there was no power to prevent newspapers making daily comments on the evidence taken. In a court of law, the evidence was heard by a jury who sat from day to day, and there could be no danger in admitting the public, for they had nothing to do with it. But to prevent undue influence being brought to bear on juries, the Press was distinctly

prevented from making comments on a case before it was finished. It was only right that similar liberty should be allowed to select committees while inquiries were pending. It appeared that courts of law had the same power of preventing reports being made of their proceedings, and he did not see why a motion should be passed preventing select committees from exercising that power.

Mr. SWANWICK pointed out that, as in the appointment of a select committee, the House delegated to certain of its members its own powers, and as any member of the House had the right of excluding strangers, it was only reasonable that the select committee should also have that right. He submitted that no resolution of this House could debar a select committee from exercising the undoubted privileges of this House and of the House of Commons. Even if this resolution were passed, it would still be in the power of any member of a select committee to call the attention of the Chairman to the presence of strangers, and the Chairman would have the right to order the strangers out.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had brought forward the motion without heat or passion. He had for some time taken an interest in this question, altogether apart from the actual case which had recently attracted his attention to it. On moving the motion, however, he was at once met with a furious onslaught—a sort of barbarous attack—by the Colonial Secretary and the hon. member for the Mitchell, which was perfectly unjustified by anything he had said. He had particularly said that he was anxious not by such a resolution to contract the powers which he admitted existed in the select committees the House appointed, even stating his willingness to withdraw the motion when it had afforded him an opportunity of discussing a really important matter of parliamentary practice. It was therefore exceeding unfair of hon. members to call him nasty names—for there was no argument. The Colonial Secretary, in his brute barbarous fashion, just slogged at him as though he was not worth argument. He was worth argument, however, and as long as he was a member of the House he should prove himself to be so; but he was not given to calling bad names, and he did not expect to be called bad names himself. The style of address presented to him, after his dispassionate remarks, was what might be called parliamentary blasphemy, and he didn't like to be blasphemed at in that way. His clear contention throughout was, that whereas the House possessed the unquestionable right of excluding strangers by the mere expression of opinion on the part of a single member, it did not exercise that right because such an exercise of power was not found to be for its own interest or for that of the public. And he had also shown how the House of Commons had of late years contracted its powers in that respect. Hon. members all knew the old tradition that Dr. Johnson used furtively to take notes, and that the publication of those notes was at one time considered a high matter of breach of privilege. Those were the days when unfortunate reporters were dragged down to the bar of the House and compelled to make an ample apology on their knees for their contumely. But the public liberties had grown since then, and the House of Commons, whilst retaining all the former theory, now gave the amplest convenience and sought for the fullest reports of their proceedings. Such a change had come over public opinion in that respect that it was now considered an indignity and deprivation of privileges if reports were not given, and the Assembly was carrying out the very same principle when it expended large sums

of money and organised an efficient staff of reporters in order that its proceedings might be made public, always reserving to itself the power of at any time contracting the practice in any way it liked. It would have been better if the Minister for Works had not applied the word "disingenuous" to him. He had endeavoured to argue the matter as fairly as possible from both sides, and get the House to look at the real facts of the case. It was not of the slightest consequence to him whether the motion was carried or not: he knew that the principle would ultimately be adopted, and that he would in some respects have contributed to its adoption. He did not quite agree with the hon. member for Ipswich, who seemed to think that our practice was the same as that of the House of Commons. Our Standing Orders were almost identical with those of the House of Commons, but our practice was different. He had frequently attended meetings of House of Commons committees which were just as open as courts of law, and yet it was not disputed that their standing orders were the same as ours, and that, if desirable, they could put them in force. He contended, not that the Assembly should do away with its Standing Orders, but that as strangers were now admitted to debates in the House there was no reason why they should not be admitted when members were deliberating in committee. The principle should be extended—if it was good for the House it was also good for the committee. Of course, there were cases, as the hon. member for Ipswich urged, in which it would be a wise discretion on the part of a committee to impose restrictions upon the publication of its proceedings, just as it was sometimes desirable that a similar power should be exercised in courts of law. That would not, however, prevent the Press from publishing evidence. It was very proper that the Press should not comment upon a case until it had been finally adjudicated upon; but a select committee would well know how to use its powers if its privileges were impugned by the Press, and the Press, discharging its duties under a sense of responsibility, would use its privileges with discretion. He did not profess to know "May" better than the Minister for Works, who had applied the term "disingenuous" to him; but it appeared to him that in this respect the practice of this Chamber and that of the House of Commons were somewhat different. The Standing Order to which the hon. gentleman referred was somewhat modern, dating from 1875; before that, evidence was simply taken, and power was given to the committee to report to the House. "May" said, on this "power to report"—

"A committee have no power to report either their opinion or the minutes of evidence taken before them, without receiving power for that purpose from the House. Accordingly, where this power has not been given on the first appointment of the committee, the chairman, before he brings up the report, moves that the committee have power to report their observations or opinions, and minutes of evidence, as the case may be. When the committee have agreed to a report upon the subject referred to them, the chairman should obtain power to report their observations—"

It was not necessary for that to be done in the case of our committees, as the power was given when the appointment was made—

"but when they have agreed to resolutions only, he should obtain power to report their opinion. When a committee desire to make a report to the House, relating to any circumstance beside the immediate order of reference, they obtain leave to make a special report."

He did not care whether the motion was carried or not. The subject had been rather a hobby with him, and his action now had no special application to this particular case, though he questioned if there had been any committee to whose proceedings more

interest was attached than to the one now sitting. As a matter of practice he had introduced the custom of inviting the Press to apply for admission to inquiries by Royal commissions, and he thought the public had gained in that way. The investigation had gained in strength, inasmuch as it had been made in the presence of and with the full knowledge of the public. Whatever arguments might be urged against the resolution applied equally against the whole system of publicity. But it was somewhat late in the day to argue against publicity. If they were a body like the Senate of the United States, deliberating on treaties with other States, it might be desirable to deliberate in secret. It might be even desirable to do so as regarded some of their own affairs, but that did not do away with the fact that the system of publicity gave the best guarantee for the maintenance of their liberties and the bringing out of the truth. He was free to admit that publicity might be abused, and therefore those old rights to which allusion had been made were preserved in order to conserve the power to redress abuse, and to be held *in terrorem* over those who committed abuses. Still he thought those rights ought not to be so used as to prevent the publicity which was so desirable, and which was the basis of their system of parliamentary Government. If everything that they did were not made public their functions would cease; the public would not know what they were doing, and would lose all interest in their proceedings. His resolution did not contract the powers of the Committee—they would still possess ample powers to assert their rights. Whatever objections might attach to his motion as an abstract resolution he was ready to accept. It was advantageous that an expression of opinion should be given upon it as an abstract resolution; and even if they did not obtain a majority to give effect to it, he was satisfied that ere long they should be successful.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Thorn, Griffith, Meston, Miles, Garrick, Bailey, Douglas, McLean, Fraser, Hendren, Price, and Grimes.

NOES, 24.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Beor, Morehead, Baynes, Feez, Macrossan, Hamilton, Lalor, Swanwick, W. H. Palmer, Cooper, Archer, O'Sullivan, Weld-Blundell, Kingsford, Thompson, Stevens, Simpson, Low, Amhurst, Hill, and Norton.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

#### MAIL CONTRACT—COMMITTEE.

Upon the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole further to consider the proposed through Steam Service between London and Brisbane.

Question put—That the Chairman leave the chair.

Mr. THORN called attention to the rule which had always been observed by the Colonial Secretary when he was Premier, of not taking any fresh business after 10 o'clock, and thought that the hon. gentleman should adhere to that rule on the present occasion. He was afraid that if the Government insisted upon going on with business they would not make any progress.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he could not understand how the Government could ask them to go into Government business at half-past 10 o'clock on a Thursday evening. He presumed that their object was to crush the members of the Opposition by keeping them there all night. If that was their object it was not the sort of object the Government of a country should have in view. He had been a close observer of the manner in

which Government was carried on in other colonies, and had never known an instance where the Government had forgotten its own dignity or had insisted on going into committee when there was no possibility of their doing any business.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member need not trouble himself about the dignity of the Government, as they were well able to take care of it themselves; nor did they want to be reminded of it by an hon. gentleman who last night deserted his party for the purpose of going home to sleep. With regard to what had been said by the hon. member for Northern Downs about his having made it a rule not to take fresh business after 10 o'clock, he would remind the hon. gentleman that this was no fresh business, as it was now the fifth day that it had been before hon. members, and had, owing to the obstruction of the Opposition, been brought to a block. The question was whether a miserable minority should rule the country, and should, by taking advantage of the forms of the House, block the business of the country. In the face of that, and when the Government and their supporters were prepared to suffer the inconvenience of sitting up all night, they were taxed by the leader of the Opposition with forgetting their dignity. The Government intended to sit right through the week, and, if necessary, the week after, until they finished the business before them.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman stated that the question was whether a miserable minority was to rule the country; but the real question now was whether the Government would insist on keeping hon. members there all night. Then the hon. gentleman taunted them because they did not all choose to stop up all night. Why, what fools they would be to do such a thing. They would make their own arrangements, and whether they chose to be there in the day or in the night was a matter which rested with them alone. The question at issue was not whether a small minority should rule the country, but it was this:—In the first place, the minority who were opposed to the proposed mail contract at the present time and under the present circumstances was not a small minority. Two divisions had been taken by the Government on the question when accidentally several members of the Opposition were absent. In the first place it was given out that the Premier was going to reply when the hon. Speaker was in the chair, and he knew that three or four members had made arrangements to come back to hear that reply; but instead of that a division was taken, the numbers being 24 to 17. That minority was not a contemptible minority. The Government had a majority in the House, but they knew very well the Opposition had a majority in the country. A minority had no right to adopt such tactics except under exceptional circumstances, but at the present time the minority represented the majority of the people. What was the proposition they were asked to pass?—and what were the circumstances under which they were asked to pass it? The Premier last night endeavoured to put the question from his point of view; but they had not yet got the complete proposition of the Government: they did not know what were the precise or the essential terms of the contract. Only last night they had alterations submitted which were afterwards abandoned by the Government. The contract involved an expenditure of £55,000 a-year for eight years, and they were not told where the money was to come from. There was a large deficiency in the revenue at the present time, and the money would have to be raised by additional taxation. Was it honest to pledge the credit of the

country to spend money they had not got? It was monstrous to ask any legislature to commit the country to such an expenditure under such circumstances. If they had a surplus, or reason to expect a surplus, he could understand Government asking Parliament to authorise the expenditure; but when they knew that every farthing would have to be raised by additional taxation on people already overburdened, the proposition was unreasonable. They had no right as honest men, to say nothing as to their position of trustees, to spend the people's money, until they knew how the people were going to contribute that money. When to that was added the nature of the proposition, which was not yet finally completed, there were sufficient reasons for taking the course they had been driven to by the Government. If the contract was a *bonâ fide* contract, then the principal objection could be removed by simply postponing the ratification for a reasonable time. Let them take up the position of honest men in undertaking to spend the money of those they represented. He had pointed out that the Opposition was not a miserable minority. But whether a large minority or a small minority, they would insist on the observance of the ordinary rule with regard to the expenditure of money—viz., that before they voted the money Parliament should be satisfied as to how it was to be raised. That was the real question; and the question they insisted on.

The PREMIER said they had heard the "real question" over and over again from the other side of the House, and now they heard it from the leader of the Opposition. That hon. member had intimated that the Government snatched a victory twice, and how did he prove it? On Wednesday and Thursday, last week, during the whole time they considered no other business but the contract. The matter was taken up again on Tuesday, and they considered nothing else. When everyone who wished to speak had spoken a division was taken, which the hon. gentleman said was taken at an inopportune time, because they (the Opposition) expected him (the Premier) to speak. Did the hon. member put himself down as such an ignoramus as to be ignorant that he (the Premier) could not possibly speak when the matter was brought forward as an Order of the Day? The hon. gentleman knew he (the Premier) was only waiting to get into committee; and he spoke the moment they got into committee. All the fanfaronade about majorities and minorities in the country he took for what it was worth. He had a majority in the House, at all events, and he knew that would be the opinion of the majority of the people of the country on the question six months hence.

Mr. GROOM: Go to the country.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Toowoomba told him to go to the country; but the Government would choose their own time to go to the country. The hon. member (Mr. Griffith) said one reason why he would not accept the contract was because they did not know its essential terms. They had considered the contract, to the exclusion of every other subject, for a fortnight, and now the hon. member, the most acute lawyer in the House, pretended he did not know its provisions. That hon. member had not the courage to introduce an amendment after being invited to do so, but said he could not consider the matter as he did not know the conditions of the contract. But the very fact that that hon. gentleman had not been able to tear the contract to pieces showed that it was well framed. And it was only his (the Premier's) own straightforwardness in admitting there was a fault in one clause that gave the Opposition ground for all that tirade against the Government. The contract was perfect in

all its conditions, with the exception of the clause he had mentioned. He had accepted the amendment of the hon. member for Blackall, because it carried out his own idea exactly. The next objection was that the House had not been told where the money was to come from. But his experience was different from the hon. members with regard to that objection. They should first make up their minds what money was wanted, and then ask the House for the means to raise it. They wanted £35,000, and when they had voted the amount he would come down and ask for means to raise the money. That was not only the proper way, but the practice of every session. They first went into Committee of Supply for a vote, and then went into Committee of Ways and Means for the purpose of raising the money. He had now answered the hon. member—though it was not much use talking if they were to have obstruction. He would be quite satisfied to let the country judge between them.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. member had said that he (Mr. Griffith) must have known that he could not reply in the debate on the contract. The hon. gentleman had been too long in the House to plead an excuse of that kind. He could in the usual way have obtained permission to speak in reply, and it had been understood that he was going to do so. Then he had said that the money was appropriated first, and the House voted afterwards where it was to come from. That was true in theory, but not in practice. They went through the form of voting the money out of the Consolidated Revenue, but the Treasurer had always to tell them where the money was to come from before they dealt with the Estimates. The hon. gentleman wanted him to remain twenty-four hours at a time in that House. He could not stand it, and he was not going to do it to oblige the hon. member. What the arrangements on the Opposition side of the House for managing the business were he was not going to disclose to members opposite.

Mr. BAILEY said that though the contract was ostensibly for the benefit of the northern ports, it contained no provisions by which the trade of those ports would be facilitated. Then, the port of Maryborough should be connected with the mail service by a service of steamboats to Keppel Bay.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition had invited their attention one day last week to a telegram he had from one of the northern ports, and he (the Premier) would disclose what the hon. gentleman could not afford to tell them about the expression of opinion in the North. The hon. gentleman, in his telegram to a gentleman in the North, said—

“We do not oppose Torres Straits mail service, but the preposterous provisions this contract which is not with British-India Company as stated. Read contract for yourself as business man and form your own opinion.”

The hon. gentleman had used the reply to that message for another purpose of his own. It was—

“No copy contract here. Immaterial who contract made with as long as Torres Straits service carried out. This the North will insist on.”

The hon. gentleman had said they did not object to the Torres Straits mail service, but they did object to the contract. He had not told them what was the opinion as a business man of the gentleman to whom he had telegraphed, but he (the Premier) would read the reply—

“Have seen copy of proposed contract and can see nothing objectionable in it. If you succeed in breaking contract consider it will be serious blow northern portion colony.”

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Premier had read something quite different to what he had sent. He had received the telegram that evening in the House. The first part was right enough, but not the latter. As for himself, he had never opposed the service, although he did some years ago. He had never seen the man from whom the answer was sent, but believed he was a person of some sense. He would read another telegram: it was to the Mayor of Charters Towers, from a friend in Brisbane. It read to this effect—

“Violent opposition is offered to the new mail contract. A public meeting will be held here to denounce it. It is evident that the contract is too favourable to northern ports. In the hope of winning support from North, the objection is raised here that only three hours' detention is permitted at Queensland intermediate ports. But what is the term allowed under the existing contract? And as the British-India boats would have a speed of eleven knots, they will not be limited to three hours' stay. Another objection raised was, that the Government must provide steamers at each port, but under the agreement the contractors must make all arrangements for shipping and landing passengers and freight. It would be ruinous to the contractors to run their large vessels empty, so they must provide all necessary facilities, and make rates so low as to secure passengers and cargo from all ports. There should be immediate strong demonstrations in support of the new contract.”

That was the way demonstrations were got up. He never could understand the jealousy between the north and south of Queensland. There might be with Rockhampton, but certainly not with Townsville. A great deal was put down to southern greed and rapacity and to get up a demonstration—that was the way history was made. He should be ashamed to get up a demonstration of that kind.

The PREMIER said he should not have dreamed of using the telegrams, but they were put into his hands, and he was justified in using them. When the leader of the Opposition read the telegram to the effect that there was no copy of the telegram at Townsville, he did not tell them it was an answer to a fishing telegram sent before.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he sent the telegram, and he was not ashamed of it. It was insinuated that he was guilty of something like disingenuousness in not reading the original telegram to make the answer intelligible.

The PREMIER said he had only asserted that he was justified.

Mr. GRIFFITH said when he came to think of it, he would like to know how the telegram came into the Premier's possession, seeing that it had only been put into his hands that afternoon? He had been warned before that the Telegraph Office was not safe. He thought it was a strange coincidence.

The PREMIER thought that was a most unjust insinuation, but to prevent the slur that was attempted to be cast upon the Telegraph Office he would state that it was sent by Peter McManus to Mr. J. M. Macrossan.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL was glad the Premier had given them name and date and all particulars of these telegrams. They did not make use of anonymous telegrams and letters on that side of the House as they did on the other side, or work the wires and cast slanderous imputations, as the leader of the Opposition did upon the administration of the Postal Department.

Mr. AMHURST thought the leader of the Opposition would see that he had been very indiscreet, and it would be a lesson to him never to lose his temper in politics. When he found he was cornered the hon. member tried to cast foul aspersions upon Civil servants, and he (Mr. Amhurst) hoped he would admit that he was sorry for it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it did not occur to him that he was casting imputations on Civil servants. He did not cast imputations; he made direct charges and stuck to them; but if it occurred to hon. members opposite that he had made imputations against the Civil Service he was sorry for it. The circumstances certainly seemed strange, but he understood now where the information came from.

Mr. MOREHEAD was rather pleased with the acerbity of the leader of the Opposition because it kept them awake, and he saw the prospect of a very pleasant evening if that hon. member would stick to his post and make attacks upon Civil servants, charging them with all sorts of villainy, and then apologise and say he never meant anything of the sort. He contended that the whole of this debate and "stonewalling" had arisen from the charges made against the Government by the leader of the Opposition, which amounted to neither more nor less than fraud, robbery, and theft, and which were calculated, as had been pointed out by the Press of the southern colonies, to degrade the Parliament, not only of this colony, but of all the Australian colonies.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not think it desirable to begin the proceedings of to-night with an acrimonious debate, nor by going over again the debate that took place during the first week of the session. The hon. member (Mr. Morehead) had quoted a remark from the Melbourne *Argus* to the effect that he (Mr. Griffith) was the first leading politician in the colonies who had taken such a course. The reason was that he was the first politician whom circumstances had compelled to do so. But who was to blame—the man who did the things or the man who called attention to them? If it was his duty to say what he did the blame was not his. What he said he said in full deliberation, and because he conceived it his duty to say it; and he could not see how, as leader of the Opposition, he could have taken any other course. He should be glad if circumstances showed that he could retract anything he had said; he would most willingly do so.

After some remarks from Mr. HILL and Mr. GARRICK,

The Committee, at 12 o'clock, adjourned for half-an-hour.

On resuming,

Mr. BAILEY condemned the proposed contract as useless either for a mail or carrying service, and argued that if entered into the public would very soon find that they were in the same position in regard to the new company as they had been in with regard to the A.S.N. Company, and that a monopoly would be established which would prove most ruinous to the colony.

Question—That the Chairman do now leave the chair—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 8; Noes, 19.

Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words proposed to be added be so added—put.

Mr. McLEAN said that, judging from the telegrams which had been read at an earlier hour, it was evident that the supporters of the Government had been endeavouring to gain the support of the northern constituencies by representing that the new service would be an eleven-knot and not a nine-knot service; but one of the great objections to the service was that it was only a nine-knot service. The main objection he had to the contract was that no information had been given as to the source from which the money was to come to pay for the service. He moved that the Chairman report progress.

Mr. BAILEY said, as the Ministerial benches were almost deserted, he felt called upon to take upon himself the task of defending Ministers from the diatribes of the last speaker (Mr. McLean). The hon. member recapitulated and enlarged upon the remarks of the hon. member for Logan.

Mr. HENDREN said that, the Opposition benches being occupied by Ministers, he must be excused for addressing the Committee from the Ministerial side of the House. The hon. member then read a number of extracts from newspaper articles with reference to the imports and exports of the colony.

Mr. McLEAN called the Chairman's attention to the fact that the Treasury benches were empty.

The CHAIRMAN said Ministers were present, and it was not necessary that they should be in their places.

Mr. HENDREN continued quoting from newspaper articles.

At half-past 2 o'clock the Committee adjourned for half-an hour.

On resuming,

Mr. HENDREN and Mr. BAILEY continued to address the committee on the subject of the proposed mail service.

Mr. AMHURST resumed his remarks on the provisions of the contract.

Mr. MILES said he was not satisfied with the contract as it stood, and should be glad if the hon. member would give more information.

Question—That the Chairman report progress—put. The Committee divided—Ayes, 9; Noes, 15. Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. MILES moved that the Chairman leave the chair; and, after some further remarks from Mr. Miles and Mr. Hendren,

Mr. DICKSON expressed a hope that the Government would allow the Chairman to leave the chair.

The Committee divided—Ayes, 10; Noes, 13. Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. DICKSON moved that progress be reported; and, at 5 o'clock, the Committee adjourned for half-an-hour.

On resuming,

Mr. RUTLEDGE addressed the committee at considerable length, and defended the system of party government on the ground that it was not desirable to hand over the power to one set of men absolutely. He maintained that the Liberal party of the House most truly represented the feelings of the colony. He acknowledged that what was called the squatting party contained more of the elements of aristocracy than any other party in the colony, but his own sympathies were with the labouring classes. He was glad to think that those classes were, as a rule, in comparatively comfortable circumstances, and considered that the prosperity of the upper classes was dependent on that of the lower.

Mr. GRIMES complained that he was made to say in *Hansard* that the merchants would be most benefited by the contract. Nothing was further from his thoughts. He referred to the pastoral tenants of the Crown, and hoped any increase of taxation would be laid on them. They had good grounds for adopting the course of obstruction they had done. The hon. member then proceeded to read some particulars with respect to stall-feeding cattle, comparing the merits of feeding. He moved that the Chairman report progress.

The Committee divided—Ayes, 5; Noes, 20. Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. MOREHEAD called attention to the absence of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

The CHAIRMAN said he was absent with the leave of the Speaker.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that circumstances might arise requiring the services of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and he should repeat his remarks, if necessary, when the Speaker was in the chair.

Mr. DICKSON thought that there was a principle involved; and, to afford the Chairman an opportunity to refer to the Speaker, he moved that he leave the chair.

Motion withdrawn, and the Committee adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 7 till a-quarter to 10.

Mr. HENDREN (the Committee having resumed) said that as there were members present who were not in attendance when he spoke upon the mail contract last night, he wished to draw attention to a fact which had only come to his knowledge that morning. It seemed to him that the *Courier* of that morning had appropriated some of the ideas. The hon. member proceeded to read an article from the *Courier*, and to comment upon it until 10 o'clock, when,

The SPEAKER took the chair, and the sitting lapsed.