

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 17 APRIL 1872**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 17 April, 1872.*

Presentation of Address in Reply to Opening Speech.—  
Gold Export Duty Repeal Bill.—Electoral Districts  
Bill.—Supply.—Gold Duty Repeal Bill.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY  
TO OPENING SPEECH.

The Speaker, on the House assembling, proceeded to Government House, accompanied by honorable members, to present to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply, adopted by the House on the previous day, to His Excellency's Opening Speech.

The SPEAKER, on the House resuming, reported that the Assembly had been to Government House, and there presented to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply, which had been adopted by the House, to His Excellency's Opening Speech, and that His Excellency had been pleased to receive the Address, and to make thereto the following Reply :—

“ TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

“ Gentlemen,—

“ In the name of the Queen, I have to thank you for the Loyal Address you have just presented to me, containing, as it does, your renewed expressions of loyalty and attachment towards our Gracious Sovereign.

“ I will at once convey to Her Majesty your hearty congratulations on the recovery of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales from his severe illness.

“ I thank you, also, for your assurance that the several important matters to be submitted to you,

shall engage your earnest attention; and I pray that the Almighty may so direct your deliberations that they may conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the country at large.

“ NORMANBY.

“ Government House,  
“ Brisbane, 17th April, 1872.”

## GOLD EXPORT DUTY REPEAL BILL.

Mr. KING rose to move as a formal motion for leave to introduce a Bill to repeal the Act imposing an Export Duty on Gold.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY objected to the motion being regarded as a formal one.

## ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for Additional Representation and a Redistribution of the Electoral Districts of Queensland.

Mr. KING rose, he said, for the purpose of calling the attention of the House, and particularly of honorable members on the Government side of the House, to the conduct of the honorable the Colonial Secretary in preventing him from introducing, by way of a formal motion, a Bill which had for its object the reducing of the taxation of a large portion of the community. He should not have felt called upon to do so but for what was said by the honorable the Colonial Secretary when the former honorable member for the Leichhardt, Mr. C. J. Roys, was introducing a Bill for the destruction of native dogs.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY wished to know if the honorable member was in order in raising a discussion on the motion now before the House?

The SPEAKER said it was contrary to the practice of the House to raise a discussion upon a motion for the introduction of a Bill, or upon the first reading of a Bill. It was the practice to allow an honorable member to explain the nature of a Bill when he moved that it be read a first time; but no debate was allowed on the motion for the first reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he thought that if any discussion could take place at this stage, it must be confined to the question as to whether the Bill would be allowed to be brought in or not.

Mr. KING: That might be correct; but he might be able to give reasons why the House should oppose the bringing in of the Bill. When he was interrupted, he was about to call attention to some remarks that were made by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, when the former member for the Leichhardt was introducing a Bill for the destruction of native dogs. On that occasion a good deal of what was called “ chaff ” was

indulged in by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House; and the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government then said, that honorable members on his side of the House never acted with such discourtesy as to oppose a motion for the introduction of a Bill; but the fact was, that several Bills were blocked from being introduced from the Opposition side of the House, in the same way as the honorable the Premier had on the present occasion tried to block him from bringing in a Bill for the repeal of the export duty on gold. He wished to call the attention of honorable members to the way in which the honorable gentleman was attempting to retard the business of the House, as regarded matters brought forward by honorable members on the Opposition side of House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the honorable member must be aware that the House had been long subject to a course of action, by which, at the commencement of the session, precedence was given to the Government in most instances, and especially in the way of procedure. Now, on the previous day the honorable member took what appeared to him to be a most unseemly course, and one which he must say, seemed to him to be nothing short of sharp practice. Before the honorable member at the head of the Government had time to rise, or anyone on the Government side of the House had time to rise, the honorable member jumped up; and gave notice of his intention to move for leave to introduce a Bill for the repeal of the export duty on gold, though he well knew that the Government had intended to bring in a Bill for that purpose last session, and that they intended to bring it in this session. Now, such a piece of sharp practice as that, on the part of the honorable member, would induce in him (the Colonial Treasurer) a desire to take such a course as had been taken by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government.

Mr. MILES said he hoped that honorable members on the Government side of the House, would not go out of their way to shut the mouths of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. He thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer should have been the last one in the House to accuse any other honorable member of anything like sharp practice. Honorable members had several times seen the Bill of the Government for the repeal of the export duty on gold, and it was one that did not meet with general approval. It was one that proposed that the duty should be gradually reduced on the sliding scale principle, until it expired. Now, he had always supported the proposition of the honorable member for Wide Bay, that the export duty on gold should be repealed at once and entirely; and he thought that on this occasion the honorable member for Wide Bay was quite correct in the course he had taken.

Mr. STEPHENS said he thought the remarks of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer were somewhat invidious, in so far as he characterised the course which had been taken by the honorable member for Wide Bay as something like sharp practice. If the honorable member could assure the House, that the Bill of the honorable member for Wide Bay was similar to the Bill the Government proposed to introduce, then he would admit that the honorable gentleman had some ground for accusing the honorable member for Wide Bay of sharp practice; but if he could not do that, he was not justified in making such an accusation. The honorable gentleman should bear in mind, that for the last two or three sessions the honorable member for Wide Bay had introduced a Bill of this nature; and he had no doubt that the honorable member would withdraw his Bill for the repeal of the export duty on gold, if he was assured that the Government Bill was the same as his. This was the fourth time the honorable member had introduced his Bill; and the honorable the Colonial Secretary should remember that he had always voted against it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was not in reference to the Bill that he spoke of sharp practice, but to the honorable member rising in his place before the Government had an opportunity of adverting to this, or any other subject.

Mr. FERRETT said he thought there was nothing like laying down a rule and adhering to it, and the good old rule which had always been observed here and elsewhere was this, that on the introduction of a Bill, or the reading of it a first time, there should be no debate. Now, what did they get by pursuing a different course, but a debate that was of no use in the end? No doubt the honorable member for Wide Bay said and did a good deal that was useful; but he thought that he shewed a bad example to young members in rising yesterday, and giving a notice of motion for leave to bring in a Bill for the repeal of the gold export duty before any member of the Government had an opportunity of referring to the subject. He was grieved, at the time, to see an honorable member, who must have known what was the practice of the House, rise in his place, and take precedence of the Government. It was, in his opinion, done for no other purpose than to shew what an important man he was.

Mr. GROOM said it had always been the practice since he had been in Parliament to allow the Government to lay their measures on the table of the House, on the opening of Parliament, before any action was taken by private members; and he was surprised when he saw the honorable member for Wide Bay rise in his place, yesterday, before the head of the Government. He could not, however, concur in the course that had been taken by the Government on this occasion,

for he thought, that though an honorable member transgressed the rules of the House, it was not well for the Government to retaliate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Government did not retaliate.

Mr. GROOM: Well, he thought, at any rate, that it would have been well if the Government had allowed the honorable member for Wide Bay to introduce his Bill. Honorable members all knew what it was, and also what was the nature of the Bill of the Government.

The SPEAKER said that it was the usual practice first to allow the Government to introduce all their measures relating to finance; and it appeared from what had been said by the honorable member for Toowoomba and other honorable members, that the Government had not an opportunity of mentioning any of the measures they intended to introduce before the honorable member for Wide Bay rose in his place, and gave notice of his intention to move for leave to bring in his Bill for the repeal of the export duty on gold.

Mr. KING said that he had been accused of discourtesy in this matter towards the Government; but he might say that the course he had taken had been forced upon him, because, last session, two honorable members of the Government—the honorable the Attorney-General and the honorable the Minister for Lands—blocked private members by placing private Bills at the head of the paper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he denied there was any discourtesy shewn to honorable members on the occasion referred to by the honorable member. He gave notice of a motion which came in order, according to the usual practice, to be placed at the head of the paper; but he did not intend, by doing so, to take precedence of the Government or of any honorable member. He only took a lucky day to have the notice placed upon the paper.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he thought that a great deal of time had been taken up unnecessarily in regard to this matter, as the motion of the honorable member would come on, though not as a formal motion, after the motion of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, which was now before the House, was disposed of.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY denied that any discourtesy had been shewn to the honorable member for Wide Bay, on the present occasion. If he had intended to shew any discourtesy to the honorable member for his conduct on the previous day, or to retaliate on it, he should not have allowed the second motion which the honorable member had on the paper to pass as a formal motion. He had only exercised the right of objecting to the motion being allowed to pass as a formal

motion because he thought there should be some discussion upon it; and that was a right which every honorable member of the House was as fully entitled to exercise as he was. But he, as the head of the Government, had another ground of right to object to it. The Bill which the honorable member desired to introduce was one that would interfere with the finances of the colony; and he would tell the honorable member that he would not allow him to introduce the Bill at all, if he could help it. He would not allow the functions of members of the Executive to be usurped by any private member. Now, this was not the first time that the honorable member had shewn discourtesy to the Government, and to himself, personally, as the head of the Government. On one occasion the honorable member undertook to move the adjournment of the House—a motion that belonged always, as he understood, to the leading member on the Government side of the House. So far as his experience went, he did not remember any instance where a private member of the House rose, on the opening of the session, and gave notice of a motion before the Government had had an opportunity of submitting their business to the House. That had always been the rule, and the exception had been furnished by the honorable member for Wide Bay.

The SPEAKER said that the discussion which had taken place on this occasion was, in his opinion, quite irregular; and it must not be taken, in future, as forming a precedent.

The motion before the House was then agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY then rose and said,—In presenting this Bill, and moving, as I am about to do, that it be now read a first time, I am aware that I am departing from what I believe is the usual practice of Colonial Parliaments; but, in doing so, I do not intend going any further than the rules of the House will allow me to go, nor do I intend to trespass against the rules of the House in any way. In taking the course I am about to pursue, I will be only following what is, I believe, the practice of the Imperial Parliament. I am informed on the very best authority, that it is invariably the case in the House of Commons, that a Minister of the Crown, when he introduces a Bill of public importance, or any Bill, takes occasion, on moving that the Bill be read a first time, to state not only the nature and object of the Bill, but also his reasons for introducing it. I believe that that practice, if adopted here, would be attended with considerable convenience to every honorable member introducing a Bill, and also to the House. Believing that such would be the case, I may say that the Government are determined to adhere, as far as they can, to that practice, and to state succinctly the principles of the Bill,

and their reasons for introducing it; and to move that the second reading be made an order for a future day. Honorable members, I think, will agree with me that the observance of this practice will be of advantage to them, as it will afford them an opportunity, before any debate takes place on the Bill, of judging quietly of its merits, and dealing with it without party animosity being imported into the debate, which cannot take place according to our rules on the first reading; and on the second reading they will come prepared to meet the assertions and arguments of the mover of the Bill. I think that will be a practice that will be attended with much advantage in our deliberations, and that, also, a good deal of time and talk will be saved by it. Honorable members, by this practice being observed, instead of having measures brought before them without their having heard the nature of them or having had time to study them, will be able fully to inform themselves about them, and come to some decision in their own minds as to what course they should pursue on the second reading. Those are the reasons which have induced me to adopt the course which I am about to take; and it is a course which, as I have already stated, will, I believe, be found to be of great advantage to every honorable member. The House and the country are aware that I promised, when the House was last in session, to bring in a Bill this session for the redistribution of the electorates, and to provide for additional representation; and I have now so far complied with that promise that I have availed myself of the first available day to bring the Bill before the House, and to move that it be read a first time. I may be taxed by honorable members opposite with being a convert to the views of the Opposition on this question; but as against any such charge as that I can firmly assert that I have always held, from the time I first began to pay any attention to politics in this colony, that a redistribution of the electorates was absolutely necessary, and that, especially, in order to provide for a due representation of the gold fields. I feel that, in dealing with this question, I will have to go over grounds that I have gone over so often before, and that at considerable length, that I will on this occasion endeavor to be as brief as possible in the remarks I have to make, so as not to tire out the patience of the House. It will be in the recollection of some honorable members that in 1870 I introduced a Bill similar to this one. By that Bill I proposed cutting the whole of the districts of this colony into single electorates, and providing for the representation of each district by giving to it one member. The Bill proposed that there should be fifty-four electorates, and consequently fifty-four members. But it appeared that that was a larger number of members than there was any probability of our getting together in our present state, though I hope

that in a few years a further redistribution will be found to be necessary, and that fifty-four members will then be as much considered to be too few, as it is now considered to be too many. So far as my being a convert to the policy of the Opposition, in this matter, is concerned, I am quite willing, if the Opposition so wish it, to make them a present of the policy, if they will agree to pass the Bill, and assist in carrying it through the House. I am quite willing to give up any claims I may possess to having held strong opinions as to the necessity that has existed for a redistribution of the electorates of the colony, if I can secure the passing of the Bill. Ever since I first held a seat in this House the unfairness of the existing distribution of electorates has pressed itself on my attention. We have at present some districts returning members elected by people in one part of the district who had no interest in common with those residing in the other part of it. In the drafting of this Bill I have endeavored, as far as possible, to avoid that error. I need not tell honorable members who have had any experience in drafting Bills, of the extreme difficulties that have to be grappled with in the drafting of a measure of this kind; but I have endeavored to draft it in a way as I thought would best meet the varied circumstances and interests of the different districts of the colony. I may state that I have not been able to take any one basis as a fixed basis of representation; and I have therefore been obliged to take a mixed basis; so that the Bill is founded partly on the basis of adult male population, partly on a basis including women and children, and in other districts property has been taken as part of the basis. I have endeavored, however, to secure as far as possible, that in every district the member shall be returned by those belonging to the same class. There was another and a great difficulty that had to be contended with in the drafting of the Bill, and that was to put the boundaries of the districts so that they should follow natural boundaries as much as possible, and that it should not involve a very expensive survey to define the boundaries; but that well-known lines should be adopted as the lines of demarcation of the several districts; and that those should be lines that would be easily recognised by everyone. I hope it will be found that the Bill has been carried out with that view, and that the divisions of boundaries are such as will be easily recognised by the people living in the different districts. I may here remark, that in the case of some districts the boundaries are at present so badly defined that, as has come to the knowledge of the Government, persons resident in one district have voted in that district and also in the adjacent district—thus voting in two districts on the same qualification. The Government, however, hope that by the provisions of this Bill it will be possible to prevent such pro-

ceedings taking place in future. Honorable members who may not agree with me in the redistribution I propose, if they imagine they can cut up the colony into squares and oblongs, and say there should be so many people in this square, and so many in that one, and give a member to each, will find, if they try it, that it will be impossible to effect an equitable representation of the people in that way. They will have to give and take in every district. Now, so far as I could, as I have said before, I have endeavored to make the districts as equal as possible, both as to interests and the class of population resident in each. I propose by this Bill that the Legislative Assembly should consist of forty-one members, and that they should be apportioned by giving ten to town and suburban districts, five to mining districts, eleven to agricultural districts, eleven to pastoral districts, and four to mixed constituencies that I could not separate. Now, sir, on reference to the table which I have just had circulated amongst honorable members, it will be found that I have pursued the same system which I did before, and with, I think, considerable advantage, of grouping the electorates. The first group consists of the present electorates of Brisbane, South Brisbane, and East Moreton. These electorates have at present seven members, and I propose to give them eight. In cutting up the electorates, they are divided into eight portions, the first being Brisbane city—that is, the city proper—which will be found delineated on the maps and described in the schedules, and includes the main business part of the city. The second electorate is Wickham; and I may here mention that in naming these electorates I am in no way tied to any particular names, and if honorable members have any better ones to propose I will adopt them with the greatest pleasure. The third is the electorate of Fortitude Valley, which is almost untouched, and the fourth electorate I propose to call Enoggera. That takes in the northern suburbs of Brisbane. The fifth is South Brisbane; not the present electorate, which I shewed last session to be entitled to only three-tenths of a member, but the present electorate, with a very large addition of suburban population. The sixth is East Moreton proper, and I may here state, for the information of honorable members, that I only had maps shewing the boundaries of the various electorates finished to-day, but that they will be hung up for their inspection to-morrow. The seventh electorate is that part of East Moreton lying to the north of the northern suburbs, which I propose to call Redcliffe, after the principal parish in that part of the district. The eighth, which we propose to call the Logan, is a piece cut out of the coast end of East Moreton. On reference to the tables it will be seen that these eight electorates possess an adult male population of

7,288, less Polynesians, Chinese, lunatics, prisoners, and foreign shipping. On the basis of adult male representation, this group, divided into eight electorates, gives 900 male adults for each member. The next division is what at present consists of Ipswich and West Moreton. I propose to keep within that district, with some little addition, so as to bring the population as nearly as possible to a fair basis, and to divide it into six electorates. First there is the town of Ipswich, and then the suburbs around Ipswich, north and south, which we propose to call Bremer. Then there are the electorates of Bundanba, which runs down towards the Oxley Creek district; Stanley, which is a very large district, running away past Mount Brisbane to the north; the district of West Moreton, which lies to the westward of Ipswich and the Bremer; and Fassifern, which contains the largest part of the southern district of West Moreton. In cutting up these districts, we have as far as possible put all the persons of the same interests into the same division. The proportion of the male adult population to the number of members is not so large here as in the first group; but, independently of the fact that in West Moreton—so far as I am advised and can gather from statistics—the population is increasing to a greater extent and more rapidly than in any other portion of the country, there was an insuperable difficulty about reducing the present number of members. I propose in the Bill not to favor any district; and in dealing with this measure I do not wish to occasion the loss of the seat of any member of the House. I feel that in endeavoring to carry a measure of this sort through the House, any provision which would entail the loss of the seat of any member would be very likely to lead to the defeat of the Bill; and I believe that the present large population, and the large increase of population which is daily and hourly going on in this group, will entitle it—if not at the present moment, at any rate very shortly—to its present number of members on the basis of population. On the property basis it is certainly entitled to the number of members set down. The next group consists of what is known as the Downs districts, which we propose to cut up into seven electorates. There will be first the municipalities of Toowoomba and Drayton; then the country immediately adjoining that locality, and running along the Main Range, which we may consider almost a purely agricultural district, or nearly so, and which we propose to call Aubigny. There will be another electorate composed of the town of Warwick and the country immediately adjacent to it. Warwick not having sufficient population to justify it returning a member itself, I have included it in a new district to be called Cunningham; and although it may be a mixed district, the interest of all parties will be so closely allied that they will be

almost sure to work well together. The district of Dalby we have treated in almost the same manner, as it includes the town of Dalby and a good deal of the adjacent country. The electorate called Darling Downs is purely a pastoral district, and Northern Downs is much of the same description. The seventh district, which we propose to call Carnarvon, is the now extreme limit of Western Downs. The next group is purely pastoral, and I think there can be no objection to the way in which it is cut up. In fact, it is left much the same as in the last Bill, and I cannot find any better arrangement than adopting the geographical boundary. The next group is that of Maryborough, Wide Bay, Gympie, Burnett, and Mulgrave. In this group there is one new member proposed—a member for Gympie, who will represent a purely mining community; and the present district of the Burnett will be divided into two, one part known as the Burnett and the other as Mulgrave. In this group you will observe that the adult male population is larger than in any of the other groups I have yet come to, and I have found it impossible to divide it satisfactorily to myself, so as to give it an additional member, to which I must admit, taking the population of the entire district, it would be entitled. With the exception of Gympie, which has an adult male population of 1,422, there is no electorate in the group which is entitled to an additional member on the basis of adult male population. The last group—of Bowen, Kennedy, Ravenswood, and Burke—is in somewhat the same position, being entitled, on the same basis, to rather more members than I have been able to allow to it. But the population of these districts is composed of mining communities, who are, as we all know, very good colonists, but who are rather of a migratory disposition; and I do not think the number of electors on the rolls will equal at any time those in the remaining parts of the colony. The other group is that of Rockhampton, which gets an additional member under the electorate of Blackall. Port Curtis is divided, the northern portion of it being thrown into a new electorate, with the port of St. Lawrence as the natural outlet. The Leichhardt is divided into two electorates. Clermont is left as an electorate in itself; and the Mitchell has had some portion of the present district of Clermont added to it, in order to bring up the population as nearly as possible to the basis. I have no doubt that there will be a diversity of opinion in respect to the manner in which these electorates have been cut up. I cannot expect that honorable members will agree with me in every way; and I can only say that when the Bill is in committee, I shall be very happy to receive suggestions from honorable members, and also to adopt them, if they are consistent with the general principles of the Bill. An honorable member has stated that the main reasons for objecting to the partial

Redistribution Bill which was introduced last session to give eleven additional members were, that it was brought into the House ready cut and dried; that it had been agreed to by the Government supporters; that the conclusions were all foregone; and that the House should take the Bill and nothing but the Bill. There was, however, no such intention at that time, and on this occasion the same objection cannot be made, for with the exception of myself and some of my colleagues, none of my supporters have seen it.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: "Hear, hear."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mind, if any one of them desired to see it, I would have shewn it to him with all my heart. But none of them asked to see it, with the exception of the honorable member who seconded the Address yesterday, who asked to see a clause, and I shewed it to him. There can therefore be no objection to the Bill on that ground. It comes in prepared to the best of my ability, and I hope and trust that it will, to a very considerable extent, remedy many of the inconveniences under which we are at present suffering. It gives, as honorable members will see, a considerable increase in the representation of the extreme northern districts. The Kennedy, for instance, which has now only one member, is allowed four; and I am sure that no honorable member will, looking to the large and increasing importance of that district, deny that it is entitled to that amount of representation. With regard to the other districts, I think they are pretty equally divided all over the colony. The principles of the Bill are pretty nearly the same as those which have been introduced over and over again. As I have said before, it proposes that the Legislative Assembly shall consist of forty-one members. The fifth clause is as follows:—

"This Act shall not affect the seats of the present members of the Legislative Assembly except as hereinafter enacted that is to say—If within fourteen days after the passing of this Act any member in his place in the Legislative Assembly declare that he desires to sit for some electoral district comprising portion of the district for which he was returned or if the House be not then sitting make the like declaration by writing under his hand addressed to the Speaker or to the Governor if there be then no Speaker he shall at the commencement of the next session if otherwise qualified become and be the member for such district without any fresh election and may as such member take and subscribe the oath required by the fourth section of the Constitution Act of 1867. But if two or more members desire to sit for the same electoral district that member who has sat for the longest time as a member of the Legislative Assembly shall be entitled to sit for such district and may so declare accordingly."

So that this clause, if enacted, will do away with the necessity of a dissolution; for I could hardly hope, even if I thought it ad-

visible, that honorable members would—after having had very recently, and in some cases pretty frequently, to contest elections—willingly vote themselves out of their seats. The Bill provides that it shall come into operation on the day it passes; but certain things will have to be done under it, such as the revision of the rolls, and it will run concurrent with the Elections Act, giving us the same time for issuing instructions for the revision of the rolls. There is one important improvement in the ninth clause, inasmuch as it specifies, in the right-hand column, the court of petty sessions at which the electoral roll shall be revised, and thus provides against the uncertainty which exists under the present Act. Disputes have frequently occurred, where there are more than one bench in the same district, as to which had the right to revise the rolls, and considerable confusion has resulted in consequence. The eleventh clause provides—

“So soon as all the electoral rolls are completed the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall issue his writs for the return of a member to represent in the Legislative Assembly during the present Parliament each electoral district for which no member has declared his desire to sit.”

So that, as soon as the amended rolls can be made after the passing of the Bill, the new members can come into the House. I can only repeat that I have thrown away all party feeling in the preparation of the Bill, and that I wish to bring it in—and the Government wish it—as a measure for the benefit of the country. I would be glad to see a larger number of members in the House returned by districts in which the interests of the people are the same, as they would better shew the feelings of the country. I may inform honorable members that only this morning I received a letter signed by a large number of residents in East Moreton, saying, that as they heard it stated that they were satisfied with their present representation, they wished to deny it, and to say that for a long time they had considered that they were totally disfranchised through the influence used by the people of Brisbane in the elections for their district. So that in East Moreton it is very evident that the electors of the outside parts of it do not consider themselves properly represented at all. They ought to know their own business, and I may say that I have heard it stated over and over again, that electors would not take the trouble to go to the poll, because they were sure to be swamped by Brisbane. That is also the case, I believe, in many other parts of the colony. I now move, sir, that this Bill be read a first time.

The motion was carried.

#### SUPPLY.

Upon the order of the day being read for consideration of the Governor's Speech, so much of the same as was addressed to

the Legislative Assembly was read by the Speaker.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. LILLEY would suggest to the honorable the Treasurer, that he would postpone his motion until the day after that fixed for the second reading of the Electoral Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER explained that it was merely a formal motion.

Mr. LILLEY said that with that understanding he would withdraw his suggestion.

#### GOLD DUTY REPEAL BILL.

Mr. KING moved, pursuant to notice, for leave to introduce a Bill to repeal the Act imposing an export duty on gold. It was stated, he said, a short time before, in the course of a discussion which had taken place, that any measure for the repeal of a tax ought to be introduced by a member of the Government; but he would now read an extract from May's "Parliamentary Practice" to shew that it was competent for any honorable member to bring forward a measure to reduce taxation. In page 450, Mr. May lays down as follows:—

“A Bill for diminishing or repealing any tax or public charge is brought in upon motion, unless it be proposed to substitute any other tax or charge; or unless the Bill also relate to trade, or to customs which are held to concern trade.”

He had been very much surprised that such an objection should have been made, for the same Bill had been introduced during three previous sessions, and on one occasion even passed its second reading—in fact, the same objection had never been raised before. He thought, however, the authority he had just quoted was sufficient to shew that a private member had a right to introduce such a measure. It had, also, been said, that it had been very sharp practice on his part, to get the Bill placed at the head of the notice paper; but he thought it was not, because after the Bill had been passed through some stages in previous sessions, he never expected that there would on the present occasion be any opposition to the introduction of it. But if it was necessary for honorable members on his side of the House, to take care to have their measures placed on the top of the paper, such a course had been forced upon them by the conduct of the Government and their supporters in former sessions. The Bill, as many honorable members were aware, had been already three times before the House. It was carried once through the second reading, and after that it was blocked at the last moment, and he was unable to carry it through. Now, if that was the case, and the Bill had passed the second reading, and yet, notwithstanding that, the Government had successfully blocked it, he consi-

dered that he would not be doing his duty to his constituents, and a large and important section of the community, if he had not taken precautions to introduce it as early as possible in the present session. But he believed that the honorable the Minister for Works would oppose the Bill, even although it had once been read a second time; and he knew also that there were a large number of honorable gentlemen opposite who were utterly opposed to such a measure, and who, if they could, would crush the miners out of the country. There were others, he was glad to say, who took a different view—gentlemen who held large areas on the Downs for one-tenth their actual value, and who wished to make up, by taxing others, what they themselves did not pay. But if, as the honorable the Colonial Secretary had stated, the Government intended to oppose the introduction of the Bill—seeing that they had a majority which, if told to do so, would reject any measure whether right or wrong, or whether they had on former occasions voted for it or not—he would not take up the time of the House unnecessarily by making any defence of the measure. He would, however, mention one fact, in order that honorable members might not have an opportunity of saying that they had legislated in ignorance of the subject. He would shew what the charges upon gold were in Queensland, and draw a comparison between them and the charges made in New South Wales and Victoria. In Victoria, the average value of the gold was £3 18s. per ounce—much of it was worth £4 an ounce, but he took the average value. In New South Wales the average value was £3 15s. per ounce, but in Queensland the average was only £3 4s. 6d. per ounce, owing to the large amount of alloy with which it was mixed; so that in Queensland the miners only received £3 4s. 6d. for what, in Victoria, the miners received £3 18s. In addition to that depreciation in the value in this colony, ten per cent. had to be paid on all machinery that was introduced, and ten per cent. on quicksilver; and to shew how injuriously that worked, he might mention that a Melbourne firm, finding that there was very little quicksilver in the colonies, and none coming, bought up all they could in the neighboring colonies, and then raised the price from 2s. 6d. to 5s. a pound. The result of that was, that not only had the miners to pay a double price for quicksilver, but that, through the importers here having to pay double *ad valorem* duty—namely, sixpence instead of threepence—the price of quicksilver was 5s. 3d. a pound, instead of 2s. 6d. In addition to that, miners had to pay heavy commission to the banks for purchasing their gold. He had been informed that in New South Wales, owing to a competition between the banks, they had a profit of only about one penny an ounce, whilst in Victoria gold was frequently bought at its full value, the banks getting it for the purpose of sending home as a

medium of exchange. But in Queensland the commission charged by the banks was nearly the same as the export duty—that was, one shilling and sixpence an ounce for export duty, one shilling and sixpence an ounce to the banks, also sixpence an ounce escort charges, and insurance and freight one shilling, which brought the amount up to four shillings and sixpence an ounce. So that the miners had to pay four shillings and sixpence an ounce for sending down their gold to Sydney to be minted, and thus received only £3 an ounce for their gold, whilst in Victoria and New South Wales the miners received £3 18s. and £3 15s. per ounce respectively. He believed that any honorable member who intended to give a conscientious vote on the subject, and who went into the matter fairly, would see how utterly impossible it was for the mining industry of this colony, if burdened with taxation in the same way as it was now burdened, to attain the same strength and prosperity which it had reached in the neighboring colonies. There were gold fields in Queensland of which certain gentlemen were very fond of boasting, as if they had made them; there were gold fields larger in extent than any in New South Wales, and yet, although some of those gold fields had been opened for the last fourteen years, or ever since the Canoona rush, there was only a small population, because no endeavor had ever been made to relieve the miners from the difficulties they had to contend against. He said again that the duty should be repealed, and that in Queensland the same inducements and advantages should be offered to miners that were offered in other colonies. He would not occupy the time of the House further on the present occasion, as he had no doubt whatever, that honorable members had fully made up their minds as to what they would do.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought it would not be honest on the part of the Government, even to give a semblance of support to the motion of the honorable member for Wide Bay; for it must be apparent to honorable members, that the Bill the honorable member proposed to introduce, was utterly opposed to the policy of the Government in connection with the matter. It would, therefore, be obvious to the House, that the policy of the honorable member, and those honorable gentlemen who went with him, must either rule, or the policy of the Government. It would be in the remembrance of honorable members, no doubt, that when the financial statement was made, special allusion was made to the export duty on gold, and that the Government then promised to prepare a Bill—in fact they had, at the time, a notice on the paper of such a Bill—to change the duty at present levied upon gold in Queensland. The difference between the Bill of the honorable member for Wide Bay and the policy of the

Government was, that the honorable member did not feel the responsibility in respect to the finances of the colony that the Government felt, and had, in his (Mr. Bell's) mind, recklessly gone in for a sudden abolition of a duty for which the Government had made no provision, the basis of the Bill of the honorable member being an immediate repeal of the duty. On the other hand, the Government, having fully considered the matter, and feeling the necessity of reducing the tax, had felt themselves in a position to gradually extinguish the tax, and had, therefore, brought in a Bill which would have met their financial views on the subject. Therefore, the policy of the honorable member for Wide Bay would have been better debated if he had waited until the Bill of the Government had come under the consideration of the House. All they had heard from the honorable member about the alloy in the gold of this colony had been provided for in the Bill which had been laid before the House by the Government, and which would be again submitted to honorable members, so that what they had heard from the honorable member as being so mysterious and important would have very shortly appeared in another form. The Government, therefore, standing in their position of having a right to deal with a measure of this sort, objected *in toto* to the course pursued by the honorable member, and objected to discussing, at the present time, the merits of the Bill, because they proposed to go into the whole question when their measure was before the House.

The SPEAKER stated that the proceedings were out of order, as, according to the practice of the House, no Bill should be debated until it was brought on for the second reading. In the present instance the principles of the Bill had been gone into by the honorable member.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it would be remembered that he had objected to go into the object of the Bill at all.

Mr. LILLEY said he was sorry that the Government should think proper to object to the mere introduction of any measure, for he might say that he himself, when a member of the Government, had invariably allowed a Bill to be introduced. He remembered once, when he was in opposition, being induced to introduce a Bill, and that permission was refused to him to do so, and that honorable members who were with him on the Opposition were not at all satisfied with the result; and he must say that it did not contribute to the ease or comfort of the gentlemen who gave him the opposition on that occasion. He believed it was always better to give leave to a member to introduce a Bill on that account. It was not his intention to discuss the Bill of the honorable member for Wide Bay, but he might mention that he had always been in favor of having the export duty on gold repealed. Of course it might be objected to

by the honorable the Treasurer for financial reasons, and there might be good ground for objection; but on the other hand there were arguments in favor of the abolition, as he believed that the miners' rights and business licenses actually paid the expenses of the gold fields. If that was the case, it was a strong reason for remitting the tax. He thought there was no good or sufficient reason for refusing to allow the Bill to be introduced, as there was no mention in the Speech that the Government intended to bring in such a measure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is named.

Mr. LILLEY: No; and therefore the honorable member was perfectly justified in moving for leave to introduce his measure. He thought the Government should agree to the introduction, and then, if they brought in another Bill, the two could be discussed at the same time, which was not an unusual proceeding. He was satisfied that it was an ill-advised course to refuse the motion, although it was perfectly competent for honorable members to vote against it. He remembered that in the case he had mentioned, there was no discussion, but that his motion was contemptuously rejected.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What was the Bill?

Mr. LILLEY: Law reform. He made many attempts to introduce it, but always failed; but he was happy to say that it had become part of the English law some years after he, as a young man, had attempted to introduce it in this colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he would not object to the suggestion of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and upon consideration he thought the honorable gentleman was quite right. He thought he had some special reasons for objecting; but as he had not, he would withdraw his opposition.

The motion was carried.