Record of the
Proceedings of the Queensland Parliament
...
Legislative Assembly
11th June 1862
...
Extracted from the third party account as published in the
Courier 12th June 1862

THE SPEAKER took the chair at a quarter past three.

MILITIA BILL.

Mr. BLAKENEY presented a petition from T. B. Stephens, Mayor of Brisbane, on behalf of a public meeting of the inhabitants of Brisbane, praying that the House would see fit to disallow the Militia Bill.

On the motion of Mr. BLAKENEY, seconded by Mr. WARRY, the petition was received.

TOOWOOMBA COURT-HOUSE.

Mr. WATTS, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands the following questions:—

(1.) Has the contractor of the Toowoomba Court-House begun his contract; if so, what time will he take to finish it? (2.) Was the contractor bound in any penalty to complete his contract in any given time? (3.) What quantity of the bricks carted on the ground have been sold or in other ways disposed of? (4.) What time have the bricks been ready for delivery at the place they are now making them, and what number of men has the contractor at work?

The MINISTER for LANDS replied that the contractor for the Toowoomba Court-House had begun his contract, and had undertaken to finish it within four months. The contractor was also bound with sureties in the sum of £300 for the due performance of his contract. The two last questions related exclusively to matters bearing upon the direct action of the contractor and the information sought for the Government were not in a position to afford.

THE CHINESE EMIGRANTS.

In reply to Mr. T. S. Warry, the COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the Government did not propose to take away any steps to prevent Chinese immigration, unless it appeared likely to increase to an injurious extent.

CHINESE AND COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

Mr. WARRY moved that the petition presented by him on the previous day, relative to the introduction of Chinese and Coolies, be printed. The motion was seconded by Mr. BLAKENEY, and a lengthy debate took place, after which the motion was put and passed without a division. [The report of this debate is necessarily held over until to-morrow.]

TRAMWAY COMPANY.

Mr. R. CRIBB, with the consent of the House, postponed the following resolution standing in his name until to-morrow (this day):—"That it would be inexpedient for the Government to entertain any proposition from the promoters of the Moreton Bay Tramroad Company, having for its object the paying of any sum of money to the present proprietors for past expenditure."

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES BILL.

Mr. LILLEY postponed the consideration in committee of the Matrimonial Causes Jurisdiction Bill until to-morrow (this day).

ELECTORAL BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the second reading of the Electoral Bill, would invite the consideration of hon. members to the fact that a measure of electoral reform had been mentioned in the Governor's message as the most important measure that would be introduced during the present session. It would also be remembered that the Government had from time to time refused to alter the existing electoral law. They had various reasons for doing so. Separation from New South Wales had been demanded and obtained, with the view of getting rid of sundry evils. If important alterations were made in existing laws hastily and without due consideration, it would be very probable that the evils complained of would not be removed. It was generally conceded that the franchise of New South Wales was not one calculated to give satisfaction to the majority of the inhabitants of Queensland, and it would be very unwise for them to revert back to a system of which the colonists had so much complained. The wisdom of the introduction of reforms being induced by pressure from without, was perhaps an open question. In his opinion, the proper time to introduce reforms was when the people had been contented for some time with the form of government under which they lived; when everything was quiet, it would be found desirable that everything should be done that was possible to improve the condition of the laws. The present state of the franchise was low enough to admit every one who chose, but at the same time it was possible that many might be excluded from it who had a perfect right to vote. He believed that the alterations proposed in the bill would be found to work much more satisfactorily. It would be found that there were two qualifications—one was for persons who had lived a certain time in a district, and who were possessed of some small amount of intelligence; the other qualification was that for men who could not read and write, but who possessed a certain amount of accumulated property. The idea that a man was born with the right of being represented had long been exploded. It was ridiculous. In some countries a man came of age at fourteen, whilst in others he did not come to age until he was twenty-one; therefore, if the theory of a man's being born with a right to be represented were admitted, some men would possess an immense advantage over others. The bill was intended to deal with the Council (which by an enactment then under consideration would shortly be elective) as with the Assembly. He would again call attention to the provisions of the bill as regarded the franchise; it would be seen that it abolished the property qualification when a man was possessed of intelligence, and was well acquainted with the wants of the district. It was decidedly improper and very undesirable that a resident of one of the Northern towns should be allowed to represent a country district. A representative was supposed to watch over, to a certain extent, and protect, the interests of the particular district which he represented. To do so properly, it was, of course, necessary that he should be acquainted with the wants of that district. By the 7th clause, it was provided that those persons who were not possessed of the amount of education required by the Act, and who yet could lay claim to a certain quantity of business capacity, by means of a high qualification should be allowed to vote. The Government had thought it very necessary for the qualification to be a high one, for various reasons. The majority of the remaining clauses very much resembled in detail the clauses of the other bill. It was also thought desirable that no person should possess the franchise unless he applied for it—if the franchise were not worth the trouble of being applied for, it certainly was not worth having. By the act, which the bill at present under discussion was intended to repeal, if the names of persons remained on the electoral roll after the month of February, they were entitled to vote, no matter how much they might be disqualified; and there was no doubt but that that certain clause of the old act had been much abused by unprincipled persons. In his opinion, it was the greatest flaw in the old act. The 22nd clause provided that no person who was at present entitled to vote would be disenfranchised—whenever a man could prove his being in possession of a *bona fide* claim, he would not lose his vote. By the 23rd clause the appointment of a revising officer was provided, and when it was remembered in what an inefficient and careless manner the lists were at present made out, he thought hon. members would agree with him when he asserted that a necessity existed for the appointment to the office of a man of acknowledged efficiency. In England the different parties which existed had made a practice of sending their own friends to supervise the registration, but in this colony, where no parties existed, it devolved upon the Government to take the matter into their own hands, and by that means endeavour to put a stop to the large amount of fraud which had hitherto been carried

on. The 36th clause removed the necessity for a public nomination, which was a system quite inconsistent with the principles of voting by ballot. A public nomination on the hustings undoubtedly infringed upon the purity of the ballot box. Let them have that principle carried out in its integrity, or return to the old system of open voting. No objection could be entertained to public meetings, where the different opinions that were entertained by the candidate on various topics might be elicited; but it appeared to him to be ridiculous for a man to vote silently subsequently to having on the hustings voted openly. The same clause almost made it compulsory for the proposer to remit with his proposition the sum of ten pounds. That provision was intended to prevent the practice which had been much resorted to, of bringing forward persons to contest an election at the last moment—persons who had not the most remote chance of being returned. That sort of thing was done by persons who wanted a holiday, or by publicans who wanted to put money into their pockets at the expense of the country. It was in accordance with English practice that each man should pay his own expenses, and no one could affirm that the sum of £10 was exorbitant. By the 45th clause, the fact of a man writing his name was considered a sufficient proof of his ability to read and write. The 46th clause provided that every elector should vote for the full number of members to be elected; the principle of the representation of minorities was decidedly opposed to responsible government. A deal of difference of opinion existed as to the advisability of minorities being represented; but he, who had studied the question deeply, was of opinion that the representation of minorities—especially in the way which it was intended by the bill to avoid—was very undesirable. The remaining clauses of the bill were the same, with very slight alterations, as the clauses of the old act. With reference to the schedules, schedule A set forth the distribution of the electorates, and the number of members apportioned to each district. In the framing of that schedule he had done his best to give to every district its fair share of representatives. It would certainly give cause for separation should any of the large and unimportant districts of the colony remain unfairly represented. Each district deserved and was entitled to the full number of members proportioned to its importance; and its comparative importance must be determined upon the basis of population. There could be no doubt but that a large district which contained a number of working men— who were the real wealth and importance of a district—deserved a larger amount of representation than a squatting district of the same size. The district of the Maranoa was getting to be a very important district, and would soon contain not less than a thousand men; and he could say the same for the district which he represented. Rockhampton undoubtedly deserved a representative. The Port Curtis district possessed now two interests, and it was necessary that each interest should be represented. He was happy to say that those interests were not conflicting. There was another interest also which it was very desirable should be represented—he referred to the agricultural interest. Alterations had been made in certain of the boundaries of the electorates – the town boundaries had been extended to the municipal boundaries, a provision which was very necessary, as no one could deny that the suburbs possessed an equal right to be represented with the town. The bill would be further considered in committee, and any slight alterations which might be suggested if found to be desirable would be acceded to by the Government, but any material alteration the Government would oppose, as some considerable time and care had been expended in the preparation of the bill. He believed that if the bill were passed in its integrity, it would be looked upon outside the House as a very satisfactory measure. He would move the second reading of the bill.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN, after having expressed his regret that no one more talented than himself had opened the debate, said on that occasion he did not think the hon. member at the head of the Government had let out the real reason of the introduction of the measure. The measure was brought on by no pressure from without, and he thought he could agree with the hon. mover as to the proper time for bringing in measures of reform. But there was no doubt but that if any measure were carried by which the liberties of the people would be jeopardised, the opposition that would be experienced from outside would be sufficiently strong to show that, as British subjects, the people were prepared to repel, if possible, in a calm and proper manner, any infraction of their liberty. No one could doubt but that the whole principle of the bill was contained in the sixth and seventh clauses. The reform was not such as the country had been led to expect—manhood suffrage was what the country had demanded some time since through the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and he believed that he was sufficiently conversant with

popular opinion as to be enabled to make that assertion truthfully. The hon. mover had said that the suffrage, as it at present stood, was as low as possible. There could be no doubt of the truth of that assertion, and any industrious and honest man who wanted a vote could get one; but he believed that the provisions of the bill under discussion were calculated to prevent a large class of honest and industrious men from getting a vote. Mechanics, who were, as a rule, the most respectable class of the community, never made it a point to obtain real property, and it was quite possible that many an honest and industrious man would never, as long as he lived, be in possession of real property enough to entitle him to vote. The greatest advocates of an education qualification have admitted that half a century at least should elapse before such a provision should come into active operation. What had been done towards educating people to enable them to vote? Absolutely nothing. And it was proposed now not only to deprive them of education, but of the franchise also. He knew instances of men who could not read and write being possessed of as much power of thinking and who could manage their affairs better than many men who could read and write. If the hon. member at the head of the Government would take the trouble to refer to the statistical register, he would discover that no less than two-thirds of the men who had been taken into custody were able to read and write. The idea of making the fact of a man being able to write his own name sufficient proof of his ability to read and write was absurd. He might do it mechanically, as a cockatoo was taught to talk. If an education test was persisted in let the person who applied produce a certificate from some competent person as to his ability. He had no objection to an education test provided that some time were allowed before that provision of the bill came into operation. The idea of the bill being calculated to induce the slightest reform upon the present state of the franchise appeared to him to be a perfect mockery. He could not understand what magic there was supposed to be in real property. A man might realise within a £100 of the sum necessary to secure his vote, and never get beyond that, therefore he would never possess a vote. There was no necessity for him (Mr. O'S.) to follow the clause through; he believed they could manage, when the bill was in committee, to effect some improvement. The manhood suffrage franchise might perhaps not be one altogether without fault, but he certainly must join issue with the hon. member at the head of the Government when he asserted that complaints had been made here against the operation of manhood suffrage. He would point out to the hon. member that manhood suffrage had returned four gentlemen—Messrs Douglas, Walsh, Elliot, and Macalister—for the colony, who would be a credit to any constituency in the world. He hoped the hon. gentleman would withdraw that portion of his speech. The hon. member had also objected to the expediency of public nomination, but had the mode of nomination in this bill existed when Victoria elected Lord Russell and Earl Grey, Victoria would not have obtained separation to this day. With regard to the payment of £10, he would ask the House if it was right that citizens should be made to pay for doing a citizen's duty—a duty which they were bound to do? There was another point to which he would refer—the representation of minorities being inconsistent with the principle of vote by ballot. He would quote a short extract from a pamphlet written by Mr. Hare. The propriety of the representation of minorities had long been a question among the leading politicians of the day, and Mr. Hare had been the only man who had solved the question. (The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Hare has not solved the question). Lord John Russell's reform bill contained a clause to the effect that where three members were to be returned, the electors could only vote for two, in order that the minority of two-fifths should be represented. He (Mr. O'S.) believed that the principal cause of the outbreak in America was the non- representation of minorities. There was no doubt but that the hon. member at the head of the Government was at heart an aristocrat, and that he was speaking against what he thought. That hon. member certainly evidenced a great lack of statesmanship. It was true, he was but a young man, and it was possible that he might be a statesman some time. He (Mr. O'S.) would read the following extract from Mr. Hare with regard to the inconsistency of the representation of minorities with vote by ballot:—

> The ground on which the ballot is demanded is, that without it the will of one man is improperly substituted for the will of another. Whether the vote is thereby more or less wisely bestowed is perfectly immaterial. The will of the constraining party may be as enlightened, his desire for good government may be as great as that of the constrained. The member chosen by the will of the former may be as well qualified to judge of all questions of public policy as he who would be chosen by the latter.
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> It is the office of the instructor, whether in things divine or secular, to elevate the morale and enlighten the understanding of the voter; but the franchise once vested in him, it becomes his duty to exercise it according to the best of

his knowledge and judgment. There is none who may not be misled in his objects or deceived in his instruments; but the discretion which his capacity, education, and experience have given him the elector is bound to employ. Everything which impedes the conscientious exercise of his will is an individual grievance. It is opposed to the principle of the Reform Bill, inasmuch as its effect is practically equivalent to a diminution of the number of voters—but apart from this consideration, a system in which a portion of the electors are induced to vote, not as they—but as others—think right, will collect for the nation an assembly of statesmen and legislators, equal in all respects to that produced by a system in which such influence is excluded, with a difference amounting perhaps to less, but certainly not to more, than the value of the judgment of the constrained class, whatever that value may be.

He would go further, and show that the common law of England did not give the power to the majority of voting away the rights of the minority. There was abundant proof that the non-representation of the minority was objectionable to the common law of England.

Dr. CHALLINOR, who was almost inaudible in the reporters' gallery, said that the arguments of the hon. the Colonial Secretary had failed to convince him that public nomination on the hustings was inconsistent with voting by ballot. He should oppose the principle of the payment of £10. With regard to the representation of minorities, he contended that minorities were represented from the simple fact that different electorates returned different classes of men. The hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. O'Sullivan) had said that many men might get as much as £400, and for want of another £100 would be precluded from the exercise of the franchise. If so, what difficulty could they find in learning to read and write; he had known instances where men of 70 years of age had learned not only to write their name, mechanically, but also to read the Scriptures; and he believed that any man who was in earnest would find no difficulty in doing so. He maintained that manhood suffrage in its integrity had never been in operation. He agreed with the hon. mover that, as the law at present stood, any man dishonest enough to obtain a vote by any means could do so. He received with suspicion the idea of agricultural representation, believing as he did that it would be only an addition to the pastoral interest. It was very necessary that a more correct method of preparing the electoral roll should be adopted. In March, 1862, there were on the electoral roll of West Moreton 1108 names, while in April, 1861, the whole of the male adult population amounted only to 1071. The names on the Ipswich electoral roll of 1862 were as many as 1174, while in April of the preceding year the number of adult males was 806. He had not much further to say. (Hear, hear.) He agreed with the general principles of the bill, and thought that, if the voting paper was pronounced informal if it contained too many names, it would only be fair that it should be informal if it contained too few. It was necessary to protect the candidate as well as to protect the voter.

Mr. JONES was opposed to the bill. Manhood suffrage was the style of reform that was required, and manhood suffrage, sooner or later, must prevail. The clause of the bill that made it compulsory for a man who could not read and write, and who was anxious to possess the franchise, to show that he had £500, was most preposterous and monstrous. By that clause, a man who had brought up a family in a respectable way, and whose sons had been educated, and who were in the habit of appealing to their father upon every occasion, would be allowed to vote, while their father, who did not happen to possess £500, would be precluded from voting. With regard to private nomination, the hon. the Colonial Secretary had informed the House, that as meetings were held prior to the nomination where the opinions of candidates could be elicited, a public nomination was unnecessary. It was well-known that those meetings were attended only by the friends of the persons interested, with regard to whose opinions the general public would be as wise as ever. For that reason only the bill before the House should be refused, and the fine old English custom of speaking on the hustings should be upheld. There was another section of the bill which was also very objectionable—he referred to the one which provided that the exact number of members to be returned must be voted for, he would designate it the anti-plumping clause. Why should a man be obliged to vote for a person whose principles were obnoxious to him? Suppose a case where some infamous character was a candidate—should a man be compelled to send that character to the House to represent himself and the country—a man perhaps to whose principles he was utterly opposed? It was highly desirable that the sixth clause should come to nothing. The bill, if passed, would substantially deprive every man in the colony who could not read and write of a vote. It was a most preposterous clause to insert in an Act. The idea of a man not being allowed to vote because he might have been imprisoned since the roll had been revised was absurd. If that were carried, a young man might come into a town on the

night preceding an election, collect a number of voters together at a public house, and, for a lark, make them all drunk. They would then be turned out, and a few convenient policemen standing near would complete the young gentleman's joke. A town would then be liable to be disfranchised by the magistrate who, of course, should he succeed in carrying his point, would be much applauded by his friends, by whom it would be considered a good joke. It was the most preposterous provision that he could conceive a bill could contain, and would render the bill, instead of being a reformation, a restriction. He had a most decided objection to the bill, and should therefore move that it be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. R. CRIBB was disappointed in the bill, and considered it a reduction rather than an enlargement of the franchise. He denied that there had been, as stated, a complaint against the Electoral Act on the grounds mentioned by the Colonial Secretary. The complaint against the Act was that this, a large district of New South Wales, had only a fractional part of the representation. He denied that the theory that man was born with certain rights was exploded. He for one believed in that theory. Property undoubtedly also conferred certain rights, but if property had its rights, it had its duties. By the bill before the House the property qualification was made five times as high as it was under our present law. The mover had stated that the qualification might be reduced in committee, but that the Government would not consent to any great reduction. If he thought the Government intended to maintain the bill in its integrity, he would certainly vote against it that night. He believed that public nomination was the only way for a man to go before his constituents and state his political views. Private meetings of the candidates' friends and supporters were all very well, but were attended with expence; and this, added to the £10 which the candidate would be compelled to pay, would deter many useful men from coming forward. Private nominations might also be arranged by a few people in a very unfair manner. He hailed with pleasure the announcement of the Colonial Secretary that he considered population the only fair basis of representation, but whether this promise was fairly kept he (Mr. C) could not yet state, as the schedule of the bill had only just been placed in the hands of hon. members, and he had had no time to consider it. It had always been held that six months' residence before registration was long enough, and he saw no reason why this term should be altered to twelve months, as was done by the bill. In a rapidly-accumulating population such a clause would exclude a large number of voters. It would reduce the voters by one half. If the House agreed to go into committee on the bill he trusted the Government would postpone the committal for some time, in order to allow the members plenty of time to consider the schedule. If certain very important alterations were not made in the measure as it passed through committee, he would certainly vote against the third reading.

Dr. CHALLINOR rose to make a remark concerning the property qualification, and was understood to say that he considered it unnecessarily high, and also that the term of residence before registration might be reduced with advantage.

Mr. WARRY was certain that no one required an alteration in the Electoral Law. We all had plenty of liberty, plenty of freedom, and plenty of power at present. If a man here could not earn £10 a year it was his own fault. The bill was a delusion and a folly, and quite uncalled for. People did not require any such measure.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN expressed his intention of supporting the amendment, and observed that the schedule was a violation of the principle laid down by the Colonial Secretary, that population should be the basis of representation. The Darling Downs, by it, were allowed five members, whereas there were not seven hundred electors amongst the lot. A member he saw had been set down for Dalby. He believed that these small towns should be created into boroughs where it was possible, and return a member; but in this instance the member should have been deducted from the two set down for Eastern Downs. An injustice was done to Ipswich by giving another member to the Downs. ("Oh, oh," and "hear, hear.")

Mr. McLEAN corrected the statement of the last speaker, that there was not more than seven hundred people on the Downs. (Mr. O'SULLIVAN: "Electors.") He knew of stations where there were two hundred men who were not on the electoral roll at present, but who had a right to be there. Were these men to be eternally disfranchised?

Mr. TAYLOR was sorry he could not vote on this occasion as he usually did with the

ministry. (Ironical cheers and laughter.) He must go with the hon. member for Warwick in his amendment. The bill would not give satisfaction to the country. He went to a certain extent with an educational and property qualification, but believed that the clauses in the bill referring to this qualification could never be altered to the satisfaction of the country. He would never vote for manhood suffrage, and he opposed the bill because it would eventually lead to manhood suffrage. The present ministers had not a lease of office for their lives, and the first acts of their successors, if this bill were passed, would be to introduce manhood suffrage. He had heard no desire for manhood suffrage expressed outside. The town he lived in was as radical as most towns, but he had not heard the people there demand manhood suffrage; in the country he believed they were opposed to it. Instead of extending the franchise the bill greatly restricted it, and also contained many provisions which it would be found very difficult and expensive to carry into operation. He did not understand the 22nd clause. That clause said—"No person shall be disfranchised by the operation of this act, but all persons whose names shall at the commencement of this act appear on the electoral roll for any district shall be entitled to have their names placed on the electoral roll prepared for such district under this act, and to vote for the election of members to serve in the Assembly, if they shall have proved at the first sitting of the revision court for such district, to the satisfaction of the revising officer, that they are entitled under the laws now in force to have their names retained on the electoral rolls on which the same appear." Their title would be a very difficult thing to prove, and it would be in the power of the revising officer to say if they had any right there or not. They would be quite at his mercy. He would like to have seen this bill introduced when the Minister for Lands had a seat on the opposition side of the House. They would have heard an immense amount of thunder over it then. (Laughter.) This bill was like many others introduced this session by the ministry, or by some kind friend. It was a premature measure.

Mr. B. CRIBB said that at present there was great trouble to know what the electoral law of the colony really was. It was scattered over two or three different acts and orders in council. This bill would consolidate the law into one measure. He should vote for the second reading, with the understanding that important amendments would be made in committee.

Mr. RAFF thought that, whether the majority passed the second reading or not, yet if the Government adhered to the measure in its integrity, it would meet with such opposition in committee that its progress would be stopped. He did not believe, as had been stated, that the bill would reduce the franchise by one half, although it might restrict it. In the electorate of East Moreton there were very few men who recorded their vote who could not read and write. It had been shown that the present law practically amounted to manhood suffrage, and it had also been said that the country required no alteration in the franchise. If this were the case, it would be a pity to pass such a measure as this. He at any rate thought that the Government should defer the second reading of this bill until they saw the fate of a measure introduced in another place—a measure intimately connected with the one under discussion. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. FERRETT had at first been inclined to vote against the second reading, but after hearing the arguments of certain hon. members opposite, he should support the bill. He was, however, by no means satisfied with many of the provisions. In the schedule he saw that Maranoa was set down for one member only. Yet the number of adult males in that district was treble the number of that in many town electorates, especially those in the neighborhood of Brisbane. One hon. member had said that this bill gave more power to a certain class in that House. If the bill did give more power to a certain class, it was not the class referred to by that hon. member. He could not agree that the present electoral law did not require alteration. As the law now stood, the method of placing people on the Electoral Roll was most objectionable, and it also appeared a very difficult matter to get a man off the roll, if he had no right there. In the district which he had the honor to represent, there were several names on the electoral which had no right there. One hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan) had said that every man could mechanically learn to write his own name, and thus qualify himself for a vote. If this were the fact, the bill virtually amounted to universal suffrage. Now a good many members had said that they did not wish to see manhood suffrage and that the public did not ask for it. He for one would like to see greater restrictions than were imposed by this bill. The part referring to Ministers might be got over in committee. With regard to this point, he saw no objection to the towns which returned

more than one member, being divided into wards, as was the case in the municipal elections. (Laughter.) East ward might return its own member. He thought that twelve months residence was too long a time to require, and he would support a shorter period. Some difference of opinion might exist as to the advisability of candidates being compelled to come forward publicly and speak at nominations. No doubt a member so eloquent and so well able to speak for himself as the hon. member for Warwick was in favour of public nominations. There was one complaint against the present electoral law which was brought by many persons living in the interior. It was that men living at a distance from a Revision Court were virtually disfranchised. If hon. members compared the census with the different electoral rolls they would find that whilst in the towns the number of men on the rolls equalled or exceeded that set down in the census, in many of the country electorates not one quarter of the number of men set down in the census were on the rolls. The law at present was very well for men who had only to walk a few yards to the Revision Court, but it virtually disfranchised people who lived two or three hundred miles from such a court.

The SPEAKER having put the question, the House divided upon the motion for the second reading of the bill with the following result:—

Ayes, 14.		Noes, 8.	
Col. Secretary		Mr. Lilley	
Col. Treasurer		Warry	
Minister for Lands		Raff	
Mr. Moffatt		Taylor	
B. Cribb		R. Cribb	
Haly		Blakeney	
Challinor		O'Sullivan	} Tellers.
Sandeman		Jones	}
Coxen			
Richards			
Fleming			
Maclean			
Ferrett	} Tellers		
Royds	}		

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the bill be committed that day week.

Mr. JONES moved, as an amendment, that the committal be postponed for a fortnight. It was a bill affecting deeply the position of a great number of individuals, and the members of that House, in dealing with a measure, were often indebted to suggestions from outside. A longer space of time ought to be allowed for the members of that House, and for the country generally, to consider the bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY stated that after his remarks previous to the recent long adjournment of the House, he could not consistently consent to the amendment, unless it were the expressed wish of the majority of the House that a longer time than a week should be allowed. The bill at present had been in the hands of hon. members for a very long period.

Mr. R. CRIBB supported the amendment, and Mr. HALY opposed it.

Mr. WARRY supported the amendment on the ground that he must consult his constituents with regard to the bill.

Mr. FERRETT observed that if this argument were admitted he must ask for a postponement of six weeks as he could not visit his constituents, consult with them, and get back again before that time. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Dr. CHALLINOR did not consider so long a postponement as a fortnight necessary before commencing the passage of the bill through committee, considering the length of time it had already been before the House.

Mr. TAYLOR considered the delay asked for a very reasonable one, and taunted the Colonial Secretary with refusing to accede to it for fear the voice of the country in the interim should be so unmistakeably raised against the bill that ministers would have to withdraw it. He (Mr. T.) would like to know what his constituents at Western Downs would think of having one of their members taken from them. During the fourteen days asked for there was plenty of work to

occupy the House in the shape of the Estimates.

Mr. BLAKENEY suggested that, before discussing the schedule, colored maps of the districts should be furnished, to assist hon. members.

Mr. O'SULLIAN supported the amendment on the ground that, if only a week were allowed, no expression of opinion from the distant towns could be elicited. With regard to the schedule, he observed that East and West Moreton contained 21,000 out of the 34,000 inhabitants of the colony, and yet these districts returned only thirteen out of the thirty-one members. He begged to remark that the hon. member (Mr. McLean) was right when he corrected him at a previous stage of the debate. Instead of containing under 700 electors, the Downs contained just 767. (Laughter.)

Mr McLEAN spoke briefly in favour of the amendment, after which the House divided on the original motion, with the following result—the Colonial Secretary retiring during the division:—

Ayes, 11.		Noes, 10.	
Mr. Royds		Mr. Warry	
Ferrett		Taylor	
Sandeman		O'Sullivan	
Haly		Jones	
McLean		B. Cribb	
Moffatt		Lilley	
Fleming		Edmondstone	
Coxen		Blakeney	
Challinor		R. Cribb	} Tellers.
Col. Treasurer	} Tellers.	Raff	}
Minister for Lands	}		

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at twenty minutes before nine, until three o'clock to-morrow (this day).