

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 20 February, 1884.

Overcrowding of Theatres—Amendment of the Jury Act—Engineering Association of New South Wales Incorporation Bill—Administration of Justice at Lismore—Financial Statement (Sixth Night's Debate)—Taxation Proposals—Estimates for 1884—Constitution Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—Vacant Seat—Mort Bay Improvement Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

OVERCROWDING OF THEATRES.

Mr. CAMERON asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—Is it his intention to take any steps during the present session to deal with the subject of the overcrowding of theatres and other places of public resort?

Mr. STUART answered,—It will not be possible for the Government to determine upon any fixed plan until the final report of the royal commission has been received. Some delay has taken place in the preparation of that report, and I have urged that it be placed before us as soon as possible.

AMENDMENT OF THE JURY ACT.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY (*without notice*),—Has his attention been directed to the remarks of the Chief Justice in dealing with the application for a new trial in the case of *Horwitz versus Horwitz*? If so, is it the intention of the Government to introduce a bill to amend the Jury Act in accordance with the suggestion of the Chief Justice?

Mr. STUART answered,—Instructions have been given to the Parliamentary Draftsman to prepare a bill for the amendment of the Jury Act in several particulars. I hope to be able to submit the bill to the House in the course of a few days.

ENGINEERING ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INCORPORATION BILL.

Bill presented (by Mr. POOLE), and read the first time.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AT LISMORE.

Mr. STUART: On the 24th of last month the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Abigail) brought under the notice of the House a charge made by a

man named Currie against certain justices of the peace at Lismore. The charge was a most serious one, as it was alleged that there was an interference with the due course of justice; and I stated that I would take immediate steps to obtain a report on the subject, and to convey the information to the House as soon as I received it. I have received the following statement from the magistrates:—

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 84,495, together with inclosures, and beg to report thereon as follows:—

Before going into the court-room on the 2nd January, on looking over the list of cases set down for hearing the chairman of the bench drew attention to the fact of one having been entered at the suit of John Currie, and remarked that he could not sit in the case. Upon this a short consultation followed, when it was found that each of the magistrates present was equally averse to hearing it. It was therefore decided to continue the case to the next court day, when it might be heard by the police magistrate. When the case was first called over neither party to the suit was present; but instead of being struck out it was allowed to stand on till a later hour of the day. On the second occasion Mr. Currie appeared, and was informed in a proper and becoming manner of the unanimous decision of the bench, and that his case would be continued to the next sitting of the court.

On the 14th January Mr. Currie withdrew his case from the small debts court, and has not since then re-entered it, nor has he entered it in the district court now being holden at Lismore. The defendant in the case (William McQuilty) is an old resident of over twenty years, owning farms in the vicinity of Lismore, and in no sense likely to leave, so that no possible injustice could have resulted to Currie from our declining to sit on his case.

Before saying anything of the document itself of which we complain, and the circumstances connected with it, we beg to state that each person had special reasons for declining to sit on any case in which John Currie was concerned. One held an unsatisfied Supreme Court execution against him; two had given evidence for the defence in a Supreme Court action (not finally decided) in which he was plaintiff, the municipal district of Lismore being defendant; all three had been members of the council, still advocate its cause, and were in a manner parties to the alleged damage, for which the suit Currie *versus* municipal district of Lismore had been instituted, and in consequence the subject of much virulent abuse in the local press and at public meetings for years past by the said John Currie. Under such circumstances we deemed it improper to sit at all. If this course should be thought wrong, either in principle or practice, we shall be glad to be better advised.

As I intend to have the document printed I need not detain the House by reading the next two or three pages of it, in which

the magistrates point out that the petition against them was signed entirely by persons who had been brought before them for improper conduct.

MR. ABIGAIL: Do the magistrates say that Mr. Stocks, who was the presiding magistrate, signed the petition?

MR. STUART: No. I will read the concluding part of the report.

Should John Currie and those who joined with him in signing the document got up by these parties have any valid grievances against the bench of magistrates at Lismore, or be aware of anything which ought to be inquired into in regard to any of those composing the bench, by all means let the inquiry be made, notwithstanding that we are of opinion that to the present we have done our duty, without fear, favour, affection, or ill-will to any one.

As the case excited a good deal of comment in the House at the time when it was mentioned by the honorable member for West Sydney, I thought that it was desirable to acquaint honorable members with the nature of the report at the earliest possible moment. I think that after hearing the report read honorable members will come to the conclusion that there were valid reasons for the action of the magistrates.

MR. A. G. TAYLOR: No!

MR. ABIGAIL: I should like to know whether John Stocks, who presided on the occasion, is identical with a magistrate who was once dismissed, and who on one occasion issued a warrant for the arrest of a person, and subsequently went after the policeman who had charge of it and struck out his name.

MR. STUART: I never heard of that until now. The magistrate whose name is attached to the report is named James Stocks, not John Stocks.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

SIXTH NIGHT'S DEBATE.

MR. DIBBS: I beg to move:

That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of Ways and Means.

I desire to take advantage of this motion to make a ministerial statement respecting the financial policy of the Government.

MR. GARRETT: Before the honorable member proceeds I should like to take the Speaker's ruling whether, on this motion, the honorable member can make a speech of the character which he indicates. I wish to know whether the proper place

for the honorable member to make the statement is not in Committee. If this is to be a supplementary financial statement, I contend that it ought to be made in Committee of Ways and Means. In the eighth edition of "May," pages 618, 619, it is stated:

As it is the province of the Committee of Ways and Means to originate all taxes for the service of the year, it is in that Committee that the Chancellor of the Exchequer usually develops his views of the resources of the country, communicates his calculations of the probable income and expenditure, and declares whether the burdens upon the people are to be increased or diminished. This statement, familiarly known as "the budget," is regarded with greater interest, perhaps, than any other speech throughout the session. The Chancellor of the Exchequer concludes by proposing resolutions for the adoption of the Committee; which, when afterwards reported to the House, form the groundwork of bills for accomplishing the financial objects proposed by the Minister. Financial statements, however, have not invariably been made in the Committee of Ways and Means. On the 3rd December, 1852, and again on the 13th February, 1857, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his statement in Committee of Supply, before the usual votes for the service of the year had been taken. In 1823, the budget was brought forward in the Committee on the Exchequer Bills Bill. In 1860 it was introduced in a committee on the customs acts. In 1845 and 1848 also the budgets, though brought forward in Committee of Ways and Means, were presented in anticipation of the customary votes in the Committee of Supply.

The exceptions stated go to prove the rule that anything approaching a financial statement must be made in the Committee of Ways and Means. The convenience of this must be manifest. The resolutions which may be proposed may embrace a very wide range of subjects; there may be a long debate in the House, but statements made by the Treasurer in the House cannot be referred to in Committee of Ways and Means. What the Treasurer ought to have done in the first instance was to conclude his statement by submitting a resolution. What has been done? We have had a statement from the Treasurer as to what he intended to propose, or thought he was going to propose, and on that mere expression of opinion we have had duties levied in direct contradiction of the rule and practice in Great Britain, as laid down in "May." No duties are there allowed to be levied through the customs except after a resolution of Committee of Ways and Means has been reported, never has the Chancellor of the Exchequer

Sixth night.

made a financial statement without submitting resolutions embodying his policy. Mr. Speaker will find it laid down in the latest as well as in the older edition of "May" that it is not legal or constitutional to levy duties at the customs upon the mere intimation of the Treasurer that it is intended at a future time to submit resolutions embodying the charges. May goes so far as to state that the resolutions must be reported to the House by the Committee of Ways and Means before the customs can be put into operation, and even when that is done an act of indemnity will be required to indemnify the Government for imposing duties without the authority of an act of Parliament duly passed by both houses, and sanctioned by the Crown. Upon a shadowy and unsubstantial statement made by the Treasurer, however, the customs have been set to work to illegally extract a number of novel, and what some persons might call unnecessary, taxes from the people. My object in calling attention to these two points is to enable us now that we are making a fresh start in this matter of finance to get upon the right track. With regard to the second point, I am quite aware that it has not invariably been our practice to wait for the report of a resolution before the customs officers are set in operation; but although this has not been our invariable practice I draw Mr. Speaker's attention to the rule laid down in "May." As to the point regarding the making of a statement in Committee of Ways and Means, I have not the slightest doubt that I am perfectly right. It is a matter which does not at this stage concern the House. The honorable gentleman can make a ministerial statement as to the proposed mode of carrying on the public business, but that does not relate to this order of the day. I am quite aware that upon this particular order an honorable member may submit a motion expressing an opinion upon any part of the policy of the Government, or seeking for the redress of a grievance the subject matter of which may not relate to Ways and Means; but I do not suppose that the Colonial Treasurer rises for the purpose of making a motion of that sort. I understood him in the few words which he uttered to say that he would state what course the Government intend to take as

[*Mr. Garrett.*

to the question of Ways and Means; and if that is the honorable gentleman's intention I submit that, for the convenience of honorable members and the country, the statement ought to be made in Committee, and that it should be concluded by the submission of the proposals of the Government in the form of a resolution.

Mr. DIBBS: I can quite understand that the honorable member who has raised this technical objection —

Mr. GARRETT. It is not a purely technical objection; it is a constitutional objection!

Mr. DIBBS: Then we will call it a constitutional and technical objection. I am quite sure, I say, that the honorable member in raising this point has acted purely with a desire to forward the interests of the Government; but I think precedents will be found upon the records of this House where financial statements have been made upon the motion "that Mr. Speaker do leave the chair." I am quite prepared to bow to Mr. Speaker's ruling, however, independently of the question whether I can or cannot make a ministerial statement. What I announced was that I intended to make a ministerial statement, and that in order that I might not be accused of dealing unfairly with honorable members I proposed in making that statement to take advantage of this motion to go into Committee of Ways and Means. I do not propose at this stage to argue the question whether the Government have acted illegally in the imposition of duties. I know very well that even when the resolutions are reported from the Committee it is illegal to collect duties at the Custom-house until they have been embodied in legislation; but that has been done before. Recently it has been done again, and we must obtain an indemnity from Parliament for an act, which for the time is illegal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Upon the point of order I may remind the House that

a member who seeks to increase taxation ought, if he intends to conclude with a motion, to move for a Committee of the Whole House.

I understand that the Treasurer rose to make a statement of ministerial intentions with regard to Ways and Means; and it appears to me that he is strictly in order in making such a statement upon this motion, although he can make specific proposals for

an increase of taxation only in Committee of Ways and Means. As a matter of fact, it has not always been the practice—although it has been the usual practice—of the House of Commons and of this House that financial statements or supplementary financial statements are made in Committee of Ways and Means. There is nothing to preclude a ministerial statement upon a motion to enable the House to go into Committee of Ways and Means. As to the levying of taxation before that sanction which is accorded by the vote of the House can be obtained, it is not for me to consider the legality of levying taxation under these circumstances. Its legality is a question between the subject and the Crown, and the responsibility for it can be dealt with here as a question between the House and ministers, with which, however, in either case, I have nothing whatever to do.

MR. GARRETT: My intention was to draw Mr. Speaker's attention to the practice adopted in the House of Commons as to allowing ministers to collect duties which have not been approved of by Parliament. I know that what has been done is not legal; but I contend that the parliamentary practice in regard to the collection of duties which have not been legally authorised has not been followed in this case.

MR. SPEAKER: The collection of duties is not a question of parliamentary practice. It is a course adopted by ministers as to which their conduct is subject to review by this House. It would be utterly improper for the Chair to express an opinion about any such act; it is a question for the House to decide.

MR. CAMERON said that if the Colonial Treasurer made a ministerial statement, as he intended to do, it would be in his discretion to elaborate it as much as he liked, and he might make a supplementary financial statement. He would not grumble at that; but he desired to ask whether it would be competent for honorable members to discuss that statement, it having been made in the whole House.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand that the honorable member is making his statement on the motion that I do now leave the chair in order that a debate may be taken in the House on what he has to say. It will be perfectly competent for

any honorable member to discuss the whole range of the subject upon the motion with which he will conclude.

MR. DIBBS: I had no object in view in asking the House to grant me its indulgence but to take the course which I am now taking, because I am prepared to admit that there is more latitude and more convenience to honorable members to discuss questions of this sort in Committee; but it is necessary for me in the proposals I shall have to make in Committee, and to give effect to what I shall now state, to have certain messages from his Excellency the Governor, which it is not possible for me to obtain before 7 o'clock.

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: And you mean to waste our time until then?

MR. DIBBS: I would not attempt to waste the honorable member's time. He is quite an adept at that himself.

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: The honorable member should not state what is untrue!

MR. DIBBS: As usual, the honorable member is very disorderly. You have decided that I am in order, Mr. Speaker, and the course which I am pursuing has already been taken in this House. A financial statement has been made on a motion for the Speaker to leave the chair. This having been done before, and having been held to be in order, I presume that it can be done now.

MR. GARRETT: No proposal was made then!

MR. DIBBS: The honorable member does not know what proposal I am going to make. By the way that the honorable member intercepted me almost before I opened my mouth on the motion to go into Committee he evidently has some idea of what I am going to propose.

MR. GARRETT: I do not think you know yourself what you are going to do!

MR. DIBBS: In the division which took place last week on the motion of the honorable member for Mudgee —

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: There was no division!

MR. DIBBS: I have an awkward task to perform, and I must beg of you to protect me, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask the honorable member not to interrupt. It is very disorderly.

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: There was no division!

Sixth night.

Mr. SPEAKER: When the financial policy is being discussed it has always been a matter of courtesy to give a fair hearing to the Treasurer.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: There was no division!

Mr. DIBBS: I repeat again that after the division of last Thursday night, for there was a division —

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: No!

Mr. DIBBS: It became necessary and desirable that the Government should reconsider the proposals which they had made to the House. That division defeated an attempt made on the part of the Opposition.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: There was no division!

Mr. DIBBS: The honorable member will not provoke me to lose my temper.

Mr. CAMERON: There was a division on a motion for adjournment, and there is no need to interrupt about it!

Mr. DIBBS: I repeat that that division defeated an attempt on the part of the Opposition to remove the present Administration from power. The object of that motion intercepting supply was clearly —

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: —

Mr. DIBBS: I will not proceed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I need not suggest to an honorable member of the parliamentary experience of the honorable member for Mudgee that it has always been the practice of the House, when the intentions of the Government respecting taxation are being divulged, to accord to the advisers of the Crown every courtesy in the discharge of that duty. If the honorable member for Mudgee is at variance in opinion with the honorable member who is addressing the House, there is one, and only one, orderly course for him to pursue—that is, to express his variance when his turn to speak comes.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: The usual practice is to interject in order to correct a misstatement!

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the honorable member that although it has been permitted by courtesy to interject to correct a misstatement that permission is altogether an indulgence, and is a relaxation of the rules of the House. If these interjections are frequent and reiterated, there can be no excuse for them.

[Mr. Dibbs.

Mr. DIBBS: The practical result of the amendment moved on the motion that Mr. Speaker should leave the chair was a vote of confidence in the Government. Among the best supporters of the Government there is and there was a strong and a manifest opposition to the proposed property-tax. The Opposition, of course, gave us clearly to understand that they were opposed to the property-tax, and indeed to any form of taxation whatever. Among our own friends and supporters also there was the same marked expression—which we could not shut our eyes to—that the property-tax was repugnant to the House.

Mr. BUCHANAN: And to the country!

Mr. DIBBS: And to some extent to the country. I do not shut my eyes to the fact, however, that the day is not far distant when these taxes will have to be popular. However, there were sufficient indications given by honorable members—those who were supporting the Government and those who were opposing the Government—to satisfy us as a government, and to satisfy me in particular, that any attempt to proceed with the proposed property-tax would lead to a very large waste of time, and that in the end we should probably be no further ahead, and that I should probably be compelled, after a great waste of time, to come down to the House with further taxation proposals. The proposed property-tax being unpopular, probably an income-tax will be equally unpopular.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear; more so!

Mr. DIBBS: I have no doubt that the income-tax will be very unpopular with the junior member for Mudgee, because he makes no secret of the fact that to avoid the property-tax he has parted with his property. However, in making my financial statement I condemned an income-tax, and I condemn it now for the same reasons for which I condemned it on that occasion. It is a most inquisitorial tax, involving heavy expense in collection; and what would lead to great difficulty in collecting it would be the means which would be resorted to for the purpose of escaping it. One great argument against it, and one which I specially endeavoured to explain in making my financial statement, is that those who are in receipt of large incomes from estates and who receive all the advantages arising from the

expenses of government would escape the payment of their fair share under an income-tax.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : We do not want either !

Mr. DIBBS : I will come to that presently ; but I do not arrive at the conclusion that we shall not require taxation by the course which I propose to take, which is so diametrically opposite to that which the honorable member has for years advocated. The Colonial Secretary clearly pointed out what was the custom of the House of Commons, which we look to as some guide in the conduct of our business, and there the refusal of the House to agree to the Government's financial proposals is not looked upon as implying any censure of the Government. I feel justified, therefore, in assuming that the conclusion arrived at by the House last Thursday was practically a vote of confidence in the Government as it now stands, although there was a clear disapproval of the financial proposals as made. In dealing with financial proposals, and with the incidence of taxation in connection with those financial proposals, the House of Commons has reserved to itself the full and perfect right to deal with them independently of ministers.

Mr. GARRETT : Certainly not !

Mr. DIBBS : Ministers are not relieved of their direct responsibility, I admit ; but their responsibility has been held times out of number not to be of that character which involves want of confidence. Besides, the popular theory held both in England and here is that the right of taxation belongs to the people themselves through their representatives, equally with the control which this House or the House of Commons, as the case may be, holds over the public purse-strings. Why do we submit the Estimates of Expenditure in detail for every shilling to be scrutinised before it is voted if it is not because the Commons have reserved to themselves the right to deal with the money of the state ? And upon the same ground, according to the authorities before quoted, the right of the people to tax themselves through their representatives is held to be not so much a party question but a question involving the rights and the powers of the House as a whole. When I made the financial statement towards the end of last month

the propositions I put forward were based upon a belief that the House would sanction the full amount of the expenditure proposed in the Estimates. We carefully considered whether we should adopt a rigorous system of retrenchment or whether we should take the constitutional course of asking the representatives of the people, or the people themselves, to give us such a supply of money by taxation as would enable us to carry on the business of the country as we had done heretofore. Further revenue became necessary, and we asked for further taxation in order that we might obtain that revenue, because we were desirous of maintaining the public service, and continuing the progress of the colony as I then indicated. We proposed a method by which the revenue required could have been raised ; but the House, as I have said, manifestly disapproved of it, and we were then left with a variety of expedients to choose from. To continue the expenditure on the scale on which it has hitherto gone on would necessitate the raising of nothing short of an additional sum of £750,000. I proposed to raise a million of money, so that at the end of the present year we should have a surplus of something like a quarter of a million. It would have been easy for us to commence a system of retrenchment, to cut down salaries, to stop public works, and thereby bring our expenditure within our income. It would have been easy for us to ask the House to sanction the sale of a million acres of land ; but the House has already declared against such an expedient, and it was not in accordance with our principles to propose it. Or we could, by a simple resolution of a few lines, have asked the House to agree to a system of *ad valorem* duties.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : And have been kicked out of office !

Mr. DIBBS : And deservedly if we had proposed anything of the kind ; but that is not the course we intend to take. Of course, as we are all aware, whenever a government is in need of revenue various theorists upon taxation come forward with suggestions as to the means by which the revenue can be obtained, and, among other modes, the system of *ad valorem* duties is advocated. There are many honorable members sitting on the benches opposite to me who would

Sixth night.

jump at the chance, if they had it, of levying *ad valorem* duties to-morrow, conscientiously believing that in so doing they would further the interests of the country, by giving encouragement to native industries.

MR. CAMERON: They are on the other side of the House!

MR. DIBBS: The honorable gentleman has one on his right, I think. One word more before leaving the subject of *ad valorem* duties. One honorable gentleman in his speech on the financial statement intimated that he intended to propose that certain articles of luxury should be taxed through the customs, and that then an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. should be levied upon all imports. That *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. would be the means certainly of raising all the revenue required to meet the wants of the Government. But what would be the effect of such a duty? I quote the argument of a member of a deputation which was introduced to me by the honorable member for West Sydney, Mr. Abigail. The gentleman said, "Put a tax of 5 or 10 per cent. on buggies, and also tax every other article that comes into the colony, and you will then not only get all the money you want but you will advance the buggy industry by enabling buggies to be made in the colony." The gentleman did not see that if the buggies were made in the colony the purchasers would have to pay a higher price to the extent of the 10 per cent. on them as well, nor did he seem to know that if the effect of the duty would be to cause buggies to be made in the colony and to keep out imported buggies there would be no revenue.

MR. ABIGAIL: You are not giving a correct version of what occurred!

MR. DIBBS: I would warn ministers who receive deputations introduced by the honorable member for West Sydney that they will find perversions made of their statements, even if they are not personally insulted. But I ask, again, what will become of the revenue if the goods are manufactured in the colony?

MR. VAUGHN: You can get it from the raw material!

MR. DIBBS: A duty upon raw material I understand to be dead against the protectionist theory. I always understood the protectionists to advocate the free

[Mr. Dibbs.

admission of the raw material and the taxing of the manufactured commodity. It was not long before I discovered that the property-tax and other taxes which I proposed as a fair and just accompaniment to the proposed extra tax on tea, was unacceptable to the House. I saw, however, that a large majority of honorable members were of opinion that the Government ought to be allowed to remain in office for the purpose of dealing with the land question, and this feeling affords some solace to me for whatever sacrifices I am making and for a certain humiliation which I must feel in having to withdraw my proposals. The views which I expressed when I made my financial statement I still hold, despite everything said against them here or at public meetings. Of course, I may be playing into the hands of honorable members opposite. I have no doubt that I shall be taunted to a considerable extent, and be told that there is no merit in bringing forward a bold set of propositions and then withdrawing them. I anticipate this taunt by saying that whatever sacrifice of a political character I may make I believe that the course which I have taken in remaining at my post is not only an act of loyalty to my colleagues but also to the people. I have already pointed out that if we proposed to impose *ad valorem* duties, or to make up the deficiency by selling land, we should be deserving of censure; these are principles which we could not support. After having said so much honorable members will, no doubt, be quite prepared to hear in what direction the Government have decided to go. One of the proposals which I am prepared to abandon is that relating to the revision of the tariff. I still hold the opinion that whenever the question of fiscal reform comes before us it is a desirable time to attempt, if possible, to assimilate our tariff as nearly as possible to that of England. I say that the protectionists would have gained by the removal from the tariff of twenty articles; but there is a sufficiently clear indication all around that it is the opinion of the House that this is not the proper time to deal with the tariff. I think that it is; I hold that there could not be a more fitting time to withdraw from our tariff trifling articles which produce a very small amount of revenue, the collection of which involves a large amount

of trouble. As, however, it is not the opinion of the House that these articles should be withdrawn from the tariff I suppose that I must accept with the best grace possible the revenue which will come to the Treasury from this source. I hope that I may yet have the opportunity to give effect to my free trade ideas. There is no sacrifice of principle whatever on my part in the withdrawal of this part of my proposals; I merely suspend for the time being the carrying out of a plan which has always been dear to me. I have informed the House that we intend to withdraw the proposal to put an increased duty on tea.

Mr. LOUGHNAN: A great mistake!

Mr. DIBBS: As we are compelled to abandon the property-tax by which those who have means and who derive the greatest advantage from the state expenditure would have been compelled to contribute fairly towards meeting that expenditure, we could not consistently retain the proposal to levy an extra tax on tea, which would affect the poorer classes as much as the wealthy. I say that no fairer tax than 6d. per lb. on tea could be imposed, because the burden of it would be distributed on all classes of the community.

Mr. CAMERON: People of means do not use tea to the same extent as poor people!

Mr. DIBBS: I say that they use it to a larger extent, because their establishments are larger than those of poor people.

Mr. McELHONE: The servants pay for the tea, not the masters!

Mr. DIBBS: It would require a good deal of explanation to support that theory. We know perfectly well that domestic servants nowadays are allowed to use a liberal amount of tea; there is no such thing now as there was in the olden days of weighing out for servants a certain amount of black sugar and green tea. When you engage a domestic servant now you do not make any stipulation as to the amount of tea which is to be consumed, and the wages are not regulated accordingly. The arrangement under which domestic servants are engaged is very much the same as in the case of seamen. The old-fashioned ship's articles used to provide for a certain allowance of tea, beef, sugar, bread, &c.; but now the allowance is sufficient without waste. Domestic servants are treated very liberally in this respect, to say nothing of the fair rate of wages which they receive.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: Why did you not think about all these things before!

Mr. DIBBS: I have told the honorable member that I have not changed my views one iota. If the House had agreed to a fair tax on property, I should have stood by the proposed extra tax on tea as an equivalent. There is another and very strong reason why the Government have decided not to occupy the time of honorable members this session in the discussion of a property-tax. If we were to proceed with any proposal of the kind, the chances are that a considerable amount of time would be taken up in the discussion of it, and thus the object for which this Parliament was called together—that of dealing with the question of land reform—might be frustrated, and we might lay ourselves open to the charge of not utilising time to the best advantage.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: Why did you not say that before?

Mr. DIBBS: I say it now, and I intend to say it again and again. I think that with regard to the question of finance the country has been practically brought to its senses. The proposal to ask those who never before paid anything towards the expense of the government of the country to do so has created considerable warmth of feeling from one end of the country to the other, and practically the thin end of the wedge of what must come sooner or later has been inserted. The seeds for the imposition of a property-tax have been sown. The question will be one of the most important which will be put to candidates at future elections.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR: Why not test the country on it now?

Mr. DIBBS: We have other objects in view; at present the country is more deeply interested in the land question than in any other. If the Land Bill becomes law, and I occupy the position which I now hold, as far as my vote goes I shall have no objection to appeal to the country as to whether a fair tax on property ought or ought not to be imposed. I repeat again that the masses of the people hitherto have paid the bulk of the taxation of the country; they have borne an unfair share of the burden, and future candidates will have to say whether they are prepared to approve of the distribution of these burdens, which are increasing every year.

Sixth night.

Mr. BUCHANAN : Property is murdered by municipal rates already !

Mr. DIBBS : The honorable and learned member shows where the shoe pinches. After all, municipal rates cannot be regarded as taxation ; they represent payment for services rendered. We intend to withdraw the proposed tax on property, and not to bring forward another scheme for the taxation of property at the present stage of our existence. We may have to do so before another year expires. So that property may be called upon to pay a share of the burdens of taxation we intend this session to bring forward and to pass if possible—it will not be our fault if it is not passed—a local government bill, under which property-owners will be compelled to contribute towards the cost of local improvements. Therefore, in withdrawing our property-tax proposals at the present time, and in stating to the House what we intend to do to meet the necessary expenditure, I do so with the assurance that if we cannot now obtain a property-tax we shall ask the House before the session is over to give us a local government bill, under which property will be taxed. As we have practically abandoned the taxation proposals by which we expected to obtain a million of money, honorable members will look forward with interest to that part of my statement which will show how the expenses of Government are in the meantime to be met. Suppose a bank manager is waited upon by a customer, who asks the manager to permit him to overdraw his account, and to make an advance to the extent of £750,000 for certain necessary public works which will be a source of profit to the customer. If the bank manager gives a refusal, it becomes the duty of the customer to see whether he cannot live upon the amount of money otherwise available. That is precisely the position of the Government to-day ; that is precisely the position in which they stand with regard to this House. We have asked for means to carry on the government as we believe it ought to be carried on. We have proposed to carry on the expenditure upon the lines set, not by this but by previous governments—to carry on the same scale of expenditure in regard to roads and bridges and other public works of that character which are necessary for the advancement of the

[Mr. Dibbs.

colony. We submitted our proposals to the House in this shape, coupled with proposals by means of which the revenue necessary to meet the expenditure was to be raised. The House has refused to grant the requisite income, and it becomes a most necessary thing for us, at this juncture of affairs, to apply that rule which I have just laid down in regard to the customer of the bank, and to bring our expenditure down to the amount of income of which we are certain. Honorable members will be aware on reflection—although they may not see to-day that it is so—that we cannot withdraw a public expenditure of £750,000 without inflicting a certain amount of hardship. I am not going to raise a claptrap cry ; I am not going to appeal to the working-classes. But we desire to keep the ball moving ; we desire to keep labour employed ; and to distribute £750,000 among the infinite number of channels through which the public expenditure of this country habitually passes before it goes finally into the hands of those who accumulate wealth. The money, for instance, passes through the hands of the shop-keeper, the mechanic, and the labourer. They each obtain their fair share of the expenditure, and the withdrawal of £750,000 is really a very serious matter. It is a matter which does not directly concern the members of this House, but it is of very serious consequence to their constituents. We are put into a corner, and I hope that the lesson which the public will derive from it will have the effect of inducing them to limit their demands upon the Government—that we shall not have so many bridges to build, and so many other public works to erect. I hope that the lesson, which, indeed, we are now learning, following as it does upon the seeds of the property-tax, which are already sown—that the lesson deducible from the retrenchment which is now forced upon the Government will be the means of sobering the constituencies, leading them to make a reduced demand for an expenditure upon public works. If honorable members can remember what I said in my financial statement regarding the public accounts for the year, and will carry the figures on, I will give them some additional figures which they can work out in a short practical way. Honorable members will recollect that the surplus at

the close of the year as formerly estimated was £246,118 14s. To this amount honorable members must add the items of additional taxation which I will give them. I estimate that I shall receive from spirits an additional revenue of £20,000; from wines, £5,000; from opium, £10,000. We shall receive £15,000 more from specific duties in the ordinary and natural increase of trade; and from the increased duty on tobacco and cigars, which I shall ask the House to sanction, I estimate that we shall receive £120,000. In the form of customs duties, then, we shall receive £170,000 more than we received last year. We propose to make a reduction in the Estimates for 1884 of £379,910. The amount of appropriations out of surplus revenue estimated as not likely to be required in 1884 is £342,000. These amounts, with an additional saving of £50,000 estimated on the appropriations of 1882, which it has been ascertained will not be required, will give us a total of £1,188,028 14s.

Mr. CAMERON: What about the immigration vote?

Mr. DIBBS: While speaking I have been expecting to receive a printed schedule of the proposed reductions in the Estimates; but I will read the figures as far as possible from the manuscript before me. I have said that the total reduction in the Estimates for 1884 will amount to £379,910. We propose in the first instance to effect a saving of £4,164 upon the training-ship *Wolverene*, which will be laid up in ordinary. We propose that the ship shall remain in that position until better times come or until some scheme whereby the ship may be more effectively used can be devised. Great and valuable as is the gift of the vessel on the part of the imperial authorities, it may be that the Government will find it expedient to sell her. We propose, however, that the vessel shall be kept in a proper state of efficiency. We have incurred two months' expenditure at the rate of £8,000 or £9,000 a year, and the working staff cannot be dismissed without due notice; but making allowance for all these charges, we shall be able to effect a saving of £4,164. The next item upon which we shall effect a saving is one about which the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Cameron)

has troubled himself a great deal, and about which I should like to say a few words. We propose to reduce the immigration vote by £75,000.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DIBBS: I have joy in front of me and grief behind me. To me it is a matter for regret that we are compelled to take one penny off this item; but bearing in mind that there is an indisposition on the part of the owners of property to contribute to the expenses of government, and that they gain more largely by the immigration vote than do other classes of the community, I say that in view of their unwillingness to contribute their fair share of taxation they must be prepared to accept this reduction in the immigration vote. I hope that when we obtain the property-tax of the future some portion of its proceeds, together with a portion of the proceeds from the sale of land, will be devoted to keeping up a healthy stream of immigration to these shores. We propose to take off from charitable allowances £26,545, and from two lines of miscellaneous votes—I cannot now say precisely what they are—£9,400 and £5,000, respectively. The expenditure in the Department of Public Instruction will be reduced by £41,120; grants in aid by £5,547; miscellaneous votes in the Department of Lands by £8,750; public works—harbours and rivers—by £14,650; public works—colonial architect—by £51,600; roads and bridges by £104,134. In dealing with this item we have endeavoured to spread the expenditure fairly over the country, providing for those works which are absolutely necessary and omitting works which may without great inconvenience stand over until the close of the year. In the Department of Mines we shall make a saving of £4,000; and on the subsidies towards the pastures and stock protection acts, &c., there will be a reduction of £30,000. If honorable members will bear with me a short time, I will give the figures. The following are the appropriations out of the surplus revenue estimated as not likely to be required in the year 1884:—Free Public Library, £70,000; new law courts, £165,000; defences of the coast, £10,000; warlike stores, £10,000; improving and clearing the Murrumbidgee, £5,000; towards the reclamation of White Bay, £3,000; reformatory for boys, £12,000;

Sixth night.

light-house, Jervis Bay, £20,000; public buildings, Dubbo, £10,000; lock hospital, £6,000; gaol, Wagga Wagga, £10,000; residence for his Excellency the Governor, £8,000; bridge at Taemas, over Murrumbidgee, £3,000; Sydney University, additional buildings, £10,000—total, £342,000. That makes a total from the two estimates of £712,000 in round numbers.

Mr. McELHONE: Is there anything off the railway vote?

Mr. DIBBS: That is annually increasing, not only as regards expenditure but also as regards revenue, and it is necessary to keep up the expenditure if we are to obtain revenue. With respect to the tobacco duties, I propose to ask the House to consent to an excise duty of 1s. per lb. upon tobacco manufactured in the colony. We shall charge 1s. per lb., as hitherto, on all foreign leaf that enters the manufactory for manufacturing into tobacco, in bond, charging a duty of 1s. per lb. on all tobacco the output from the factories; but upon foreign leaf going from bond or from ship's side, for home consumption, or for the manufacture into cigars and cigarettes, a duty of 3s. per lb. But cigar manufacturers will be permitted to manufacture in bond, paying on the foreign leaf inwards 1s. per lb., and an excise duty outwards of 2s. 6d. per lb. We propose to increase the duty on cigars from 5s. to 6s. The differential duty on manufactured tobacco will be 3s. instead of 2s. 6d. In that way we shall please the tobacco manufacturers. I have endeavoured to cut down the differential rate to 6d. or 9d. per lb.; but I have met with a large amount of hostility. The strongest argument against my first proposal is the fact that in Victoria the differential rate which I now propose exists. We might have been placing the local manufacturers at a disadvantage, and I am not sure that we should not have been jeopardising a large industry. We shall get over £120,000 additional revenue from a very slight tax on the tobacco consumer, and we can afford to be generous, as we get rid of the opposition of the manufacturers. There is no doubt that from one-half to two-thirds of colonial leaf is used in the manufacture of tobacco in the colony. In some cases pure American leaf is used, but that is sold only at a very high price, and is used here for competing with the finer

[Mr. Dibbs.

kinds of tobacco manufactured in America. A large proportion, nine-tenths of the tobacco consumed in the colony, now consists of colonial leaf, and by imposing a differential duty of 3s. per lb. we shall avoid any outcry from the local manufacturer on the ground that injury will be done to his interests. There will be no lessening of the growth of tobacco; and there will be a healthy competition amongst the manufacturers themselves, which will check the realisation of such large fortunes as they have made in the past by keeping down the price to the consumer. The accounts for the year 1884, under the proposals which I have just explained, will be as follows:—Income from taxation, including customs, £2,111,400; land sales and annual revenue from land, £1,532,450; receipts from services rendered, £2,923,550; general miscellaneous receipts, £249,300; making a total of £6,816,700. The expenditure on the scale which I have just given will be: for general services, £5,999,751; provided by Constitution and colonial acts, £46,485; special appropriations—interest on borrowed money,—£1,286,676; giving a total of £7,332,912, less a sum chargeable on the loan vote of £54,374, showing a total expenditure for the year of £7,278,538. Deducting the estimated expenditure from the total revenue there will be an estimated surplus at the end of the year of £188,028. As soon as I obtain the message from his Excellency the Governor I will lay the new Estimates on the table, and withdraw the old ones. I do not know of any points that I have left untouched; but if there are any I shall be happy to explain them in Committee. I am slightly modifying the proposal with regard to the duty on spirits, because a very large quantity of spirits, notably Hennessy's and Martel's brandy, can only be obtained direct from the manufacturers at about 12 or 13 per cent. under-proof. It is not the fault of the importers; they cannot get it at proof. Martel and Hennessy have a standard as to strength, which they will not depart from. I propose to deal with spirits under-proof in this way: the duty on spirits of all kinds imported into the colony, the strength of which can be ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer, will be 12s. per proof gallon. No allowance will be made for the under-proof of any spirits of a less hydrometer strength

than 16·5 under-proof. The consumer will consequently obtain a wholesome liquor and liquor of a fair quality as regards strength. As regards case spirits reputed contents, 2 gallons and under will be charged as 2 gallons; over 2 gallons and not exceeding 3, as 3 gallons; over 3 and not exceeding 4, as 4 gallons. For several weeks past I have been the subject of a great deal of abuse and misrepresentation with regard to the proposals which I have made; but I believe that those proposals have been just and equitable, and although I change them now for the reasons I have stated, I am as firmly convinced as I ever was in my life that those proposals were sound. The day is not far distant when those proposals, almost in the form in which I have made them to the House, will become acceptable not only to the House but to the people throughout the country. I find myself in the position of having to bend before the tempest, and I do so at the sacrifice of my own personal feelings and for the good of the country. There are other objects in view in life besides standing by one's own particular theories, and we must occasionally bend to the breeze. In this case I have lowered my sails to the tempest; but I hold to the conviction stronger than ever that the course which I proposed was the right one. To my amazement I have found certain classes in the community—notably the large property-owners, who never before displayed the slightest sympathy with poverty—raising the cry that we are endeavouring to oppress the poor man. Although we have every desire to provide food, labour, and education for the working-man, yet certain classes—the moneyed classes—have denounced me as their enemy. I can afford to put up with that, and to treat it in a proper spirit, because I believe my views to be sound, and no taunts will prevent me from doing what I consider to be my duty to my country.

Question proposed.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: I do not intend to detain the House ten minutes. The Colonial Treasurer has eaten dirt enough and has sufficiently humiliated himself since he told us that he brought forward his proposals for the benefit of the country. He has now abandoned them and brought forward others which are not for the benefit of the country,

and he rushes away as usual, because he is afraid of criticism. We have listened to his statement, and now he runs away. This is the way these big men do; they dare not face criticism. If the honorable member thought his proposals were right, and that they were for the good of the country, he ought to have done as he said he would do—he should have stood or have fallen by them. He said that they ought to be accepted as a whole when he introduced them, and I said they ought to be rejected as a whole, and he has himself rejected them as a whole. He has abandoned the whole box and dice of them. Why has he abandoned them? To save his own neck. This is bravery nowadays! The honorable member says that he would not like to see a change of government just now. I do not know how that may be; I know that no one on this side of the House would like a change of government now, because this Government have brought this country from the position of being the most prosperous country in the world to a worse position than that of any other of the colonies. Does the honorable member suppose that any one on this side of the House desires to take up the burden which the present Government will leave behind? I say let them extricate the country from the terrible mess into which they have brought it. Unquestionably we have no desire to take charge of affairs in the rotten state in which they now are. The honorable member ventured to say—which was untrue—that he changed his course because of a vote of this House. I say there was no vote of the House. I submitted a motion which might or might not have been carried, but we never came to a vote. The Government instead of coming fairly into the ring and grappling with us, as has always been the case with previous governments, abandoned the whole box and dice of their proposals. Ministers have abandoned their proposals before, but never did a ministry with a great majority at its back abandon proposals which in their opinion were for the good of the country. Why did they not persist with their proposals? Was it because they discovered them to be wrong? The Treasurer says he does not think they were wrong. Were they, then, afraid of public opinion? Is that the pluck for which this Government have been so much

Sixth night.

commended? But if the Government had determined to let their proposals go the Treasurer might have said that without delivering an insulting harangue to waste the time of the House. He would then have met with no interruption from me; but when he persisted in saying what was not true I interrupted him by an exclamation, and I have never before, in all the years I have been here, found a speaker to rule a member out of order for making an interjection.

MR. SPEAKER: The honorable member is not in order —

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: Very likely!

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask the honorable member not to interrupt me. The honorable member, I am sure, must be aware that when it is intended to challenge the decision of the Chair it must be done by motion in the proper way, and the reference, which is as disrespectful as it is insulting to the authority of the Chair, is one which I ought not to be left to take notice of myself.

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: I have not challenged the action of the Chair; I simply pointed out that I never knew an exclamation to be complained of before. The Honorable the Treasurer persisted in saying that there had been a division against his proposals and I said there had not.

MR. W. CLARKE: There was a division on the motion to adjourn the debate!

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON: Was that how it was? No; it was because the Government found that they were likely to be in a minority. As I have said, no one desires less to see a change of government than I do. I know too well the responsibilities of office even under ordinary circumstances. I have taken office I do not know how many times—I could not count the number on my fingers; but I never took up such an inheritance as that to which the men who take office after the present Government will succeed. Because the Government cannot get their wretched property-tax our prosperous colony must come to grief, and roads and bridges and all manner of public works throughout the colony must be stopped! What is the cause of all this? To what else can it be attributed than to the mismanagement of the country's affairs? The Government acknowledged that when

they came into power they found the colony in a highly prosperous state, because they telegraphed the fact to England at great expense. I should like to know what sort of a telegram the Treasurer will send to England to-morrow. Will he telegraph to-morrow that he has been obliged to withdraw his proposals, or will he leave people in England to suppose that he is able to carry them, and thereby impose upon them with regard to the actual position of the Government? I contend that there is no necessity whatever for a curtailment of necessary and proper expenditure. The Ministry have got themselves into a bog-hole from which they cannot extricate themselves, and they are not brave enough to come forward and admit their error, but sneak away from their proposals by cutting down the votes for public works all over the country. What they should do, instead of cutting down the expenditure on works which, I presume, are necessary, is to sell land enough to pay for the improvements. They know that the policy of this side of the House is the best policy, but they are not brave enough to act upon it. They know very well that the exchange of the waste public lands for public improvements is necessary for the advancement of the country. What do the Government propose to do with respect to the land? They propose to let it or lock it up for twenty years at a rental of 2d. per acre, whereas if they sold it they would get, even at 4 per cent. interest, equal to 1s. per year. Talk about alienation of the land! Will it not be alienation if we part with it for a term of twenty years at such an insignificant rental without regard to its value? It seems to me that the Government are in about as pitiable a position as they can be. Did not they proclaim a few months ago that this was one of the most prosperous countries in the world? Where is that prosperity now? They tell us that we cannot afford to make roads and bridges, which they admit, by the fact that they made provision for them on their Estimates, ought to be made. What a wonderful change there has been in a few days! The other day the Treasurer's words were, "We do not intend to reduce the salaries of civil servants or the wages of labourers, and, above all things, we do not intend to check the progress of the country by stopping public works of a

[*Sir John Robertson.*]

permanent character." Now, because the honorable member has been forced to abandon his taxation proposals we have quite another story. I am sorry for the honorable member, for the mistake which he has made. In no sense do I want to do more than to express regret for his mistake; but when he says that we are not to have roads and bridges, that the great interior of the country is not to be advanced by necessary works being constructed, I say that I must challenge him from point to point. In the face of the statement that the Government did not intend to reduce the wages of labourers, how can the Treasurer account for the fact that since the remark was made 800 men employed on the railways have been dismissed? If the Government thought that the various works included in their original Estimates were necessary, why have they dropped so many of them? I observe that they have not omitted the item of £40,000 for a steam-ferry for North Shore.

Mr. YOUNG: Or the item for the purchase of Redfern Park!

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: I say that the company whose boats run to and from North Shore perform the work satisfactorily, and the Government, with good reason, ought to have omitted the item to which I refer. And so with the Redfern Park and Paling's property; but we have not heard a word about these things. Is it not too bad that, after we have spent three or four weeks in discussing the proposals of the Government, they should withdraw them? I do not blame them for doing so, as honorable members on this side of the House pointed out at once that this would be the wisest course to pursue. The other day I proposed a motion which might have been carried, but I withdrew it; there was no division on it, although the Treasurer says that there was. I am quite willing that business should proceed as quietly as possible as regards ministers. I am sure that none of us on this side desire to disturb them; but there is a point beyond which we must not allow them to go. I am sure that I have shown no disposition to embarrass the Government; but when they brought forward their outrageous, insulting taxation proposals I felt bound to oppose them. I did not do so out of a mere spirit of opposition. Honorable

members who did me the honor to elect me leader of the Opposition know well how thoroughly I objected to take any course which would be hostile to the Government. It was only because it was absolutely necessary for us to show the Government that we were not to be trifled with that I moved the motion which I did the other night. When the time comes to consider the Estimates we shall see whether honorable members are prepared to submit to the stoppage of the public works of the colony for the sake of keeping this Government in office. I do not think that a majority of honorable members will allow it. I now advise the Government, in the most kindly feeling, not to be so foolish as to stop the construction of roads and bridges and other great works, but rather to do as the Treasurer said they intended to do, that is, proceed with the works, and then find the money in a way which will not be offensive to the people.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: How would you raise the revenue?

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: It is not for me to suggest where the Government are to find the means; that is the duty of ministers. We have simply to say whether we approve of or condemn the proposals of the Government, and by their action to-night they have admitted that we have condemned their policy most unmistakably.

Mr. BURNS: I fully expected that the Colonial Secretary would have replied to the speech of the honorable member for Mudgee.

Mr. STUART: The honorable member did not give me a chance; he jumped up so quickly!

Mr. BURNS: I am prepared to give way to the honorable member. It seems to be part of the policy of the Government to refrain from discussing questions which they bring forward, and to keep their supporters silent. There was a time when the idea of a government making its policy known privately and asking its supporters not to make speeches would have been scouted in the House. I have not much complaint to make about the course which the Government have taken with respect to their financial proposals. I rather take it as a personal compliment, inasmuch as some of the recommendations

Sixth night.

which I made to the Government, shortly after the financial statement was made, have been adopted.

Mr. STUART: Hear, hear!

Mr. BURNS: The honorable member's cheer reminds me of the observations which he made when I offered that advice. I sketched out a plan by which I contended that all necessity for additional taxation would be obviated; I advised the Government to revise the Estimates and to withdraw a number of appropriations for services which were not likely to be required during the year 1884. I was told by the Colonial Secretary that my desire was that the Government should commit political suicide. There has been a wonderful transformation since then; the Government seem to have come to the conclusion that it is their duty to commit political suicide. The other day the Government said that they would stand or fall by their proposals.

Mr. DIBBS: Who said that?

Mr. BURNS: The Colonial Secretary said so, and the honorable member cheered the statement. I take no exception to the omission from the Estimates of appropriations which cannot possibly be expended during the year 1884; but I certainly object to the reduction of the vote for roads and bridges. I hope that this will not be assented to by honorable members, especially by honorable members who represent country constituencies. The Government have shown themselves to be so pliable, so willing to sacrifice their policy at the bidding of their supporters, that I have no doubt if honorable members who support them put on a little pressure the roads and bridges item will be restored to the position which it occupied in the original Estimates. The Treasurer says that he thinks that the course taken by the Government with regard to the question of finance is a wise one, inasmuch as it had forced on the people the consideration of the question.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: We were told that the policy of the Government was a bold one!

Mr. BURNS: I do not see where the claim for boldness in the action of the Government comes in. I do not differ in opinion very much from the Treasurer as to what ought to be the fiscal policy of the country; I entirely agree with him as to the advisableness of following as

closely as possible the lines of taxation in Great Britain—this is to have as few customs duties as possible, and to restrict them to articles of general consumption. But I contend now, as I have contended before, that the time chosen by the Government for revising the tariff could not be more inopportune. The discussion has shown that if any industry has had some incidental protection as the result of duties which have been levied for revenue purposes there is sure to be a loud clamour against the removal of those duties. The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Copeland) has given notice of certain proposals for the revision of the tariff; in fact, he has propounded an entirely new scheme of taxation. I do not know whether, after hearing the Treasurer's statement this evening, the honorable member intends to proceed with his proposals. I think that as a free trader the honorable member is liable to have his position in the matter entirely misunderstood. I am sure that the honorable member is influenced by no feeling of hostility to the Government. I can hardly understand how the honorable member, in the face of his free trade opinions and his experience in Victoria, can ask the Government to adopt a scheme of taxation to the real principle of which he must be entirely opposed. No doubt the answer of the honorable member will be that he merely desires to place the Government in possession of means to raise revenue to meet the temporary deficiency, and that when that purpose has been accomplished the taxes may be discontinued. The honorable member has condemned the proposal of the Treasurer to omit from the tariff twenty-four articles the duties on which are troublesome to collect, and only yield £40,000 a year. At the same time, the honorable member contends that as vested rights have been called into existence by the incidental protection given to certain industries we ought not to interfere with the duties. I am sure that the honorable member has not well considered what will be the result of his proposals. If they were agreed to, there would be still louder clamour against interference with vested rights if it were ever proposed to remit any of the duties. The honorable member first of all proposes to put a duty of 10 per cent. on what he describes as articles of

[*Mr. Burns.*

luxury which are not made in the colony. I do not know how the honorable member has arrived at the conclusion that many of the articles which he has mentioned are not manufactured locally. The honorable member can hardly maintain that furniture, upholstery, saddlery and harness are not manufactured in the colony, and that a duty of 10 per cent. will not be equivalent to protection. On all other articles the honorable member proposes an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. If the honorable member had read the evidence taken by the Victorian Tariff Commission, I am sure that he would not have made such proposals. It was proved that not only were importers' invoices "salted" so as to deceive the customs authorities as to the value of the articles, but also that local manufacturers were in the habit of making articles resembling those imported, and claiming drawback on them when they were sent out of the colony; thus making a double fraud on the state. The honorable member must have noticed that his proposals met with the approval of gentlemen in and out of the House who favoured the principle of protection. I have been pleased to hear the Treasurer say that he could not quite agree to a proposal to impose *ad valorem* duties. I am sure that he will be no party to the imposition of such duties for the purpose of relieving property-owners from fair taxation. These people have been very ready to suggest of late that we ought to go to the Custom-house for the revenue which we require. It will be well, perhaps, if they are reminded of our experience when *ad valorem* duties were imposed. This was done in 1865, when the colony was suffering great financial depression. From the year 1863 to the year 1870 the colony was suffering from a large deficiency between revenue and expenditure. Different expedients were resorted to by different governments to remove the deficiency. The first announcement of the actual deficiency was made by Mr. Smart, I think in the year 1863. The financial statement delivered in that year showed that there was a deficiency in the revenue exceeding £400,000, and the honorable gentleman subsequently estimated that at the end of 1864 there would be a clear deficiency of £653,811 14s. 9d. For a long time there were grave doubts as

to whether the deficiency estimated by Mr. Smart really existed, but as time rolled on it was shown that so far from Mr. Smart over-estimating the deficiency he had under-estimated it. In the course of one year the deficiency amounted to £850,000. I contend that the colony is not now in such a distressed condition as to place the Colonial Treasurer under an obligation to resort to the means which were resorted to at the time to which I refer in order to obtain revenue. At the time Mr. Smart made this announcement he was in this fix in regard to his ways and means: he issued Treasury bills for £400,000 in order to cover a portion of the deficiency, and the Government were unable to float these bills although they bore interest at 6 per cent. They were lodged in some of the banks as security against an overdraft. The banks did all that lay in their power to dispose of these bills on the London Stock Exchange, but were unable to do so, although they had received authority to sell to the best advantage. Some changes of government took place, and the government of the day were at length compelled to give the House the information that they were paying in London for an overdraft of £837,000 no less than 11 per cent. Some time afterwards, when the Government were further pressed for money, the manager of the Oriental Bank brought the Government to this position in regard to their finances: he refused to find funds for the ordinary monthly payments of civil servants unless Mr. Smart gave his personal security for the amount required. Not only was this so; but Mr. Samuel in 1865 informed the House that so great were the straits to which the Government were reduced through the want of money that the manager of the Oriental Bank, acting under advice received from London, had intimated to him that the bank had a right to know what measures the Government intended to take by way of new taxation in order to provide for the advances which the bank had made to the Government in regard to loan bills, and in respect to other advances which were then uncovered. The banks sold some of the 6 per cent. Exchequer bills at as low a rate as 88. The manager of the Oriental Bank having said that the colony stood in

a bad position in the estimation of the Stock Exchange, he refused to make further advances unless new taxation were proposed. Under similar circumstances, Mr. Eagar, then treasurer, proposed to the House that we should arrange for a loan of £3,000,000, bearing 6 per cent. at as low a rate as 84. Parliament was not induced to ratify the proposal, but the circumstance shows the straits to which the colony was reduced financially. It was at this time of great difficulty that the Government of Sir Charles Cowper proposed to Parliament the adoption of *ad valorem* duties. I do not know what course the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Copeland) intends to take in regard to his amendment; but if the Government make another change of front, or if the honorable gentleman does not agree with the Government in the course they have taken, and persists in moving his amendment, the proposal to impose *ad valorem* duties will, I have no doubt, receive the support of a small section of the House. I believe there was no act in the public life of the late Sir Charles Cowper which that gentleman more deplored than his connection with the adoption of *ad valorem* duties, which, however, were resorted to under special circumstances and in order to protect the credit of the colony. Taxation of this kind being once imposed, those who desire at any time to repeal it are always met with the outcry raised on behalf of interested parties that local industries will be destroyed. I listened with great satisfaction, therefore, to the announcement of the Colonial Treasurer that he will not listen to proposals for the imposition of *ad valorem* duties. What is the experience of this colony in regard to *ad valorem* duties? We had several changes of government while those duties remained the law of the land, and this mode of taxation was constantly condemned in the strongest possible language as being inquisitorial in some respects and iniquitous in so far as it deprived an honest trader of a fair chance of competing with dishonest traders. It is a fact established beyond all doubt—and it was referred to in the budget speech of one of our treasurers—that there was a system as complete as it could be whereby the customs authorities were deceived by the use of false invoices. These were used

[Mr. Burns.

by unscrupulous traders, and honest men, admitted with shame and regret that they were compelled to shut their eyes to the iniquity of the system in order that they might be enabled to compete on fair terms with their neighbours. That was the condition of affairs in this colony under the operation of the *ad valorem* duties. Mr. Saul Samuel, in one of his financial statements, described the duties as being most iniquitous, and while expressing his desire to get rid of them at one fell swoop said that owing to the influence of public opinion in favour of maintaining the duties as incidental protection, and owing to the want of revenue, he could not make a proposal for the remission of more than one-half of the duties at a certain date, and it fell to the lot of Mr. G. A. Lloyd, the Treasurer of a subsequent government, which had a large revenue in excess of their expenditure, and which undertook—as it was their business to do—to revise the whole of the taxation of the country to propose the repeal of the balance of the *ad valorem* duties. I recollect perfectly well that strong pressure was brought to bear upon the Government with a view to induce them not to take that course; but the Government—to their honor, be it said—persisted in their proposals, and the House supported them by passing a measure for the repeal of the duties. A portion of the duties were repealed in 1869, and the remainder were repealed in 1873. Now, as we hear so much about *ad valorem* duties, it may be well to quote some observations made by Mr. Lloyd when he moved the resolution for the repeal of the duties. The Government proposed to omit from the tariff a large number of small duties which did not produce much revenue, and they proposed at the same time the total repeal of the *ad valorem* duties. Mr. Lloyd said:

Amongst these reductions will be found the repeal of the *ad valorem* duties. I feel convinced that there are but few honorable members of this House who will not rejoice at the prospect of getting rid of these obnoxious taxes. The effect of these duties has been to hamper our trade, and to drive a large portion of it into other channels. They have had a most baneful influence on the mercantile community, inasmuch as they have given rise to a system of demoralisation the extent of which it is hardly possible to estimate. If honorable members had opportunities of knowing the extraordinary means which have been adopted by some houses to evade these imposts, they would, I am sure,

admit that the existence of such duties is an evil only to be tolerated under the most exceptional circumstances. There have been instances of men, honorable in all other respects, stating that if they did not resort to the expedients unscrupulously adopted by their fellow-tradersmen, they must inevitably be ruined, for it would be utterly impossible for them to compete in business if they paid the duty honestly on the full value with others who succeeded by means of fictitious invoices, and other disreputable practices, in getting their goods through the customs on payment of less than half the duty.

Stronger language than that used by the Treasurer in 1873 in condemnation of these duties could not be used. These, however, are not the only reasons which may be urged in support of their repeal. The tendency of duties of this kind is to create a number of industries which grow up by this artificial means, and the moment you attempt, when the Government are in possession of an abundant revenue, to remove the duties there is an outcry for the maintenance of the taxation for the special benefit of these few industries and at the expense of the rest of the community. The clamour which was raised on the occasion to which I have referred has been raised in connection with the tariff proposals of the present Government, and it may be accepted as an illustration in a small way of the effect in any part of the world of imposing taxation whereby industries are established in an unnatural and fictitious way. I should be glad if the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Copeland) could see his way clear to withdraw his amendment; indeed, I think that in the face of the statement of the Government that they are about to readjust their Estimates and to make new proposals, they ought not to be embarrassed, especially at the instance of a friend, by a motion intercepting Ways and Means and containing the proposal of a new form of taxation. An honorable member has gone out of his way to tell the public out of doors of the immense advantage which he says will result to the colony if we adopt the proposals of the honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. Copeland) in reference to this subject. This honorable member has appealed to the experience of America in illustration of the beneficial results of protection. I do not wish to occupy the time of the House in discussing the question at any length; but as there is in the House a small party who constantly

impress upon us the immense advantages which follow the adoption of protection, it may be as well to point out that so far from the case of America serving the purpose of these honorable gentlemen it is one which shows that the adoption of protective duties go far to retard the prosperity of a country. These honorable members who are in the habit of telling us of the experience of America always forget to point out that in that vast country—in extent almost as large as the whole of Europe—with a population of 50,000,000 there is absolute free trade as between the different states. The duties exist only for federal purposes. No doubt they were imposed in the first instance in part to encourage the growth of local manufactures; but there is absolute free trade throughout the United States. We have a good illustration of the effect of adopting an unsound system of taxation, including protection, in the spectacle which we now witness, which is this: that, while for federal purposes the Government of the United States have more revenue than they require, and would like to readjust the taxation in the direction of relieving the people of certain burdens, they dare not do so because of the large vested interests which have been established in connection with local industries. There is no doubt of the fact, however, that there is in America at the present time a large and growing party who are in favour of free trade, and I venture, as one observing the signs of the times, to say that the time is not far distant when, in regard to this question of protection the Government of the United States will be compelled to give effect to the growing feeling that it is unfair to tax nine-tenths of the population for the benefit of the remaining one-tenth. I have no desire to occupy the time of the House much longer. We shall have an opportunity in Committee to discuss the change of front which has been exhibited by the Government. The chief anxiety I had with regard to this change of front was lest the Government should not remain firm in maintaining the fiscal policy of which the Treasurer has been so staunch an advocate, and lest they should adopt a policy which might result in a legacy of difficulties to such of their successors as may have to deal with the customs revenue. I feel certain, however, that the Colonial

Sixth night.

Treasurer will firmly refuse to listen to any proposals for the introduction into this colony of a system of taxation which is regarded by the large majority of those who have thought upon the subject as being of a most pernicious character. I would like once more to point out that the cry raised by the Government and their friends as to the advantages of withholding the sale of Crown lands by auction is being very much overdone. Those who agree with me upon the subject think that it is a fair expenditure of public money to use for public improvements the revenue produced by a proper competition in the purchase of Crown lands. The Government have urged this cry in favour of stopping auction sales until, like similar cries raised by other governments, it became to a certain extent popular, although there can be no doubt that there is already evidence of a change in public opinion as to the policy of this step. People are at length beginning to realise that the policy under which we have extended our railways from one end of the colony to the other, which has enabled various governments to improve our harbours and rivers, and to improve the public estate all over the country, has been a wise one, and that the contention that the revenue derived from the sale of Crown lands should not be devoted to public works is one which cannot be justified in the light of our past experience. The Colonial Treasurer and others have made it appear that my honorable friend, the member for Mudgee (Sir John Robertson), and those who act with him, are anxious for the wholesale disposal of Crown lands at auction without any competition. A more unjust charge could not be made. I for one have contended that all governments in the past have sinned more or less in allowing sales by auction to an extent which has precluded the possibility of competition; but I think it is a wise policy, as it is also one which has been advocated by some of the best economists in considering the subject of colonisation, and which has been commended by the Colonial Secretary in a speech which he delivered in 1879 when holding the office of Colonial Treasurer, to expend the revenue derived in this way upon permanent public improvements. I should like to impress upon the House the

[*Mr. Burns.*

fact that unless former governments had pursued this policy our railway system could not have been extended to its present dimensions. Up to 1874 the railways of this colony did not pay 4 per cent. on the capital invested in their construction. For many years the railway receipts exhibited a mere shadow of a balance over and above the cost of working expenses, and it was then that revenue was obtained from the land fund to pay the interest upon the public debt. By law all the revenue derived from the sale and occupation of Crown lands has to be put into one fund. It would have been better if a separate account had been kept year by year of the receipts from the land fund, showing on the opposite side the appropriations made. This would have given us a better check upon the appropriations of this branch of the revenue. The evil of the system has been not so much in the use of the money obtained from the sale of Crown lands as in the abuse of auction sales. The Government, which came into office on the top of a wave of popularity, propose, according to their Land Bill, to reduce the area of land sold by auction to 200,000 acres a year. I maintain that they will find this course a fertile cause of embarrassment to them as long as they remain in office—that is, they will find it difficult to provide the money necessary for the carrying on of public works. This embarrassment will extend to any succeeding government who may pursue a similar policy. The honorable member for Mudgee (Sir John Robertson) has been charged over and over again with maintaining that the interest on our public debt should be paid out of the land revenue. That has not been the contention of the honorable gentleman.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. BURNS: What the honorable gentleman contends, and what documents on the table will show, is that the revenue hitherto obtained from the sale and occupation of Crown lands has been spent upon unquestionable public improvements, and during the period when the railways did not return the interest upon the cost of their construction, the deficiency between the receipts and that interest was a fair charge upon the land revenue, which was intended to be appropriated for the carrying out of public improvements. So far we can gather only in

a very general way the nature of the reductions which the Government propose to make in their Estimates. I have contended on a former occasion, and I still contend, that the Government would do well to withdraw such an item as that of £165,000 for new law courts. This is an amount which cannot possibly be expended in 1884. Then there are other appropriations which will lapse in course of time by reason of the Government being unable for a variety of causes to proceed with the works. The want of sites and a number of difficulties of that kind will prevent the erection of these buildings. I earnestly go with the Government, therefore, if as a temporary measure they propose to omit all items of this kind. But to me it is inconceivable how the Government could arrive at the conclusion that the ordinary votes which are required year by year for the improvement of the interior should be omitted. If the expenditure of the money were required in and about Sydney, there would not be the least fear of this metropolitan Government omitting the amounts from the Estimates.

Mr. CAMERON: I do not know so much about that; as it is, I do not see that Sydney is favoured to any extraordinary degree!

Mr. BURNS: I do not think my honorable friend has any reason to complain as to the expenditure in and about the metropolis when we find the Government, on the eve of declaring to the House that there was a deficiency in the revenue, giving £34,000 for a park at Redfern which is not required. They have made other provision for an enormous expenditure in and about Sydney, and I think they might have shown a little more attention to the claims of country districts. These matters, however, will be explained more fully when the House goes into Committee; but I feel that I am only discharging a duty which I owe to the House and to the country in making these observations as to the course which the Government have taken. I for one have no desire to embarrass the Government in their conduct of public business. I have a strong desire to assist them in the discharge of that duty, and to give to my honorable friend, the Minister for Lands, as little pretext as possible for delay in proceeding with the Land Bill. I regret very much

that by the introduction of these taxation proposals unnecessarily we have been compelled in a measure to waste time which could have been devoted to better purpose in discussing the Land Bill. I have no desire in any way to embarrass the Government, but as far as I can I shall give them my support on their present proposals.

Mr. STUART: I must apologise for not having accepted the invitation of my honorable friend to take the place into which he so eagerly jumped; but knowing that his offer was made from a feeling of politeness I wished to show myself capable of reciprocating it. I think I may congratulate myself on having done so, because I have had the pleasure of listening to the very interesting history which my honorable friend has given us of the financial proposals which have been made for many years past. I do not intend to follow him in his somewhat antiquarian research, for although I acknowledge that it was interesting, I fail to see what practical bearing it had on the subject at present before the House. The only marvel I have with regard to the honorable member who has just resumed his seat is that he does not feel himself sufficiently strong in his political constitution to walk across the Chamber and take his seat on the benches on this side of the House, because in every criticism he has passed upon the proposals of the Government he has admitted his entire agreement with them.

Mr. BURNS: Certainly not!

Mr. STUART: The honorable member found fault with our late proposals, but he approves of our present proposals. We are not only at one with him in this respect, but we are at one with him also in thinking that some such measure as we have proposed is preferable to resorting to *ad valorem* duties. I re-echo to the utmost all that the honorable gentleman has said upon that point. Our past experience of *ad valorem* duties has been not only that they were vicious in themselves but that they were to a great extent destructive of the trade of the colony. They transferred a large portion of our trade with New Zealand and the South Sea Islands to Melbourne, and it has only been by a long and arduous struggle that the trade of Sydney has recovered the position it lost

Sixth night.

during the period of the imposition of *ad valorem* duties. We know that the *ad valorem* duties are regarded by some honorable members as the very best possible, as being in fact the panacea for all our ills ; but I hope that the House will not resort to them under present circumstances. I should hardly have risen to give expression to these sentiments in approval of what was said by the previous speaker if I did not feel it incumbent on me not to allow the remarks of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition to pass without a distinct disclaimer from this side of the House to some of the positions he put forward. The honorable member drew particular attention to the position in which the Government were placed by contrasting the position of the colony a few months ago, when we sent a glowing telegram to England about our prosperity, with the present state of affairs, which the honorable member said was a position in which ruin stares us in the face. I consider that the views put forward by the Government are perfectly consistent. I say that the prosperity of this country is going on from day to day, and that the country is more prosperous to-day than it was when the telegram referred to was sent home. There is such a thing as fictitious prosperity, as contradistinguished from solid prosperity. A large balance at one's bankers is not always an indication of solid prosperity. Sometimes it is the very opposite, and it is impossible that the country could undergo such a change in its land policy as it is now undergoing without some degree of apparent difference in its prosperity. I say "apparent difference" advisedly, because I believe that the prosperity of the colony is being placed on a much sounder basis than before ; and it is better for us to put up with a temporary difficulty than to push forward in a career of delusive prosperity, which, however great, is after all only an apparent prosperity. My honorable friend, Sir John Robertson, alluded, in an almost melodramatic manner, to the extremely dishonest behaviour of the Government in going behind Parliament and endeavouring to work upon a portion of the House in a manner to which other honorable members were not privy, and making a sort of bargain in order to

[Mr. Stuart.

defeat his motion. Now, no one knows better than my honorable friend that nothing of the kind took place.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : How do I know it ?

Mr. STUART : I would appeal to my honorable friend's own instincts of what is right as to whether he would in his quieter moments charge us with anything of the kind. It was only in the delirium of the wild excitement which he exhibited a short time ago that his feelings got the better of his judgment, and led him to accuse the Government of dishonest behaviour in making a bargain with their supporters. But I assert most fearlessly that no bargain of the sort was ever made.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : Then why change front ?

Mr. STUART : Has the honorable member never changed front in the course of his political life ?

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : Never without a fight !

Mr. STUART : When the honorable member proposed to make certain reductions in taxation, and was compelled to abandon his intention, was he guided by the opinion of his friends or of his opponents ?

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : I was outvoted !

Mr. STUART : That is the only occasion I can remember on which the honorable gentleman did not stand true to his colours.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR : The Government gave us all we want !

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : We have danced on your colours !

Mr. STUART : We are quite prepared to stand all the gibes and jeers the combined constituency of Mudgee can cast at us.

Mr. McELHONE : You will stand anything as long as you get your £2,000 a year !

Mr. STUART : If the honorable member could do the work, I should be quite willing to let him have the money and even more.

Mr. McELHONE : But I could not stand the gibes !

Mr. SPEAKER : The honorable member for The Upper Hunter will recollect that I have repeatedly called attention to his interruptions. I hope he will not persist in them.

Mr. McELHONÉ: A good many have been disorderly besides me!

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be that some other honorable members have been guilty of disorder; but that is not my doing, and it is no justification for the honorable member's conduct.

Mr. STUART: The honorable member for Mudgee twitted us with having brought forward, and then abandoned, proposals which we thought were for the good of the country, and with now bringing forward other proposals which are not for the good of the country. That is not the correct way of stating the position. The proper mode is this: Both sets of propositions may be good for the country, but not equally good. We consider that the proposals we first put forward were best calculated for the advantage of the country, but inasmuch as we found that the House was not prepared to accept them at the present time—although I believe we shall live to see the day when the House will rejoice to accept such propositions—we are now advocating what we think to be next best for the good of the country.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR: Why pander to the will of the House?

Mr. STUART: Pander to the will of the House! Does the honorable member understand what is the constitutional position of a financial proposal? It is that the House itself has to deal with the proposal. The honorable member seems incapable of understanding that position, so that we have again and again to reiterate what I may term the principles of constitutional boyhood, which are that the financial position of the country and the remedies for that position are essentially matters for the House to deal with.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR: Well, let the House deal with them!

Mr. STUART: We are endeavouring to let the House deal with them. My honorable friend, Sir John Robertson, appealed to that resource to which he is always appealing. "Unlock the land," he says, "return to auction sales, and the difficulty will be at an end." I hope that neither my colleagues nor myself will ever take any other view of the sale of public lands than that we have put before the House; and that if the lands are to be sold by auction my honorable friend opposite will be the auctioneer.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: You will do it before the session is over!

Mr. STUART: Of course millions of acres might be sold; but would that be for the ultimate advantage of the colony? I thought we had already determined by a large majority that there should be an end to that sort of fancied prosperity—that we were to remodel our administration of the land and place the financial position of the country on a sounder and better basis.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: You have not done it yet!

Mr. STUART: No, because my honorable friend and those who act with him throw continued opposition in the way of what is necessary to give effect to it, and also because time is necessary for carrying out such a reform. It is merely to fill up this interval of time that it is necessary to have recourse to increased taxation or diminished expenditure. Well, the House having evidently shown that increased taxation is not in accordance with their views, the alternative of diminished expenditure is presented to them.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: Hear, hear! Stop roads and bridges.

Mr. STUART: Stop the roads and bridges! I have no doubt that there are hundreds of roads and bridges which it would be extremely desirable to have made; but they have to be taken in turn according to the more pressing necessity. It might be a good thing if we could make at once all the roads and bridges which will be required during the next hundred years; but inasmuch as we cannot do that, as we are restricted in some degree by the means at our command, so it is that now being deprived of a portion of what has heretofore been factitiously called the land revenue of the country, we are obliged to curtail our expenditure.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: We are sorry for you, that is all!

Mr. STUART: The honorable gentleman may keep his sorrow for himself; we are quite able to do without it, although we are always ready to receive his sympathy. But neither his sorrow nor his sympathy will settle this question. What we have to do as practical men is to say what is best under the circumstances. I think it would be much better if we could obtain from property that which property has a right to pay.

Sixth night.

Mr. McELHONE: You could have got that by an income-tax!

Mr. STUART: What is the difference essentially between a property-tax and an income-tax? If the honorable member has property worth £100,000, which brings him in £6,000 a year, and the state wants to squeeze him to the extent of £500 a year, what does it matter whether that amount is obtained by a rate upon the capital value or the yearly income? The result is the same.

Mr. McELHONE: You only reach men with property by a property-tax; but you reach men with large incomes or salaries and little property by an income-tax!

Mr. STUART: Income in some cases is merely productive labour or work, while in other cases it is the result of accumulated labour, and it is much more equitable to tax accumulated labour than to tax the productive energies of the people.

Mr. McELHONE: Why do they not do that in England, the country we profess to follow?

Mr. STUART: We do not profess to follow England in everything. No one who has studied English political history can arrive at any other conclusion than that the enormously overwhelming influence of property has prevented property from being taxed as it ought to be in England. But we are, or ought to be, in happier circumstances. The only regret I have in the matter is at finding that accumulated property is rapidly acquiring here that same unfortunate power which it has in England. Accumulated property will also crush out producing property, and thus it is that in England property escapes its fair burden of taxation, while the producers are made to contribute theirs in the shape of an income-tax. What is it that England has been seeking to deliver itself from but this tyranny of property over productive industry, and therefore in a country like this, property, so long as you reach every man's property, is a fairer subject of taxation than income. There is, however, a determination on the part of the property-owners of this colony to cast as far as possible the burden of taxation upon the toilers of the day, who have not yet reached the stage of accumulated wealth.

[Mr. Stuart.]

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR: You can shift the burden of a property-tax, but not of an income-tax!

Mr. STUART: You can employ such checks as will as perfectly secure the one as the other. If you have power to impose a tax, you also have power to say who shall pay the tax and who shall be exempt. That argument, therefore, which was brought against the property-tax never had any weight with me. Now, what is our position? We have laid down the principle that property shall bear its fair share of the burden of taxation. Property refusing to a great extent to bear that share, we say that we will at once bring in a local government bill which will compel property to contribute a large portion towards the public expenditure. A local government bill to be effective must have as an essential principle a property-tax.

Mr. GARRETT: It is not a tax at all; it is a payment for services!

Mr. STUART: That is one of the fine wire-drawn distinctions which peculiarly suit the idiosyncrasy of my honorable friend, the member for Camden. What is the difference, after all? Is not three-fourths of the expenditure from our consolidated revenue really a service expenditure?

Mr. GARRETT: Do not the people pay for the services? They pay for railways, post offices, and telegraphs!

Mr. STUART: Do they pay for roads and bridges? No; the general revenue pays for them, and if we could have imposed a property-tax property would have paid for them. By a local government bill we shall transfer to the local authorities the making of roads and bridges, which, I believe, will then be better and more cheaply made than they are now, because the parties most interested will take care that the money is properly expended; and we shall not then be called upon as we are now to vote £20,000 or £30,000 for a bridge at Bundarra, or £50,000 for a gaol at Bathurst or some such place, which I say is a waste of money.

Mr. McELHONE: What about the Illawarra railway?

Mr. STUART: The Illawarra railway will be the best paying concern in the country, and I hope the honorable member will live to see the day, which will be at

no distant period, when he will say, "Who would have thought that this railway would be the most productive in the country?"

Mr. McELHONE: You yourself said it would not pay as a mineral railway!

Mr. STUART: I did not.

Mr. McELHONE: I can show it by your own speech!

Mr. SPEAKER: I remind the honorable member for The Upper Hunter that I have already had occasion to refer to his interruptions. If such conduct is to continue, the discussion will lose the character of a debate. Honorable members who expect the right of free speech must concede the right to others. I do more than suggest; I insist that these interruptions be not continued.

Mr. McELHONE: There have been interruptions all around!

Mr. SPEAKER: The honorable member commits disorder in the very making of such an interjection. No other honorable member has interrupted to the same extent as the honorable member for The Upper Hunter.

Mr. McELHONE: They have to quite as large an extent!

Mr. SPEAKER: The honorable member must not enter into debate with the Chair. I now remind him of that for the last time.

Mr. STUART: I was pointing out that the proposal now made by the Government does not involve an absolute change of front such as some honorable members have endeavoured to make out; it is merely, as it were, a division of the proposals which we made in the first instance. The principle which we laid down was that property should bear a fair share of the burdens of the country, and what we now say is that as it appears to be the will of the House—the will of the House may be gathered in many ways, it is not always to be ascertained by a vote but sometimes from the expression of opinions,—as I verily believe that the expression of opinion has been against a direct property-tax, it becomes the duty of the House to concur, as I hope it will, to the proposal now made, which is backed up by our intention to immediately submit to the House a local government bill which will remove on the one hand a great deal of the expenditure which now encumbers

our general account, and on the other will tax property for the maintenance of local public works. I am sure that when a local government bill becomes law we shall witness no such utter waste of money as we have unfortunately witnessed during years past. It has been our endeavour in recasting the Estimates to cut off works, not with a view to put them aside altogether, but to relegate them to the local government bodies which I hope will be called into existence within a few months. No doubt exception will be taken to some of the items which remain on the Estimates, just as exception will be taken to the striking out of other items. I must confess that there are other works which I should have liked to strike out, but there are reasons why this could not well be done. Take the case which I mentioned just now—that of the erection of a gaol at Bathurst. In this case contracts had been entered into, and faith must be kept with the contractors, although I believe that the expenditure might well be done without. I think that the whole system of country gaols might very well be reconsidered. We have gone to enormous expense in building a large gaol at Trial Bay, and when it is occupied by prisoners there will be ample room, or it is to be hoped that there will be, in the other gaols for many years to come. The utmost care that the Government could bring to bear on the various items on the Estimates has been exercised. Those which do not appear in the new Estimates are such as in the opinion of the Government are the least important—the postponement of which for a year will cause the least detriment. Before the year expires we hope that local governing bodies, which will be able to construct the works to the satisfaction of the people most concerned, will be in full operation.

Mr. CAMERON: I think that honorable members must admit that we are now in a more peculiar position than we have been since the inauguration of responsible government. The transactions of the last few days show a change of front on the part of the Government which I venture to assert has no parallel in the history of responsible government in the colony. A few days ago the Treasurer propounded a tax on property to the extent of 1d. in the £, or tantamount to

Sixth night.

1s. 8½d. in the £, on income from property ; but now we are told that there is to be no tax on property. Instead of this we have a proposal which I think will be as pernicious in its effects as the first proposals of the Government—the stoppage of public works. The supplementary financial statement of the Treasurer will create as much alarm throughout the country as the first statement. I was one of those who condemned that statement. I said that the proposals of the Government were fraught with danger to the whole country, as they must result in the stagnation of trade as the effects of them were then visible in the state of the labour market. I say now that if the proposals made by the Treasurer to-night are carried into effect there will be stagnation of trade from one end of the country to the other. We were told that the Government were going in for a system of retrenchment.

Mr. GARRETT : There is no retrenchment !

Mr. CAMERON : If there is any attempt at retrenchment, it is at the sacrifice of principle. What is the main item in the proposed retrenchment ? The other day the Government were told by the honorable member for Balmain (Mr. Garrard) that immigration was being overdone, that people were being brought here who owing to their habits of life elsewhere were almost compelled to remain in the city, where there was no employment for them. The Treasurer disputed this statement and was applauded to the echo by many honorable members when he did so. But now we find that the Treasurer is so far prepared to sacrifice the principle in favour of which he contended so strongly as to reduce the item by half. No doubt this is a sop to Cerberus—an attempt to gain popularity in view of a pending election. The Treasurer practically admits that the labour market is overstocked. Yet he has not the pluck to propose the excision of the vote for immigration, while he proposes to retain proposed taxes on commodities used principally by working-people. Tobacco is essentially a poor man's luxury ; but the Treasurer has not said a word about withdrawing the proposed tax on this article, nor has he devised any scheme for taxing wealthy absentees like Sir Daniel Cooper, who draws a princely revenue from the property which

[Mr. Cameron.

he owns here, without paying a farthing towards the cost of the protection of it by the state.

Mr. DIBBS : I propose to tax cigars, which are smoked by wealthy people !

Mr. CAMERON : Poor men sometimes smoke cigars.

Mr. FREMLIN : They cannot be very poor if they do so !

Mr. CAMERON : I admit that the use of tobacco may be regarded as a luxury ; but it is indulged in to a considerable extent by the working-classes, and I think that it might well have been left without additional taxation at the present time, more particularly as, in my opinion, there would be no necessity whatever for extra taxation of any kind if the Government were to adopt a judicious system of retrenchment in the public service, which is growing to such an extent as to threaten danger to the liberties of the people. Before taxing necessities of life the Treasurer ought to have the pluck to reduce the expenditure in the public departments. We have heard a great deal about the pluck of the Treasurer ; we have been told that no matter how unpopular his views were he stood by them. I confess that I had doubts about the pluck of the honorable member ; but after the marvellous revelation of to-night I have no such doubts. The Treasurer has swallowed the leek most unmistakably. The other night I ventured to say that the second reading of the Land Bill had cost the country nearly a quarter of a million of money owing to the inducements in the way of roads, bridges, court houses, and other works held out to honorable members. I think that a perusal of the original Estimates presented by the Government will confirm this opinion. The Colonial Secretary told us to-night that the original proposals of the Government were better than those which are now submitted, and that the time would soon come when the country would be compelled to adopt them. In making this statement the Colonial Secretary merely re-echoed the words of the Treasurer. If the members of the Government really believed this, it was their duty to stand gallantly by their colours. The Colonial Secretary says that the Government abandoned their proposals because they found that their friends were opposed to them. This is holding the fort with a

vengeance; it is an exhibition of weakness on the part of the Government such as we have not seen here for many years. I never thought that the Treasurer would submit to anything so degrading or humiliating as to be told that neither he nor his colleagues were capable of formulating a policy, but that they must accept any policy which might be propounded by the gentlemen sitting behind them. What is responsible government coming to? I think that we had better appoint a permanent committee. This is the government of committees. This is the Government who wished to relegate to a committee all matters relating to railway construction. This is the Government which appointed a commission to inquire into the working of the land law, and when it sent in its report the Secretary for Lands thought that it was of so little value that he did not read it. The remark of the Government is, "We consulted our friends." I suppose that there will be another meeting of their friends to-morrow. The Government were compelled to abandon the proposed property-tax because they were aware that it was unanimously condemned from one end of the colony to the other. Dozens of public meetings were held to consider the proposal, and in no instance was a resolution carried in favour of it. Why? Because the people saw that it would mean ruin to the country. I ask honorable members who are acquainted with commercial affairs whether the mere fact of the crude iniquitous proposal being made has not done a great deal of damage to the interests of the colony? Last year the Government sent a cablegram to England at an expense of over £1,300 to inform the people of England of the wonderful prosperity of the country. I wonder whether they will send a cablegram now picturing the existing state of affairs; will they inform the English people that the gigantic scheme of fiscal reform which was going to put an end to all our troubles has ended in smoke, the only part of the scheme left being the tax on tobacco which is to be smoked in future. Surely the Treasurer must feel that he occupies a more ignominious position than any of his predecessors was placed in! He told us that he would stand or fall on his proposals. How is he carrying out that promise? He is holding the fort.

Mr. DIBBS: That is the sore point!

Mr. CAMERON: The honorable member has no right to apply that interjection to me, because if rumour is not the lying jade which she is usually represented to be it is the sore point with many of the friends of the Government who attended the celebrated meeting. The Premier has revealed another pleasing prospect to-night. He says that we do not require additional taxation just now because within twelve months a local government bill will be passed, when the Government will be able to adjust the finances.

Mr. MELVILLE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAMERON: Is the honorable member green enough to believe that? We heard of this local government bill before the honorable member entered the House. It has been a stock measure of governments for years past. We may all admit the necessity for such a measure; but do honorable members lay the flattering unction to their soul that it will improve the financial position of the country?

Mr. STUART: Certainly!

Mr. CAMERON: Certainly not. It must entail as great a demand on the consolidated revenue as the votes which we now give to the municipalities. There is an extraordinary feature in connection with the proposal to stop public works. Already the Government have discharged 800 men from the only branch of the public service which is remunerative—the Railway Department,—and now they propose to close other avenues for the employment of these men by stopping the construction of roads and bridges and public works throughout the country.

Mr. WRIGHT: Not roads!

Mr. CAMERON: The Treasurer proposes the reduction of the item for roads and bridges by £104,000. I would suggest to the Treasurer that the best course to pursue would be to omit the item for immigration and add the £75,000 to the item of roads and bridges. There is plenty of labour in the country at the present time. The Colonial Secretary shakes his head. I acknowledge that there is a scarcity of domestic servants; but they are just as scarce in London.

Mr. STUART: No!

Mr. CAMERON: The reason is that girls prefer to work in factories because they enjoy a greater amount of liberty

Sixth night.

than they would have if they were in domestic service. I say that there is a plethora of manual labour in the Australian market.

Mr. STUART: No!

Mr. CAMERON: I do not think that the honorable member is a better authority than myself on the subject. The only stone building now in course of erection in Sydney in addition to the Post Office, which is almost finished, is the new Custom-house. Surely it is free trade run mad to with one hand take away the means of subsistence of people already here, and with the other bring strangers here who will be glad to stave off starvation by accepting lower wages than fellow-workmen have been in the habit of receiving! How can you blame the working-classes for finding fault with such an iniquitous system? There are men here who think it impossible to bring out too many immigrants—who would have them brought here like so many sheep. There are colonies around us which have been ruined by going too far in the matter of immigration. In New Zealand at the present time a large proportion of the labouring-classes are working for 3s., 4s., and 5s. a day. I say that it is an iniquitous thing to bring people hereto take bread out of the mouths of those already here; the state ought not to use its funds for the benefit of capitalists who ought to secure labour at their own cost. The Colonial Secretary taunted the leader of the Opposition with sneaking out of a division on the motion which he submitted the other night when he found that he had only a few followers.

Mr. MELVILLE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAMERON: It is all very well for the honorable member to cry "Hear, hear!" because he finds himself among the "boss-cockies."

Mr. MELVILLE: What do you mean by "boss-cockies"?

Mr. CAMERON: Let the honorable member ask the Secretary for Lands who was the first to use the expression here. I was about to point out that on the occasion to which the Colonial Secretary referred there was a division on the motion for the adjournment of the debate. Thirty gentlemen followed the honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition benches, and I venture to assert that those thirty gentlemen represented, as far as it was

possible for such a number to do so, the gentlemanly character and intelligence of this Assembly. But if that were not so, what is the position of the Colonial Secretary himself? When he first assumed the command on this side he led, unless I am much mistaken, an opposition consisting of six or seven members, and it is no discredit to him.

Mr. MELVILLE: We were never afraid to call for a division!

Mr. CAMERON: I think the honorable member makes a mistake when he says "We did this" and "We did the other thing." I object to the honorable member speaking in the official plural. I do not recognise him as a member of the Government. He is not yet in that position, although I do not know but that he would make a fair attempt at maintaining the dignity of the office. But I object to his "we"; the honorable gentleman has no right to talk for the Government.

Mr. MELVILLE: I was talking of the late Opposition, of which I was a member!

Mr. CAMERON: But the late Opposition was not formed of the gentlemen who now occupy seats on the Government side of the House. The Colonial Secretary in chaffing the leader of the Opposition as to the small number of members which followed him the other night on the motion for the adjournment of the debate has forgotten one important fact which he cannot ignore, and for which the country may thank honorable members on this side of the House. It is this: that owing to their combined efforts the iniquitous taxation proposals of the Government had to be abandoned. I am glad to say that I was one of that minority—that I lent my humble aid to prevent the infliction upon the people of this country of that which I conceived to be a great calamity. I am quite prepared to see another change of front on the part of the Government when their proposal to retrench on the road and bridge expenditure comes to be thoroughly investigated. But for the combined action of gentlemen who usually sit on this side of the House the roads and bridges expenditure would have been placed on a different footing, and the country would probably have been saddled with a new scheme of taxation. The Colonial Secretary tells us that the country owes the Government a great deal for their

[Mr. Cameron.]

stoppage of sales by auction. Ordinarily that sentiment is greeted with cheers from honorable members opposite, but it failed to elicit that expression of approval to-night. I am one of those who never believed in the aggregation of large estates; I am one of those who never believed in ruthlessly parting with the people's heritage. The whole of my public life will show that whenever I have spoken on the question I have always advocated keeping as much of the people's land as you possibly can consistently with the settlement of the country and the receipt of the fair value of the land sold. I never expressed the view, however, that a minister had a right, by a stroke of the pen, to stop a system which had existed for so long a period, stopping English capital from coming into the market, and crippling trade, for that is the effect of the sudden stoppage of the sale of land by auction. Then the Premier finds fault with the manner in which his predecessors have disposed of the land revenue. My honorable friend himself when Treasurer of a government of Sir John Robertson, advocated the adoption of the Wakefield system, and said that the land revenue could be applied to no better use—and I quite agree with him—than in the construction of permanent and productive improvements. Here we have another change of front. What are the next financial proposals of the Government to be? I suppose that it is in deference to the views of the Postmaster-General that the Government propose to put the *Wolverene* in dock. There is to be a huge saving of the public expenditure upon this vessel; but I think the Government are not taking the right course in this matter, and that the vessel will cost us as much doing nothing as doing the little which she is supposed to be doing at the present time.

Mr. FLETCHER: Give her to me; I will make a steam-collier of her!

Mr. CAMERON: I do not know but that she would make a good small-pox hospital. But this is the class of retrenchment we are to have. You are asked to stop public works, and to sanction the dismissal of a large number of men while you are bringing others here to compete with them in the labour market. Do you hear one word about reducing the salaries of the civil servants? Are you asked to tax

the £800, £900, and £1,000 men in the service of the Government? Are you asked to abolish the system under which three men are employed to do the work which properly belongs to two men? In addition to the Local Government Bill and the Land Bill we are to have a civil service bill. We are expected to pass the whole of these measures in addition to the financial measures of the Government within the year! You have no right to throw dust in the eyes of the country by saying that you are about to retrench, when it is manifest from your proposals that there will be no thorough and satisfactory system of retrenchment. There is plenty of room for retrenchment. If you reduced by 1 per cent. every salary over £500, you would do no harm to the civil service or to the country. The civil service is terribly overstocked. Men are pitchforked into positions in the service because they happen to have political influence at their back. If we were to do away with purchases like that of the Redfern Park, paying £35,000 for a bog-hole which would require the expenditure of another £35,000 to convert it into a park, which when made is not required, there being three others in the neighbourhood; if we were to do away with such questionable purchases as that of Paling's property in George-street, look at the saving which would be effected! In wiping off £35,000 for the Redfern Park, £66,000 for Paling's property, and £40,000 for the North Shore ferries, you effect a saving of £130,000 at one swoop. None of this expenditure is required. If we are going for the convenience of the public, and in direct competition with private enterprise, to run a ferry to the North Shore, why should we not also run ferries to Manly Beach, to Watson's Bay, or even to Newcastle. Where is the principle to stop?

Mr. FLETCHER: And they would not run a ferry between Newcastle and Stockton!

Mr. CAMERON: No; because it was a ferry which was really wanted. Two populous parts of the Hunter River district cannot be accommodated; but the Government will supply an expensive ferry between North Shore and Sydney, which are supplied by private enterprise with all the ferry accommodation which is required. We stand in this position:

Sixth night.

that with a paltry deficiency—for if you make allowance for the stoppage of auction sales the deficiency, on the Treasurer's own showing, is paltry—we have been asked to impose a new and iniquitous system of taxation. Under these circumstances—and seeing that the Government expect to receive an additional revenue of one or two millions from land under the operation of the new law—it appears to me that there is no need for fresh taxation. If there is to be new taxation, let it fall upon those who live in other parts of the world upon immense incomes derived from property in this colony before its incidence is permitted to affect the producing classes of the country, who too long have contributed an unfair share to the cost of government.

Mr. MELVILLE: I have noticed that honorable members sitting on the Opposition benches are in a very bad temper whenever the Government face them with financial proposals. The honorable member for The Upper Hunter (Mr. McElhone) and the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Cameron) seem determined to re-enact the part assigned to the ancient Scotchman, who, when a suspected witch was caught, resorted to rather peculiar methods in order to discover whether the woman was or was not a witch. The unfortunate creature was plunged into a water-hole, and whether she sank or swam the same verdict was given. If she sank she was no witch; and if she swam it was considered that her connection with witchcraft was established beyond a doubt, and she was killed accordingly. Some honorable members opposite are disposed to treat the Government in much the same manner; but these very gentlemen were afraid to call for a division on the motion of censure the other night.

Mr. GARRETT: There was no occasion to do so!

Mr. MELVILLE: There is not in the House a better tactician, or one who better understands how to pull the wires than the honorable member. They knew very well that if they called for a division they would show their miserable weakness. Some honorable members have recently insinuated that my support of the Government arises from pecuniary motives; but it is very well known that, so far as the financial proposals of the Government are

concerned, I have taken an independent stand, and that their proposal to remove certain duties met with no sympathy from me. Many persons inside and outside of the House have heard me express my disapprobation of the financial proposals of the Government —

Mr. CAMERON: Did you vote against them?

Mr. MELVILLE: The honorable member would have found me voting against them at the proper time. I am sorry I shall not have the pleasure of assisting the Treasurer to place upon the shoulders of the free traders the direct taxation in favour of which they are so constantly prating. The Treasurer is accused of cowardice in abandoning his proposals; but the truth of the matter is that he has been forced by a free trade chamber to abandon them.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: On which side of the House?

Mr. MELVILLE: The record of speeches in *Hansard* will show. Night after night the wail of the Opposition has been that the proposals of the Treasurer if adopted would ruin the country. The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Cameron) tells us that while the Government have been obliged to dismiss from the Railway Department 800 men they contemplate spending £75,000 in bringing additional labour into the market. How remarkably silent the honorable member was when he sat on these benches, and when the late Government tried to force an immigration vote through the House, at the same time dismissing a number of men from the Railway Department! The honorable member knows that there are frequently occasions when it is necessary to dismiss surplus hands in the Railway Department. Almost every treasurer in this colony who has submitted proposals for direct taxation has been compelled to withdraw them.

Mr. GARRETT: That is not so; the proposals to impose stamp duties have never been rejected, and they are collected now!

Mr. MELVILLE: The honorable member for Bathurst will remember the period when the wool and coal tax proposals of the late Government were rejected, and when the Government were saved by the casting-vote of the Chairman of Committees. Shortly afterwards honorable members

[Mr. Cameron.]

went to their constituents ; but the honorable member, when on the hustings, said nothing about the defeated wool and coal tax proposals. Not one member of the Government mentioned the matter when before their constituents.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : We did not propose to tax women's underclothing !

Mr. MELVILLE : The honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition benches has frequently told us that if an attempt were made to alter our fiscal policy he would be found acting with the free traders. When the Martin Administration appealed to the country some years ago on the question of free trade or protection the honorable member for Mudgee (Sir John Robertson) was one of a number of gentlemen who successfully opposed them. The honorable member when appealing to the public on that occasion declared himself in favour of free trade and direct taxation. What is the meaning of direct taxation ? If it means anything, it means a tax on property.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : Not such a ragged-tailed one as this is !

Mr. MELVILLE : It means either that or an income-tax.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER : You might have a capitation-tax !

Mr. MELVILLE : Yes, the honorable member at the head of the Opposition once expressed himself in favour of a capitation-tax. The honorable member expressed a strong desire to see some one come forward and propose a property-tax.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : Yes, and stick to it !

Mr. MELVILLE : What has taken place now that the Government have proposed to carry out free trade theories ? The rabid free traders have risen up in arms against them. They say, " We are favourable to a property-tax, but this is the wrong time for it ; we are favourable to it, but this is the wrong kind of a property-tax ; we are favourable to a property-tax, but the wrong individuals have proposed it." The fact is that the moment those free trade gentlemen find an attempt made to carry out their own principles the stern and practical application of those principles frightens them. If the Colonial Treasurer had persisted in applying his free trade principle, the most determined opposition would have come

from free traders. The principle of the tax is perfectly fair ; it is only where it goes to undue lengths that it is objectionable.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR : We want no taxes at all !

Mr. MELVILLE : There is no doubt about that. The only thing that honorable members opposite want is a majority against the Colonial Treasurer.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : If the honorable member expected one, he would be over here in two minutes !

Mr. MELVILLE : The honorable member cannot say that about me. When I sat in Opposition I opposed the late Government fairly, honestly, and persistently. Five or six of us sat for months on the Opposition benches as much isolated as if the yellow flag were flying at each end. We opposed the wool, coal, and cattle duties to the utmost.

Mr. A. G. TAYLOR : It was a piece of cheek on your part !

Mr. MELVILLE : Will the honorable member say it was cheek on my part to follow such men as the late Michael Fitzpatrick, the late William Forster, the present Minister for Lands, and other experienced members of the House ? The honorable member for Mudgee would do well to show some such cheek as that, instead of exhibiting the sort of cheek which he has displayed on too many occasions. When the late Treasurer proposed the wool, cattle, and coal taxes the honorable member for The Upper Hunter said that the time was not far distant when it would be necessary to impose a property-tax and an excise duty upon all tobacco. I wish to say a few words about the immigration vote. As far as the Government are concerned I have given them a fair support.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : And they have given you the same !

Mr. MELVILLE : That is a statement which the honorable member cannot prove. No one who has known my career either here or elsewhere will say that I act from mercenary motives in the discharge of my public duties. I require no support from any party whatever. I entered the Assembly by fighting a fair battle, and I am prepared to go back and do the same again. If the Government proposed anything that was against my political creed, I would vote against them, even if they

Sixth night.

should be removed from office. I will never sacrifice honest principle for any government. With regard to immigration, I am surprised that the Government did not withdraw the whole sum of £150,000. The honorable member for West Sydney, Mr. Cameron, has been talking about the discharge of working-men, and there might have been some justification for his remarks if this were the first time that working-men had been discharged.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: What, 800?

Mr. CAMERON: When was it done before?

Mr. MELVILLE: I do not know how many hundreds there are; but I do know that the late Government discharged large numbers of men. The same thing takes place under every government.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: We always had money!

Mr. MELVILLE: So would the present Government if they allowed the public estate to be sold. Had they gone on selling millions of acres of land to individuals the public Treasury would always have been full. It is said that capital has been prevented from being circulated in the country owing to the stoppage of auction sales; but I venture to say that nothing of the kind has happened. Thousands of acres of land have been bought by means of bank-notes which were paid into the Treasury, but which were not worth the paper on which they were written. The banks have not the money which the notes represent. Honorable members may laugh, but I suppose they are not aware that the time when the inspection of the banks takes place bullion is carried from one bank to another. The bank-notes with which the land is purchased are merely promissory-notes, and they are taken from the bank to the Treasury and from the Treasury back to the bank, and the people's land is taken from them. I believe that if the proposed property-tax had been imposed in less than twelve months honorable members would have lost their fancy for free trade and direct taxation, and would have learnt that it is far better to raise revenue at the Custom-house. I believe that our taxation should be of such a description that whilst it brings in revenue it should encourage the establishment of local industries. If

[Mr. Melville.

the Treasurer proposed to remove or to impose a duty which would help to destroy local industries he would find me voting against him. I have too strong an appreciation of the industries of the country to be willing to sacrifice them for any government. The taxes which we already possess have caused the development of several industries. Will any free trader, however rabid, deny that the duty on kerosene has not only encouraged the production of kerosene but has also reduced the price to the consumer? The manufacture of vinegar, of maizena, of rope and other articles has been stimulated by the imposition of duties of a protective nature. What is the position of our own farmers as compared with the farmers of Victoria? We find that the growth of wheat and hay in this colony is unprofitable. Our farmers are handicapped. Let us assist local industries, and do away with a class of persons who occupy the position of commission agents between the manufacturers in other parts of the world and the consumers in Sydney, whom they supply with rubbish at a higher price than the articles could be obtained for if they were manufactured in the country. The free traders finding themselves driven from one position after another make wild and ineffectual attacks upon those opposed to them, and they tell us now that the people are going to be thrown out of employment unless certain moneys are voted for roads and bridges. We have been told that the reduction of the Estimates is another cruel act on the part of this Government, who have done so many fearful things—that it will throw hundreds of people out of employment; but we have been told also that that is not correct. We have been told that the second reading of the Land Bill was obtained by promises of roads and bridges and other public works.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON: No!

Mr. MELVILLE: The honorable member for West Sydney, Mr. Cameron, said so. He said the Land Bill had cost the country a certain sum of money, and he followed that up by saying that the roads and bridges which had been promised in order to obtain the second reading of the Land Bill were about to disappear from the Estimates. Surely those who make this charge must be aware of some facts

which justify it; they must know of some honorable member who has had such a promise made to him; and if so, why don't they speak out? If the honorable member for The Upper Hunter had the remotest idea that any particular member had been promised a road or a bridge he would not hesitate to mention the fact. I had no intention of taking up so much of the time of the House as I have, nor would I have done so had I not been interrupted. But with regard to the 800 men who have been dismissed, their dismissal is owing to the fact that the Government have abandoned, to a certain extent, the system of day work in connection with our railways; but many of the men have been employed by the contractors who have obtained the work. When the vote for immigration comes before the House I shall do my best to negative the remaining £75,000, because I am opposed to the expenditure of one penny of the people's money for the purpose of bringing labour into an already overcrowded labour-market. I hope the day is not far distant when the Treasurer—either the present Treasurer or some other—will come down to the House with financial proposals which will conduce to the establishment of industries in the colony, and I shall be happy to do all that lies in my power to assist in carrying such proposals. I am sorry that a property-tax is not to pass, because I believe that property-owners should be compelled to pay in the form of a land-tax towards the protection of their property, and that some of them should be compelled to disgorge the land they have become possessed of, and which they will not use themselves or allow others to use.

Mr. McELHONE: There seems to be an extraordinary muddle in the Government camp. The honorable member for Northumberland is a well-known protectionist; yet if the Government had dared to adhere to their original proposals, which included the remission of certain duties, the honorable member no doubt would either not have voted at all or he would have voted with the Government.

Mr. MELVILLE: You have never seen me shirk a vote since I have been in the House!

Mr. McELHONE: As still further showing the muddle the Government supporters are in, the honorable member for

East Sydney, Mr. Copeland, proposes to give us two years of protection. He has given notice of a series of resolutions which he intends to move on the motion to go into Committee of Ways and Means, one of which resolutions is as follows:—

That as a means of raising further revenue this House is of opinion that it would be judicious for the Government to propose an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per centum on billiard-tables, guns, carriages, velvets, silks, satins, laces, furs, and feathers, fireworks, furniture, upholstery, gas-fittings, looking-glass, plate-glass and glass ware, gold-leaf, grindery; musical, optical, scientific, and surgical instruments; jewelry, marble and granite, pictures, paintings, and statuary, saddlery and harness, silver-plate and plated-ware, and watches and clocks; and an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per centum on all other goods, wares, and merchandise imported into the colony, and upon which no specific duty is levied.

The honorable member proposes to tax grindery; but he says nothing about taxing imported boots and shoes. How would a tax like that assist colonial manufacturers?

Mr. COPELAND: "Grindery" should be "cutlery"!

Mr. McELHONE: That may be the explanation; very likely the honorable member did not know himself what he meant. There is very little cutlery made here—in fact, none at all, except perhaps a few penknives.

Mr. COPELAND: That shows it is not a protective duty!

Mr. McELHONE: If the Government understand one thing more than another it is the old adage:

For he who fights and runs away
May live to fight another day.

Mr. GARRETT: But they will not fight!

Mr. McELHONE: Well, they run away to fight another day. If they heard that their supporters had met again in secret and condemned their latest proposals they would no doubt run away and live to fight another day. As long as they can remain in power that is all they care about. They have now given up all the taxes they first proposed except the tax on tobacco. And who are the largest consumers of tobacco? Are they not the working-men, who are already taxed 2s. a pound on imported tobacco? If we are to have an excise duty at all why not have it on colonial ale—that cursed stuff which ruins a man, body and soul? Why did the Colonial Treasurer not propose an excise duty on sugar, and thereby tax the

Sixth night.

rich sugar company which is making £100,000 a year out of the £5' duty on imported sugar? There is no industry which can bear taxation so well as the sugar industry; and if the Treasurer were to impose an excise duty of £2 a ton upon sugar the cane-growers on the Richmond and Clarence would get as much per ton for their cane as they get at the present time. This wealthy company monopolise the whole of the trade by buying out, or ruining by underselling, every one who sets up any opposition. They pay 10s. a ton for the sugar-cane, and 20 tons of cane will make a ton of sugar. Add £5 per ton as the cost of manufacture, that will make £15 per ton as the cost to the company, which therefore makes a profit of about £15 a ton. If, then, an excise duty of £2 a ton were imposed; it would not affect the value of the cane to the grower. The Treasurer has courage enough to tax the poor man, the poor tobacco-growers, who cannot be sure of a crop of tobacco one year in three, who grow their two or three tons of tobacco in out-of-the-way nooks and valleys, and then drag it 40 or 50 miles to market, but he does not touch the rich brewers or the rich sugar company for fear of consequences. We were told in the usual casuistical manner of the Colonial Secretary that the property-owners have defeated the Government. Who are the property-owners? I say, and I defy contradiction, that the bulk of the property in houses and land belongs to the working-classes and not to the richer classes. Take the whole of Woolloomooloo, Surry Hills, North Shore, Balmain, Waterloo, Ashfield, Petersham, Parramatta—any place within 15 or 16 miles of Sydney—and for every man worth £5,000 you will find 100 persons with little houses worth £400 or £500, and these are the men the Colonial Treasurer attempted to ruin by the most iniquitous system of taxation ever proposed in any part of her Majesty's dominions. The only reason I can assign for the cry against property by the Government is that they have no property to tax. We were told that it would be fairer to tax property than income. Is it fair to tax a poor man who has a little house worth £400 or £500, and let men like Sir James Martin, Mr. Darley, and Mr. Salomons, with their £3,000, £4,000, and £5,000 a year, go untaxed? No one

[Mr. McElhone.

in God's creation except the present Colonial Treasurer would dare to make such a proposal. I say, advisedly, that we owe no thanks to the Government or their supporters for the giving up of this taxation. The credit is due to the Opposition, who by their action put the Government into a corner, out of which they could not get except by their supporters telling them that if they did not withdraw their proposals they would be defeated. We are told that the Treasurer expects to receive a large sum from increased rentals of Crown lands. What a nice time it is to ask the squatters to pay a higher rent! If there is any industry in the colony which should be treated tenderly at the present time it is the squatting industry. I honestly believe that at this moment one-fourth or one-third of the stock of the colony are dead or dying on the arid plains of the interior. You may go from Gunnedah to the borders of Queensland without seeing a blade of grass or a drop of water, and the stock lying dead or dying along the road. Men who were rich twelve months ago are now poor men. I have heard of one person who has lost 8,000 or 9,000 head of cattle during the last three months. On the Lower Namoi there is a station which three years ago was worth £120,000, but which now is not worth £20,000; and it is from persons in this condition that the Treasurer expects to get a largely-increased rental. I will never be a party to exacting an increased rent from those squatters who are left after the drought. I have never yet voted against immigration. I believe that when the country is prosperous and trade is brisk we cannot do better than spend our money in bringing people to the colony; but at a time like this, when hundreds of men are going about the country looking for work, we have no need of immigration. I venture to say that you could find 1,000 men to-morrow for any kind of labour about Sydney, men who cannot go into the country because they have their wives and children with them. I shall not vote a single penny for immigration this year, because I believe that we have plenty of labour in the country to do all the work that is required. The building trade has not been in a worse state for years past than it is in at the present time, and business of all kinds is

slack. And who is responsible for this but the Government, who by their insane action have driven the banks into a corner? If honorable members have read the correspondence recently laid before the House, and which I am surprised the press has not taken in hand with the object of exposing the Government, they must have seen that the manager of the Bank of New South Wales compelled the Government to take the work of floating the three million loan out of the hands of the Bank of England and to give it to the Bank of New South Wales. On the 31st of May the Government notified to the Bank of New South Wales that arrangements had been made for the floating of the loan by the Bank of England.

Mr. STUART: That is not this case!

Mr. McELHONE: Here is the letter:

I do myself the honor, by direction of the Colonial Treasurer, to inform you that the Government has had under its consideration for some time past the question of the bank to be appointed in London for carrying out the provisions of the Inscribed Stock Act of last session (46 Vic. No. 12), and that after mature deliberation it has decided upon employing the Bank of England for that purpose.

From a cablegram received from the Agent-General this morning the Treasurer learns that arrangements have been concluded with the Bank of England, in accordance with the decision of the Government.

That is plain enough, surely!

Mr. STUART: Perhaps the honorable member will allow me to explain!

Mr. McELHONE: No, I do not want any Scotch casuistry to-night. In reply to that letter the manager of the bank wrote:

Referring to our interview of yesterday, I have now the honor to request that you will inform me, at your earliest convenience, how far the agreement between the Government and this bank is, or is intended to be, affected by the arrangement reported in the news column of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* newspapers of yesterday (and heard of by me, through those channels for the first time), as having been made between the Government and the Bank of England for the inscription of the public debt.

But especially is it of moment that we should be advised upon the subject generally as early as possible, for the reason that the condition of the local account of the Government demands immediate attention and arrangement, in the interests of all concerned, and the floating of a new loan has a direct bearing upon this bank's power and desires to provide the Government

with the means to meet its present exceptionally heavy expenditure, in harmony with the terms of the agreement existing between us.

In a subsequent letter the manager said:

The contract between the Government and ourselves contemplates that the aggregate working accounts of the Government shall be maintained in credit to the extent of £300,000, and the fact is that there is now not one farthing at credit of such accounts.

The contract between the Government and ourselves expressly states that the Government shall give to and maintain with ourselves fixed deposits to the extent of £500,000 before depositing or redepositing elsewhere, and the fact is that the Government have between £400,000 and £500,000 deposited elsewhere at the present time, whilst the Government has overdrawn its account with us above £350,000 as against fixed deposit money of £500,000.

Instead, therefore, of our having £300,000 at credit of the working account, and £500,000 at fixed deposit as contemplated by the agreement, the Government has reduced its balance with us, in the working account, to something like £140,000, all told. It has done this suddenly, without arrangement, or time for preparation on our part, and in a stringent condition of the money market, which was described in the last Government budget speech as threatening a commercial crisis, and which stringency has certainly intensified since; and the Treasury day by day is continuing to draw upon us much in excess of its deposits.

Since the 7th of May—that is, in little more than a month—the Government has drawn out of our coffers in Sydney £540,000 in excess of its deposits with the bank during the like period, without our consent, contrary to the contract between us, and without the slightest intimation how far it is intended to extend the exhausting process, or when replenishment will be made.

Under these startling and embarrassing circumstances, my board is compelled to respectfully request the immediate consideration of the Government to the position, and to beg that no further strain may be forced upon the bank pending mutually satisfactory arrangements.

The finale of the correspondence was that the Government were brought to their knees by the bank just as was the case when the present Colonial Secretary was manager of the bank, and Mr. Smart the Treasurer was compelled to give his personal guarantee for advances. The correspondence seems to indicate that the Colonial Secretary was coerced into placing the floating of the loan into the hands of the Bank of New South Wales, because the cablegrams notifying the change were sent by him. I do not see how we could get into a worse state of affairs financially than is shown by the letter which I have quoted. Who is responsible for it? When the Government took office they had an absolute cash

Sixth night.

surplus of £2,000,000, and within six months the Government had to bow down to the dictation of the Bank of New South Wales because the account was overdrawn to such a large extent. Nothing could be more degrading to the Government or to the colony. As to the works which the Government propose to strike out of the Estimates, I must say that I think that their action in this respect will not have the effect of throwing one working-man out of employment. I do not intend this remark to apply to the reduction of the amount set down for roads and bridges, as whatever other works may be postponed there ought to be the least possible delay in providing the people with roads and bridges to enable them to get their produce to market cheaply and expeditiously. The buildings for the Free Library and law courts may well remain in abeyance for the present. No harm will be done by getting rid of the *Wolverene*. Will any one say that the colony will suffer in the least if we refuse to vote a penny for immigration? I think that the Government have acted wisely in reducing the amount for charitable allowances. The Colonial Secretary is deserving of credit for putting a stop to the extravagant expenditure of money on the new hospital buildings in Macquarie-street, and also for preventing the directors of the Randwick Asylum from dipping their hands into the public coffers as they have been doing for years past. I think that the vote for the Department of Public Instruction may be reduced by at least £200,000, and no injury be done to the public school system. The expenditure of the department is grossly extravagant, and if it is allowed to increase it must inevitably break the back of the system. It is proposed to reduce the amount for public works in charge of the Colonial Architect by £51,000; the amount might be reduced by £100,000 and no injury would be done to any one. Then there is a reduction of £30,000 in the item of subsidies under the Rabbit Act and the Pastures and Stock Protection Act. I hope that this does not mean repudiation. An arrangement has been made with the squatters that they are to receive a certain sum of money for the destruction of rabbits and other pests. The striking off of this item may be a penny-wise and pound-

[Mr. McElhone.

foolish policy. I wish to show how money is wasted on our railways, more particularly on the Illawarra line. I think that the Colonial Secretary will admit that this will be the most expensive railway in the colony.

Mr. STUART: Not more expensive than the Northern Junction Railway!

Mr. McELHONE: I will quote from a speech made by the Colonial Secretary at Kiama on the 20th July last. He said:

Another reason was that it appeared to me an error had been committed by taking the railway over the heights of the Bottle Forest route instead of by the lower level of the Port Hacking route. * * * I felt that if the railway was to be a mineral-carrying one, which I know it must be, that to take it up a height of 400 feet above what appeared to be necessary was imposing a permanent disability on the country and the electorate, and upon the possibility of the line paying. * * * I am told by competent engineers who are in the habit of dealing with railway-trains, that if an engine of certain power could convey (say) 250 tons over the one level, that same engine could not take more than 50 or 60 tons over the higher level. If that be so—and the statement is on the authority of the department itself,—then it is apparent that in order to make this railway payable we ought to find out the feasibility of making it on the lower level.

Mr. STUART: You say that I am wrong in that!

Mr. McELHONE: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. STUART: The honorable member has said so on several occasions!

Mr. McELHONE: The engineer-in-chief says it is impracticable to make the railway by that route.

Mr. STUART: He has not been over the country!

Mr. McELHONE: I have nothing more to say on that subject at present. I shall not vote for an excise duty on tobacco as long as an excise duty is not imposed on colonial ale. Tobacco is more necessary for the working-men than beer, and I think that the wealthy brewers of the city can better afford to pay 1d. or 2d. a gallon on beer than tobacco-growers can afford to pay the proposed duty on tobacco. I believe that if the proposed excise duty on tobacco be imposed, the effect will be to close all the small manufactories in the country. If the scheme of the Government is carried out, it will all have to be made in bond, every small industry will be killed, and the

persons engaged in it will have to turn to something else as a means of livelihood. But the Treasurer would not care if, like Samson when he removed the pillars of the temple, he tumbled the whole colony down in headlong ruin. You can find a thousand better arguments in favour of putting an excise duty on beer than in favour of putting an excise duty upon tobacco. The Colonial Treasurer said the other night that he had considered the propriety of putting an excise duty upon sugar, and that he had arrived at the conclusion that that duty ought soon to be imposed. Judging from the action of the Government in abandoning the whole of their propositions, however, I question whether they will dare to do anything of the kind. A few wealthy men have secured a monopoly of the sugar trade of this colony, and they will not allow any, except a few large firms in Sydney, to import sugar. The action of these gentlemen is robbing the colony of hundreds of thousands of pounds which it would otherwise receive in the shape of duties. Excise duties are regarded as a last resource by the financiers of Great Britain, and unless some great emergency can be shown to exist I shall not be found voting for the introduction into New South Wales of this obnoxious form of taxation. At one time in England it was not thought a great crime for those who had illicit stills to put under the turf any exciseman who came in the way of their business. I trust that we shall never reach that state of things in this colony. I understand there are many others who wish to speak to the question, and I therefore move :

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. STUART : I hope honorable members will not press for an adjournment yet. The Government are very anxious to get into Committee, and to submit their proposals in the form of resolutions.

Mr. F. B. SUTTON said it seemed to him to be of little consequence whether the debate was or was not adjourned, because it could be resumed to-morrow on the same motion.

Mr. McELHONE said that under those circumstances he would ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

TAXATION PROPOSALS.

In Committee of Ways and Means :

Mr. DIBBS : I move :

That towards raising the supply to be granted to her Majesty, from and after and inclusive of the 20th day of February, 1894, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon tobacco manufactured or cut in any tobacco factory, on being entered for home consumption, a duty of 1s. per lb., and upon cigars and cigarettes on being entered for home consumption a duty of 2s. 6d. per lb.

I do not submit the resolution to the Committee with a view to take the discussion to-night.

Question proposed.

Mr. GARRETT thought the better plan would be for the Treasurer to submit the whole of the resolutions together; that was the usual course; the Committee would then have an opportunity to consider them *seriatim*.

Mr. STUART : I am not sure that that has been the usual course; but I see no objection to it.

Mr. DIBBS : In order, then, that the whole of our proposals may be before the Committee, I move :

That towards raising the supply to be granted to her Majesty, from and after and inclusive of the 20th day of February, 1894, in lieu of the existing customs duties now raised, levied, collected, and paid upon the several articles, goods, wares, and merchandise imported into the colony hereunder mentioned the duties of customs specified against each (which shall be payable on all such of these goods as were then and are now in bond) shall thereafter be raised, levied, collected, and paid :

Beer, ale, porter, spruce, or other beer :	s. d.
In bottles—for 6 reputed quarts or 12 reputed pints	0 9
Cigars and cigarettes	per lb. 6 0
Opium and any preparation or solution thereof not imported for use as a known medicine	per lb. 20 0
Spirits—on all kinds of spirits imported into the colony, the strength of which can be ascertained by Sykes' hydrometer	per proof gal. 12 0
No allowance shall be made for the under-proof of any spirits of a less hydrometer strength than 16·5 u.p.	
Case spirits—reputed contents of 2, 3, or 4 gallons shall be charged :	
2 gallons and under shall be charged as 2 gallons.	
Over 2 gallons and not exceeding 3, as 3 gallons.	
Over 3 gallons and not exceeding 4, as 4 gallons.	

Stearine	s. d.
Tobacco—delivered from ship's side or from a customs bond for home consumption—manufactured, unmanufactured, and snuff	per lb. 0 1
Tobacco—unmanufactured—entered to be manufactured in the colony. At the time of removal from a customs bond or from an importing ship to any licensed tobacco manufactory for manufacturing purposes only into tobacco, cigars, or cigarettes	per lb. 1 0
Wines—sparkling—for 6 reputed quarts or 12 reputed pint bottles	10 0
Wines—other kinds :	
In bottles—for 6 reputed quarts or 12 reputed pint bottles	5 0

Progress reported.

ESTIMATES FOR 1884.

Mr. SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Governor requesting that the Estimates-in-Chief for 1884 and Supplementary Estimates for 1883 and previous years might be returned to him with a view to the substitution of amended Estimates in lieu thereof.

Estimates withdrawn.

Message, No. 19, from his Excellency the Governor—recommending for the consideration of the Assembly the amended Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1884 and Supplementary Estimates for 1883 and previous years, in substitution for those submitted, with the Governor's message, No. 12, of 22nd January, 1884—ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee of Supply.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL
(No. 2).

Bill received from the Legislative Council without amendment.

VACANT SEAT.

MR. REID.

Motion (by Mr. STUART) proposed :

That the Committee of Elections and Qualifications having reported that George Houstoun Reid, Esq., one of the honorable members for East Sydney, was incapable of being elected or of sitting or voting as a member of the Legislative Assembly, the seat of the said George Houstoun Reid, Esq., is hereby declared to be vacant.

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON : That ought to have been done a month ago !

Mr. STUART : It ought not !

Sir JOHN ROBERTSON was quite sure that no one on the Opposition side of the House would object to this little arrangement. They did not in the case of the honorable member for Bathurst. They were only too glad that Mr. Reid had an opportunity to avail himself of the privilege of going before his constituents. He had always thought it a great privilege to go before the people, and he was sure that honorable members on both sides of the House would not be found objecting to Mr. Reid's seat being declared vacant as Mr. Suttor's was.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

MORT BAY IMPROVEMENT BILL.

Bill passed through Committee without amendment.

Report adopted.

House adjourned at 12.10 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 21 February, 1884.

Dubbo Cattle Sale-yards Bill (second reading)—First Readings—Consolidated Revenue Fund Bill (No. 3)—Assent to Bills.

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

DUBBO CATTLE SALE-YARDS BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. JACOB rose to move :

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said the bill had passed the usual ordeal before it was sent from the other Chamber. It was constructed on the lines of previous legislation in the case of the Orange Cattle Sale-yards Bill. The people of Dubbo wished their municipal council to borrow money to erect cattle sale-yards, and they asked for the power necessary in all such cases. Except in the 6th clause the bill was similar to other bills passed for like purposes. When originally introduced in the Assembly the 6th clause provided that no other sale-yards should be erected within 3 miles of Dubbo ; but in Committee this was objected to, and it was agreed that no distance beyond the boundaries of the municipality should be allowed. Since then it had been represented to him that this omission would render the bill almost inoperative. The 10 acres upon which it was intended to erect the sale-yards was at the north-east corner of the municipality. There was a reserve upon which, if it were sold, private yards might be erected, by which means the objects of the people of Dubbo in providing this public accommodation would be defeated. In Committee he should seek to amend the clause by the insertion of an outside limit of 1 mile.

Mr. STEWART objected that the bill authorised the corporation to collect dues on other property than their own—to collect fees from other sale-yards which might be established in the neighbourhood. They had the land for nothing, they proposed to borrow the money for constructing the yards, yet they would make the owners of other yards pay for selling on their own premises. Never was such a bill before submitted to any legislature.

Mr. A. CAMPBELL presumed that the object of the 6th clause was to prevent other sale-yards being established in the neighbourhood ; probably one was sufficient,