

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 1872

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 18 June, 1872.

Imprisonment of Polynesians.—Adjournment.—Reporting.
—Alleged Atrocities upon the Aborigines.—Electoral
Districts Bill.

IMPRISONMENT OF POLYNESIANS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that on Thursday evening last, the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba made a statement in the House respecting the imprisonment of three Polynesians from Westbrook Station, which might prove injurious to the colony if it were allowed to go uncontradicted. He would now read the report on the subject which he had received from the Police Magistrate who committed the men to prison, and he thought that by it, honorable members would be satisfied that the statements which were made by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba were not borne out by the facts. He might state that he telegraphed to the Police Magistrate, after the statement was made in the House, for information as to the facts of the case, and in reply, he received the following answer by telegraph:—

“Toowoomba, 15th June, 1872.

“*Re* Westbrook Islanders. Full report in reply to your queries will be posted on Monday morning.

“GILBERT W. ELLIOT, P.M.”

The report which he received was as follows:—

“Toowoomba, 13th June, 1872.

“SIR,—In accordance with your telegram of this afternoon, I have the honor to enclose copy of depositions relative to South Sea Islanders now in gaol, and also to make a full report of their case, as follows:—

“On the morning of Tuesday, the 4th instant, between eight and nine o'clock, eight Polynesians (the majority, if not all, of whom could speak and understand English well) came to my house and complained that they, having engaged with Mr. Beit for three years, had been discharged from Westbrook Station by the superintendent, Mr. Ross; that they wished to fulfil their agreement, but, upon their asking for knives to cut their meat, Mr. Ross three times told them they had better go back to Brisbane, and find their way there the best way they could; they also said they had nothing to eat since the preceding morning. After talking to them for some time, I gave them an order to get their meals in the town, until I could enquire into their grievance, and that afternoon sent a letter to Westbrook, addressed to the manager, asking why these men had been discharged. On Wednesday morning, the 5th instant, I received a reply to my letter from Mr. Ross, saying the Islanders had not been discharged but had absconded. I saw the Islanders about nine o'clock that morning, when they told me they were quite willing and wished to return to their service. I then went to Drayton to hold a court, and on the way met Mr. Ross, who asked me to grant warrants for these men. I told him I would meet him in Toowoomba at twelve o'clock. I did so; he again applied for warrants, which I declined to grant, on the ground

that the Islanders were not absconders, but had come into town to make a complaint to me, whether real or imaginary. After some conversation, I took Mr. Ross to see the Islanders, and explained to them fully that Mr. Ross would give them all they asked for if they returned to their service, which he confirmed in my presence; but they each and all refused to go back, although I spent some time in trying to persuade them to do so, and pointed out the penalty of their refusal, telling them if they would return I would go with them and see the promises carried out; but they said, “No, gaol very good place.” I then granted warrants for their apprehension, and heard their case the same afternoon, and even in court tried to persuade them to reconsider their decision, but everyone refused; so I sentenced the ringleader to three months' imprisonment, and had him removed from the court, when I again asked each of the others to return to their service, but they all refused, and I sentenced each of them to one month's imprisonment. I took great care that each and every one of them should understand all the proceedings, having them taken out of the dock and brought up close to the bench, where I could hear and understand them better.

“In conclusion I may state I did all in my power to settle the difference between the Islanders and their employer, before taking the case into court, and in court I repeatedly asked them why they would not go back, which they distinctly understood; but they would give no reason, simply saying that they would not go back. These men are a fine strapping lot of fellows, and, I believe, have all been in the colony before, and perfectly understood everything said to them. I fully believe that while I was in Drayton, someone must have seen them and advised them to take the course they did.

“I have, &c.,

“GILBERT W. ELLIOT, P.M.”

On receiving that report, he asked for further information; and the Police Magistrate, who had, in the meantime, read the statement of the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, as reported in the newspapers, sent him another telegram on the subject, which he would also read. He (the Colonial Secretary) in his second telegram instructed the Police Magistrate to further an additional report, and the following was the telegram and additional report which he sent:—

“Toowoomba, 15th June, 1872.

“*Re* Westbrook Islanders. Since making report, have seen Groom's speech. Can refute his assertions, if desirable, by further report to you. Please reply.

“GILBERT W. ELLIOT, P.M.”

“Toowoomba Police Office,

“16th June, 1872.

“SIR,—In making further report relative to the South Sea Islanders from Westbrook Station, now in gaol, I shall endeavor to be as brief as possible, but it is necessary to go to some length to place the whole features of the case before you.

“1st. In reply to your query, under what section of what Act I sentenced the men to hard labor, I have the honor to report as follows:—By clause 25 of 81 Victoria, No. 47, Polynesians

are placed under 25 Victoria, No. 11—and I dealt with them under the 4th clause of that Act—they refusing to work or enter into their service without reasonable cause. Messrs. McLean and Beit having paid between £11 and £12 each for them for passage money, and also gave them rations, tobacco, pint pots, &c., this, in my opinion, brought them under that clause of the Act.

"2nd. Why I sentenced them at all, Ross having apparently broken the agreement by refusing them blankets:—

"The complaint of refusal of blankets was never made to me. Mr. Ross, in his evidence, said he told them to go to work, and they then applied for blankets; at that time they were eight miles from the head station. He said they should get them by-and-bye, and he afterwards explained by that he would send them out blankets the same evening. I may here state they all had blankets and swags with them.

"In court they admitted all Mr. Ross said with one exception, viz., 'That he had not ordered them off the station to go to Brisbane.' They all asserted he had done so three different times; and I, thinking there was some misapprehension about the matter, told them I would go to Westbrook with them, and see they got all they required, and were entitled to, if they would return.

"After hearing their statement at my own house on the morning of Tuesday, the 4th instant, I took them to the Post Office Hotel, where I procured them breakfast and a good large room at the back of the premises, in which they had a good fire. I saw them three or four times during that day, when they all told me they had plenty to eat and everything they wanted, and that they wished to go back to Westbrook and serve their three years. I again saw them the next morning before going to Drayton, when they again expressed their willingness to go back.

"Upon coming back from Drayton, I endeavored to make arrangements for their return, but they then, one and all, refused to go back on any terms, and I, considering they had no real grounds of complaint, issued warrants for their arrest; but until the time they were taken in custody (1.30 p.m. on Wednesday), they were lodged and boarded at the Post Office Hotel. By this you will see they were not provided with shelter and food at the lock-up, as stated by Mr. Groom; and from enquiries I have made at the railway station, I find they were not locked up in a van, but were in a second-class carriage, the door of which was opened, and many, if not all, of them got out upon the platform. Again, they were not without food, as the enclosed letter from Mr. Mellor will shew. The ringleader was not a native chief of Lifu, but a man who put himself prominently forward as spokesman for the others, who has been some years at sea, and has also been in the colony before, and is what is called a thorough bush lawyer, and who, in my opinion, guided and led the whole lot. The chief was one of the seven who received one month's imprisonment.

"In conclusion, I can only repeat that I did all in my power to settle the difference between them and their employer, and it was with great regret I had to sentence them to imprisonment in consequence of their determined refusal not to go back to their service without, in my opinion, having any reasonable grounds for such refusal;

and I am still of the opinion that, under the circumstances, I could have pursued no other course.

"I have, &c.,

"GILBERT W. ELLIOTT, P.M.
"The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Brisbane."

In the communication he had received on the subject, there was enclosed the following note from Captain Mellor:—

"Brisbane, 4th June, 1872.

"R. Kelleff, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours of this date, I have made inquiry from the captain and steward of the 'Settler' about finding of the Polynesians, and I find that, during the passage, they had supper as much as they wanted, and in the morning, breakfast before going on the railway; and also the steward gave to a man, with two boys, a loaf of bread and about 8 lbs. of beef to eat on the way to Toowoomba, so the report is totally without foundation. I hope this will be satisfactory, and remain, Sir,

"Yours respectfully,

"(Signed) EDMUND MELLOR."

ADJOURNMENT—REPORTING.

Mr. HEMMANT rose and moved the adjournment of the House. He did so, he said, for the purpose of calling attention to the way in which the debates were reported in the *Courier* and in "Hansard." He referred more particularly to the remarks he made when the House was in Committee of Supply, on Thursday last, as to the way in which a certain firm in Sydney prepared invoices of goods sent by them to this colony. On the following day, on looking at the *Courier*, of which the honorable the Premier was a proprietor, he was somewhat surprised to find that the name of the Sydney firm, which he particularly mentioned, was suppressed. He thought, however, that it would have appeared in "Hansard"; but he found that such was not the case. The name of the firm he mentioned was, he might say, drawn from him by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, and, while he was surprised to find that it was not reported in the *Courier*, he was more surprised to find that it was not reported in "Hansard." It appeared to him that there was a disposition on the part of the Government to shield persons who were guilty of such practices as he referred to; and he was supported in that opinion by the answer which was given by a former Treasurer—the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay—to a question which was asked by the late-Mr. Atkin, on the 21st of December, 1870. Mr. Atkin was then one of the members for East Moreton, and the question he asked was as follows:—

"1. Is the Government aware of the names of the firms in Sydney who are in the habit of shipping goods to Queensland ports, accompanied with false and fraudulent invoices, for the purpose of enabling their customers to evade the payment of the *ad valorem* duty?

"2. Is there any objection on the part of the Government to give publicity to the names of these gentlemen?"

The answer which was given to that question was—

“The Government possesses no information on the subject.”

Now, he had always understood that the object of putting questions to members of the Ministry was, that by giving notice of such questions, they might have the opportunity of obtaining information on the subject referred to, from their subordinate officers. But this practice could not, he thought, have been followed, in respect to the question put by Mr. Atkin, in 1870, for he understood that in the Custom House there was a long list of names of firms suspected of sending false invoices of goods, and that the landing waiters had special instructions to give particular attention to the shipments by those firms. He thought there might have been a delicacy on the part of the *Courier* to publish the name of the firm he mentioned, as it might be invidious to do so in the case of one firm only. Now, he had since been furnished with the names of other two firms, who were also in the habit of forwarding two sets of invoices. The first he would mention was the firm of Petersen, Bosen, and Company, York street, Sydney. Honorable members, he thought, would admit that it was a very difficult thing to obtain satisfactory proof of those practices; and it was only occasionally that such evidence could be obtained; but it was, nevertheless, a well-known fact, that since the imposition of the *ad valorem* duties, the Treasury had suffered very considerably by such practices. The invoice referred to cases of goods sent to a firm which was not now in existence. The goods to which they referred were sent by the “Lady Young” steamer, in September, 1868. There were three cases, and the genuine invoice stated the value to be £344 5s. 5d.; whereas the value as stated in the invoice prepared for the customs, was set down at £243 10s. 6d. This difference arose partly by the goods being invoiced, in the invoice for the customs, at about twenty-five per cent. below their real value, and partly by omitting to mention in the invoice for the customs, some of the goods that were forwarded; and of course the duty paid was less by the amount payable upon the difference between the values stated in the two invoices. The next invoice he had to refer to was one from Thompson and Co., of Pitt street, Sydney. It also referred to a shipment of three cases of goods. The invoices prepared for the customs represented the goods to be of the value of £118 1s. 1d., while in the second invoice, the value was set down at £187 8s. 1d. The course adopted by Thompson and Co. was somewhat different from that observed by Petersen and Bosen, and it was a course which also saved their clerks a considerable amount of time and trouble. It consisted in omitting the alternate lines in the invoice; but not only was that done, but every article was invoiced at about twenty per cent. below

its actual price. Both the invoices he had referred to were dated in September, 1868, and they would be at the service of such honorable members as might desire to look at them. Now, when such was known to be the case, and when a member brought forward an instance in proof of what he said, when challenged to do so, as he was on Thursday last, when the House was in Committee of Supply, his observations, he thought, ought to be reported; and if the daily press was not sufficiently independent to do so, they should be reported in “Hansard.” In regard to discussions of a similar nature in the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales, a very different course was observed by the *Sydney Morning Herald*; and that was a journal whose example the honorable member for Western Downs had said he wished the *Courier* would imitate. By referring to that journal for 1870, it would be found that when such practices were exposed in the Legislative Assembly there the names of the parties mentioned were reported. During the debate which then took place on the tariff proposed by Mr. Samuels, who was, at that time, Treasurer, Sir James Martin named several firms as authorities as to the injurious effects the tariff would have upon the revenue of the colony, and amongst others he mentioned the name of Prince, Ogg, and Co., the firm which he (Mr. Hemmant) mentioned on Thursday last, when the Estimates for the Customs department were under consideration in Committee of Supply, but whose name was omitted from the report of the *Courier*. Mr. Samuels, in replying to the observations of Sir James Martin, said that he did not place much confidence in the opinion of Prince, Ogg, and Co., in respect to a question affecting the tariff, inasmuch as they had passed entries at the customs for goods stated by invoice to be of the value of £300, and when they were called upon to amend the invoice, the value was put down at £1,200. That was what took place in the Legislative Assembly in Sydney, in November, 1870, and it was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the following day, but here the *Courier* had not pursued a similar course. He thought, however, that considering the large amount that was expended upon “Hansard,” over which the House had control, it ought to have appeared in that publication.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he had over and over again stated in the House, that he had nothing whatever to do with the management of the *Courier* newspaper, and he thought it would be admitted that, if he had, the articles would be very different from those that appeared in it. As was very well known, he was one of the proprietors of the *Courier*, but with the management of it he had nothing whatever to do. In fact, so far from having anything to do with it, he did not believe that he could get a letter inserted in it if he wanted to do so. The honorable member

for South Brisbane had full control over it as manager for the other proprietors, and none of the other proprietors had anything whatever to do with what appeared in it. Now, while he said that, he must also say that he did not think the paper would have been justified in publishing the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton, which he delivered in the House on Thursday last; for though it was not actionable as a libel when delivered in that House, he believed that its publication in the *Courier* would have laid the paper open to an action for libel at the instance of those whose names were mentioned by the honorable member; and his honorable colleague, the Attorney-General, was doubtful as to whether it would have been justifiable to have published the speech in "Hansard." However, he had nothing to do with the reports that appeared in "Hansard," but he must say, that, as a rule, the reports in "Hansard" were very much curtailed; and he had said so before. Now, as honorable members were aware, some of the debates that took place in committee were of more importance than those that took place in the House, and yet they were not reported in "Hansard"; and he hoped that some honorable member would table a motion to the effect that the speeches that were delivered in committee should be fully reported. He thought that it would pay the House and the country if they had a full report of the proceedings of the House published in "Hansard," and it would, in his opinion, be very desirable that such was the case. However, as to the *Courier*, he must again repeat, that he did not think the reporters for that journal would have been justified in putting in their report the name of the firm that was mentioned by the honorable member for East Moreton in the course of his speech, when the House was in Committee of Supply, on Thursday last.

Mr. LILLEY said he had not intended to say anything upon this subject, but he should be sorry if it were allowed to go forth to the public that a newspaper could not, without being liable to an action for libel, publish a *bonâ fide* report of the speeches delivered in Parliament. It had been decided, and not long ago, in a case in which the proprietors of the *Times* were the defendants, that a *bonâ fide* report of what took place in Parliament was a privileged publication. The case he referred to was that of Wayson and Walters, and it was then decided that an honest and *bonâ fide* report of what was said in Parliament, though if it were spoken elsewhere would be libellous, was privileged, and, as such, might be published.

Mr. RAMSAY said that as he had been referred to by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, as having been questioned upon this subject in 1868, while he held the office of Treasurer, he desired to say that he did not remember it; but he had no doubt that if such a question was put to him it was inquired into. How-

ever, he did not remember any case of the kind having been referred to him. The cases which had been mentioned by the honorable member took place four years ago, and hence they might have escaped his memory. Now he would ask the honorable member, if he could not produce cases of a more recent date? and he would remark, that the names of those who had received the goods should also be mentioned, as the receivers of the goods were as guilty in the transaction as those who sent them. The honorable member seemed by his remarks to imply that the responsibility of his speech not appearing in the *Courier* rested upon the Government, but that was not the case. The entire management of the *Courier* rested with the honorable member for South Brisbane, and he could mention cases of speeches being omitted which it did not suit that honorable member to have reported. There was, for instance, a speech of his own which occupied six columns of "Hansard," that was not even alluded to in the *Courier*, and he mentioned the matter at the time to the honorable member. As to the particular case which had been referred to by the honorable member for East Moreton, it might have been a matter of doubt at the time whether it should be reported or not; but, as the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had stated the law as bearing upon the publication of speeches delivered in the House, it appeared that the speech of the honorable member might have been reported, and that it was unnecessary the names of those persons he referred to should have been suppressed. For his own part, he thought it would have been desirable, in the interest of the public, that the speech of the honorable member should have been fully reported.

Mr. STEPHENS said he thought that honorable members would give him credit for taking the attacks that were made upon him in the House in respect to what appeared in the *Courier*, very coolly. The honorable member for Western Downs had just charged him with the omission from the *Courier* of a speech of his that did not suit him (Mr. Stephens). Now he must give that accusation the most flat contradiction. He had nothing whatever to do with what speeches should be reported in the *Courier*, or what speeches should not be reported; and in the particular case referred to by the honorable member, he must give the most flat contradiction to the charge that he had had anything to do with his speech not being reported. So far from his having had anything to do with its omission, he did not even know at the time the honorable member spoke to him about it, whether it was in the *Courier* or not. It was a generally understood thing that the reporters were professional men, who knew what was required of them, and it was a rule not to interfere with them. As the honorable member had made so direct a charge against him (Mr. Stephens) in the matter, he

felt called upon to give it a contradiction equally flat and direct. There was no interference with the reporters of the *Courier* whatever, except this, that a certain number of columns were allowed for a night's debate, and they had to confine their reports to that extent; but as to what speeches should be reported, and what speeches should not be reported, there was no interference with the reporters whatever.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he had no hesitation whatever in saying that the honorable member for South Brisbane did not allow anything to be inserted in the *Courier* newspaper, without his having some knowledge of it. The honorable member received from the other proprietors £200 a-year for his services as managing proprietor of the paper, and at their board meetings he was frequently charged with causing things to be omitted. At those meetings, he was charged as plainly with doing so as he was charged with it here. When he caused reports of speeches to be kept out of the paper, as he was charged with doing, he did what was an injustice to others. It was the honorable member for South Brisbane who was to blame for the suppression of speeches from the paper, and for the injury that resulted from that being done. It was no use for the honorable member to come here and deny it, for it was well known that he did so. And some of the other proprietors were as much ashamed of the paper as anyone else could be, on account of that being done. It was not the reporters who were to blame, and he would not stand by and hear them disparaged where they could not defend themselves. He would tell the honorable member here, and wherever he might meet him, that he alone was answerable for all that was bad in the paper, and for all suppressions from publication in it. The honorable member knew that he was guilty of those acts, and that he alone was chargeable for them.

Mr. STEPHENS said that the honorable member had impliedly charged him with blaming the reporters of the *Courier* for the suppression of speeches. Now, he emphatically denied that he had done so. He did not blame the reporters at all, and he had no cause to do so. He believed that they did their work faithfully and thoroughly well. He thought it must be admitted by everyone that they had done their work extremely well. In what he had said respecting the reporters of the *Courier*, he was defending them instead of blaming them.

Mr. THORN said that he had frequently had occasion to complain of the way in which the speeches delivered by honorable members in the House were reported in the *Courier*; and he would take the present opportunity of denying that speeches were well and properly reported in that paper. The speeches of honorable members were reported in the *Courier* just as suited the purposes of the honorable member for South Brisbane. It

appeared to him, that for the last twelve months, the *Courier* had endeavored to make people who possessed an influence in the colony of the least importance, and had endeavored in every possible way to degrade some honorable members in the eyes of their constituents. As to the fairness with which speeches were reported in the *Courier*, he had seen five out of seven columns that were devoted to the proceedings of the House, occupied by a speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane. Now, that could not be called fair reporting, and he had always observed that the speeches of the honorable member were fully reported, while the speeches of other honorable members were not fully reported.

Mr. HEMMANT then, by leave, withdrew his motion for the adjournment of the House.

ALLEGED ATROCITIES UPON THE ABORIGINES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was not in the habit of troubling the House about articles that appeared in the newspapers, nor did he remember doing so before; but, on Saturday last, he picked up, by accident, an article in a Sydney newspaper, and if it had alluded to himself alone, he would have allowed it to pass without any comment, as he did with respect to a great deal of the rubbish that appeared in the newspapers referring to him, and as he would treat the letter that appeared in the columns of the *Courier*, that morning, from his eccentric friend, Mr. Douglas. But the article to which he now referred was such an atrocious libel upon the policy of the Queensland Government, that he felt he could not allow it to go forth to the world without contradiction. It appeared in a Sydney paper called the *Pastoral Register*, and was copied from the *Central Australasian*. The article was as follows:—

“A writer in the *Central Australasian*, who proposes to give a narrative of the expedition to the wreck of the ill-fated ‘*Maria*,’ says:—‘We brought off with us Mr. Johnston, Sub-inspector of Native Police; and from hearing his conversation with some of our fellows, I got my first insight into the atrocious state of public opinion in North Queensland with reference to the blacks. He spoke of killing whole camps—not merely men, but girls and piccaninies—with the greatest coolness. Further experience of this man and other residents in these parts, and information picked up in various ways, have convinced me that the policy of the Queensland Government towards the blacks is simply, though not avowedly, one of extermination. This Mr. Johnston boasted openly to us of the favor and protection extended to him by Mr. Palmer, the Premier of Queensland, and of that gentleman’s approval of his method of working. At the present rate of slaughter, there will soon be no blacks to kill. On this particular occasion—the first on which I had come in contact with any holding such opinion—I could not restrain myself from asking, in a voice that

sufficiently betrayed my indignation, if he did indeed avow that he or his followers killed women and children? He saw at once what were my feelings, and answered straightforwardly enough—that if he did so he never said anything about it.”

Now he begged to give that statement the most unqualified contradiction. Until he saw this article he did not know that there was such a person as Mr. Johnston connected with the Native Police force—he was utterly unaware of the existence of such a person till then. Now he wished to state this most emphatically, that the Government, ever since he had been a member of the Government, and in fact ever since there had been a Government in the colony, had never pursued a policy of extermination in dealing with the blacks. The policy of the Government towards the blacks had been for the repression of crime; and he had always, in giving instructions for the mounted police, required that there should be strictly enforced upon the attention of the officers the necessity of frequently patrolling their districts with the view of preventing crime. Their policy had been one for the prevention of crime, and not for punishment. When he saw this article he communicated with Mr. Johnston, by telegraph, to know if the statements were true, and that officer denied emphatically having made such a statement as was attributed to him. He had received two telegrams from Sub-inspector Johnston, from Cashmere, under to-day's date. This was the first one:—

“The statements contained in extract from *Pastoral Times* are without foundation. I beg permission to contradict them in that journal.”

The second telegram was as follows:—

“I remember seeing the survivors of the ‘Maria,’ but held no communication with most of them. The only ones I spoke about blacks to, were W. Forster, who sided with them, and Mr. Coil. I never made any such statements as contained in the *Pastoral Times*. Dr. Tate, who is one of the survivors, is now at Georgetown, who was present, and to whom I refer you; also, Captain Gowland, to whom I stated I never was in Brisbane, neither did I ever see the Colonial Secretary.”

If this had been a matter merely affecting himself he would have allowed it to pass without taking any notice of it; but as the article charged the Government with pursuing a policy of extermination towards the blacks, even to the piccaninnies, he could not allow it to pass without contradiction; and it was solely with the purpose of doing so in the most distinct and emphatic way possible, that he had brought the matter before the House.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the second reading of the Electoral Districts Bill.

Mr. MACDEVITT said he desired to congratulate the honorable the Colonial Secretary on having introduced a measure of this kind

into the Legislative Assembly; and also upon the concise and lucid manner in which he did so when he brought it forward for a first reading. He did not have the pleasure of listening to the speech of the honorable gentleman on that occasion; but though he had not had that pleasure, he had had the opportunity of reading his remarks as reported. He had also read the Bill itself attentively, and while he hailed it, as everyone who was anxious to see some measure of reform passed, with the utmost satisfaction, he must confess, and with some regret, that it did not come up altogether to what he considered to be the requirements of the colony. If they were to search the Bill from beginning to end with the view of ascertaining the specific principle upon which it was founded, they would search in vain. When the work of reform was undertaken without the assistance of any specific principle to go by, and when the question of reform was made one for furthering party politics to some extent, instead of providing a fair measure of representation, it could not be wondered at if the measure should be an imperfect one. He fully believed that the Government desired to do what was just in the matter of reform; but, at the same time, he considered that they were controlled by a peculiar influence—an influence which tainted even this liberal measure—the most liberal measure which they had yet brought in. It was quite impossible to discover any principle in this Bill by which it could be judged. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, and others, had claimed that the adult male population should be taken as the basis for allotting new members over the colony; but, if they were to search this Bill from beginning to end, they would find that this principle was departed from, and that, in fact, it did not exist in it. Anyone who was a stranger to the measure and to the deliberations of the House on the subject, if he were asked to give his opinion of the measure, and to say if he considered it was based upon the principle of the representation of the male adult population, or in fact, any other distinct and recognised principle of representation, would have to admit that he could not see in it any reason to justify him in saying that such was the case. From the fact that it had not, as it appeared to him, been framed upon any distinct basis of representation, was, he considered, the great mistake in this Bill. Now, there was a well-known principle as a basis of representation, and it was one that was admitted by men who were versed in the science of Government to be the most correct and equitable principle by which the representation of the people could be regulated, and that was the representation of population generally. It was, of course, impossible to follow out this principle, or any other principle that might be laid down as a basis of representation strictly; but still it was a principle that should

be taken as a standard, and one that it was safe to go by. Now, it was well known that when the constitution of the United States was framed, after grave deliberation, that was the standard of representation which it was considered to be wise to adopt, and it was adopted accordingly; and he thought that it required very little reflection to shew that that was the proper standard to take in this colony, because by taking it they also gave to property its fair and legitimate influence. If they applied that rule as a basis of representation, they would find by it that property was pretty fairly divided amongst the population; and that if they allotted representation according to population, they would also allot a fair share of representation to property. In America, it was found to be impossible to devise any system that would give the same amount of satisfaction; and having the experience of that country before them, and as the principle there had never been departed from, he thought it would be unwise for them in this colony not to take advantage of the lesson which the history of that country taught them. If there were behind what appeared on the surface of this measure of reform, some secret political influences to be gratified, he must admit that it would not further the purposes of those influences if the population basis was accepted as the legitimate basis by which representation should be regulated. He did not mean to say that any such influences had been considered in the framing of the measure, or that it had been drawn up so as to carry into effect any concealed motives, and secure an advantage to one particular party over another; but still he must say that it appeared to him there was a strong tincture of something of the kind throughout the whole of the measure. Looking, however, at it impartially, and considering the strong party feelings of honorable members on the Government side of the House, he considered it was wonderful that the measure was so fair to the general representation of the colony as it was. Speaking more particularly as to the district he had the honor to represent, he must say that he was thankful to the honorable the Colonial Secretary for bringing in a measure that gave a more adequate recognition of the claims of the Kennedy district to a fuller representation than was provided for in the Bill that was formerly brought in on the subject. By that measure it was proposed to give only two new members to the Kennedy, making three altogether for that district; but now it was proposed by this Bill, to give it three additional members, making four altogether. He must do the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government the justice to say, that after the discussion on the second reading of the Bill, which was withdrawn last session, and in place of which this Bill was proposed, he intimated to him (Mr. MacDevitt) that he would consider, favorably, his proposition, that there should be a fourth member allotted

to the Kennedy district. Now, he was glad to see that in this measure there was a fourth member proposed for the district; but still he held that that amount of concession was not sufficient. If they applied to that district the only principle for which the framers of the Bill contended, that of an adult male population basis, it would be found that with a fourth member, the Kennedy would not be fairly dealt with. There might be some difficulty in dealing with the large centres of population, such as Brisbane, Ipswich, and Rockhampton; and there might be some justification for not giving them such a large share of representation as on the ground of numbers they might be entitled to, because the exercise of public opinion, through the local journals, would go to some extent to secure them against injustice being done to them, and, at the same time, strengthen the position of the members representing those districts. Now, no such thing could be said with reference to the case of the Kennedy, because the population of that district was so sparsely scattered that they required all the influence that representation, on the basis of population, could give them, in order to secure the claims of the several portions of the district being listened to in the House. The honorable the Minister for Works had, he would admit, given considerable attention to the local wants of the district, so far as he had brought them before that honorable gentleman; but notwithstanding that, and though from the influence of public opinion on both sides of the House, and the increasing importance of the North, there was something being done for the district, there was still great dissatisfaction existing in that part of the colony. He had received a letter from a resident at Ravenswood informing him of two or three grounds of complaint of want of attention to the requirements of the township, the population of which was very rapidly increasing. The hospital, for instance, which received from the Government only £350, though it was entitled to receive £1,000, had had to be closed because of the want of funds to carry it on. The post office and other public buildings were also complained of as being insufficient; and the inhabitants had been compelled themselves to erect a temporary bridge. Now, the construction of a substantial bridge was a work of the most vital necessity for the ordinary traffic of the township. He must however say, the honorable the Minister for Works had, in consequence of the representations which he (Mr. MacDevitt) had made to him on the subject, given instructions to the Superintendent of Roads for the Northern District to prepare an estimate for the construction of a suitable bridge; but in the mean time the diggers had been under the necessity of erecting a temporary bridge, by a public subscription. Now such a state of things, he thought, shewed beyond all question, the great necessity there was for the Kennedy district receiving a fair share of representation, ac-

ording to its population. Now, he would not object to the Leichhardt, Springsure, and other districts of which Rockhampton was the centre, receiving the amount of representation which it was proposed to give them under the Bill, if other districts were treated in a similar manner. But he found the districts of which Rockhampton was the centre, with a total male adult population of 7,128, was to have eight members allotted to them, while the Kennedy, with a population of between 6,000 and 7,000, was to have only four members allotted to it; and he had to complain of that as an injustice to the district he represented. If the Kennedy district was to be left as it was, justice should be done to it by increasing the number of members in proportion to its population. Then there was also the district of which Ipswich was the centre; it had six members given to it, while the Kennedy, with a larger male adult population, was to have only four members, and the same might be said of several other districts. The district of Maryborough and Wide Bay was dealt with in a similarly unjust manner. Now, if the honorable the Colonial Secretary was anxious to secure to himself the reputation of being actuated in this matter by a fair spirit of liberality, those were objections to the measure which he should endeavor to remedy. It was particularly worthy of remark, that the two districts that were unjustly dealt with, were those of the Kennedy and Wide Bay, the inhabitants of which were at the last election hostile to the administration of the honorable member; and he thought, therefore, that to deal unjustly with those two districts, would not tend to increase the honorable gentleman's reputation for statesmanship. If the honorable gentleman was willing to do justice to the principles he desired his conduct to be judged by, he should not, he thought, make the two districts where the population were against him at the last election, a signal exception in respect to representation. Now, it had been pointed out to him how the injustice, so far as the Kennedy was concerned, could be easily remedied; and that was simply by making Ravenswood a separate electorate; but not to take in with it the new diggings on the other side of the boundary, such as Charters' Towers and the Burdekin. Another representative might, with great justice, be given to those places. That district, which about a year ago was comparatively a wild, was now inhabited by about 2,000, and it was advancing rapidly in population and prosperity. There were two mills employed there in quartz crushing, and there were two in the course of erection, while the machinery for another was being sent up there. Ravenswood had, according to the figures set down, a larger proportion of male adults than some other districts to which one member was given. He thought, therefore, that the electorate might be very fairly divided into two—the

Broughton River, which would be a natural boundary, separating them. If some such course as that was not adopted, the measure would not be of so satisfactory a character as it was said to be. On the understanding that such necessary amendments would be made in committee, he hoped the Bill would shortly become law, and that it would result in an improvement of the management of the public affairs of the colony.

Mr. LILLEY said he was very glad to find that they had at last entered in something like earnest upon the real business of the session, and he hoped he would be met by honorable members on the Government side of the House in the same spirit in which he intended to approach the discussion and consideration of this measure—a spirit that would be divested, as far as possible, of anything like party feeling; and with the sole object of endeavoring to obtain as sound a system of representation for the colony as they could, under present circumstances, devise. He was anxious that whatever result the changes proposed by the Bill might have upon the state of parties in the House, they would accept of them in a manly spirit. He did not himself expect to gain anything like a party triumph by the amendments he intended to propose on the Bill; and he hoped honorable members on the Government side of the House would, as far as human nature would allow them to do so, divest their minds of all party feeling, as to the amendments that might be proposed by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. In the main, he might say the Bill was sure to pass the second reading, and it would have to be dealt with chiefly in committee. He had given it a very careful consideration, and he believed it could be made, with some alterations—and those not of a very extensive character—a Bill that would be acceptable to the community. At all events, it would be better than the system they had at present; and if they made even a short step in advance, they would effect some good, and their labors during the present session would not have been in vain. The only fixed and definite principle which the Bill could be said to contain was that of dividing the colony into single electorates—for it appeared to him that, in other respects, the basis of the Bill ran in a double groove. He would admit that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had had a very difficult task in framing the Bill; but it seemed to him that, while the honorable gentleman had endeavored to base his Bill on a double groove, he had had some slight regard as to population, and a steady regard to the adult male population. There was a tolerably fair consideration shewn as to the adult-male basis. The Bill seemed to group the electorates, as regarded population, into three classes—those having a population of 1,000; others with 2,000; and, again, others with 3,000. Now, considering the difficulties the

honorable the Colonial Secretary had to meet in regard to the boundaries of electorates, the Bill might be said to have been framed with considerable fairness. The honorable gentleman, he believed, had endeavored to do in the matter what appeared to him to be fair and right. It was but reasonable, however, to consider that he had also had a strong regard to the sanctity of squatting electorates, and that he had carefully singled them out and so dealt with them as to provide a few little Goshens which might be of service to his party. But they could not blame him for doing that, for they could not expect that he would commit political suicide in bringing in a measure of this character. Now, whilst he would accept of the Bill in good spirit, and believing that it might secure a tolerably fair representation, he must not be understood as giving his approval of the system of single electorates. He accepted it simply as a matter of expediency; but he did not wish to be understood as giving up his belief that population was for all purposes the easiest basis to go by, in order to secure the largest measure of justice. It was a basis that secured the fair representation of the people, and also the representation of intelligence, and of the wealth and property of the colony; and in every respect, whatever it was desirable to infuse into representation was obtained by basing representation upon population. More particularly in this colony should this basis be adopted, where the inhabitants were all more or less on an equal footing, from the wealthiest squatter down to the poorest laborer. They were nearly all equal, and had equal rights, and therefore in adopting the population basis they would obtain in the easiest way all that it was desirable to have represented. They might be referred to the case of England as affording an example of representation which they ought to copy, but so far as the actual state of representation in England was concerned they could not find a worse example; and if honorable members would take the trouble of reading at length an article in the *Westminster Review* for April—the last number, he believed, which they had received—they would find set forth in it some most startling anomalies in the English system of representation. They would find that some small boroughs, having a population of five, six, or ten thousand, had an equal representation with cities containing a hundred or two hundred thousand of a population. By this article the grossest anomalies were shewn to exist in the English system of representation. The writer to which he referred gave tables, shewing the anomalies which existed, but although he (Mr. Lilliey) did not intend to make use of them at the present time, he would ask honorable members to bear with him whilst he read a few extracts, and to give them their best attention. He would deal with the principles contained in the measure by-and-by; but he thought it was

essential, now that they were discussing the representation of the colony, even if he was rather tedious, that he should not only give expression to his own views on the question, but also that he should shew how they were fortified by the opinions of others. He admitted that it was a most difficult question to deal with, and that men might approach it with widely different views, but at the same time with the most perfect honesty and intention of purpose; and he wished to deal with it in a broad, and he might say, a catholic spirit. He wished before he discussed the details of the measure which had been introduced by the honorable member at the head of the Government, that he should tell the world his opinions, on the matter of representation, in as few words as he could, and also without trespassing more than was necessary on the time of the House. He believed that the population basis was the best in every respect, and the most convenient for a colony situated as Queensland was, and therefore it should be adopted as near as possible. At the same time he admitted the very grave difficulties that the honorable the Premier had had to face in trying to place the representation of the colony under its existing circumstances on such a basis. He believed that it would be impossible to have that basis everywhere, but he thought that as far as they possibly could they should approach that basis. He did not believe in the adult male population basis; but he thought that combined as the two systems were in the Bill before the House, out of them they might get a compound measure which would have the effect of giving something like an expression of the popular feelings of the colony. There were some examples in the extract he was about to read which he thought would shew the gross anomalies which existed in representation in England at the present time, and which were certainly most remarkable. Speaking of the contrasts offered by the different towns and metropolitan boroughs, the writer stated:—

“We subjoin, for the sake of comparison, two lists; one, of the metropolitan boroughs and towns with a population above 100,000; the other, of fifty-six boroughs with a population below 10,000, each of which still returns one member; to the latter we have added the two smallest boroughs still returning two members. Thus it is simply the fact that, taking the large and small boroughs in the aggregate, one man in the latter avails as much in political weight as twenty in the former. If we make the comparison between the largest and smallest constituencies, the difference is still greater. Take, for instance, the first on the list of the large, and compare it with the two first on the list of the small towns; we shall find that Eversham and Northallerton have conjointly a population of 9,848 souls, and return the same number of representatives as Marylebone with a population of 477,555; and that, consequently, the inhabitants of these two interesting little villages have as much influence in regulating the destinies of the country as fifty times their num-

ber residing in the capital. This incidentally illustrates what we shall have to insist upon at greater length hereafter. The two members for Eversham and Northallerton are Tories, and the two members for Marylebone are Liberals; consequently, on any division, the vote of the 9,848 'rurals' of Eversham and Northallerton might cancel the vote of the 477,555 citizens of Marylebone."

Then there was a list of other boroughs, some returning one member to represent a population eight and nine times as large as that of other places which returned two members. He found, for instance, that Wednesbury, with a population of 116,768, returned only one member, whilst Tiverton, which had only 10,025 inhabitants, returned two members; and so it went on right down the list. It would thus be seen what a gross evil would be committed if the state of representation in England was taken as an example at the present time. He thought, also, that it was a question whether a wealthy, intelligent, and populous city like London should not have its proportion of representation in the same way as the county of Essex, or any other English county. There were various other inequalities pointed out, and it was shewn that they were manifested in nearly as glaring a manner in the county constituencies as in the boroughs. For instance, there was the industrial constituency of Lancashire, with a population of 398,287, which only returned two members; whilst Rutland, which could not be called an industrial county, and had a population of only 22,070, returned two members. That was only one part of Lancashire, for he found lower down that south-west Lancashire, having a population of 352,756, had two members, and that the same number was given to Westmoreland, with its population of 51,563; Northumberland, with 54,520 inhabitants, had two members, whilst the West Riding, with a population of 379,363, had only two members—and so on;—the inequality prevailed throughout the whole of the representation of England. The reason of that was well known—it was because in England the great landed interest had been able to retain its hold upon the representation. He had given those figures as an example for the guidance of honorable members, so that the grievances which the people of England were yearly trying to have remedied should be avoided—one of the greatest of which was, that the large cities and industrial counties were all so grossly unrepresented in proportion to other parts of the country. Surely, it would not be said by any honorable member that, with the franchise people possessed in this colony, there was anyone who had not a right to be represented—for, if that was said, then it would only be saying that there were some who had an inherent right to govern or rule the country, and that certainly had not as yet been discovered. Then, he would take it that the represented were the whole of the people, or

ought to be; if they were not some injustice was done, and, if they were, then any measure which might be passed should be made as fair and equitable as it possibly could be made. Now, what had been the result, under the present system of representation in England? He would go on quoting from the writer he had quoted from previously, and he would again say that his object in doing so was in order that not only his own views should be expressed, but that they should be fortified by those of others. So far as he himself was concerned he meant to accept the Bill with any alterations which might be made in it by the House; except, of course, there was such a change that no man in the just exercise of his public duties could accept it. In its present shape, however, he was not opposed to it, and he thought by the course he was now adopting he was clearing away a great many difficulties, and was assisting to enable honorable members on both sides of the House to approach the question in a fair and friendly manner. The writer of the review went on to say:—

"Under our present system of representation it is absolutely impossible for the dwellers in our urban districts, the essentially liberal and progressive portion of our population, to secure the adoption of any measure of social or political reform without entering upon a long, costly, and painful agitation. The House of Commons ought to be an exact index of the public mind upon all questions relating to the public welfare. But so far is this from being the case, that the advocates of new measures, even when they are unquestionably approved by a majority of the community, or at least by the majority of those who form an opinion on political matters, are almost invariably driven to hold monster meetings and threatening demonstrations, before they can induce Parliament to believe that a majority of the nation is in favor of the desired legislation."

It was to avoid that agitation and violent means, in future, that he thought they should now endeavor to make the present Bill as far as possible a just and fair measure of representation, to suit the population of the colony, so that the people might have the means of giving expression in the House to their opinions, instead of holding large and agitated meetings, where matters were not likely always to meet with that fair and calm consideration which it was desirable should be given to them. He believed that it would be far better to have the people fairly represented in the House, and that was why he had always been so earnest and anxious that a fair and just measure should be passed when they entered upon the question of representation. The language of Mr. Bright was next quoted by the writer of the review. He said:—

"If you want any great measure now, what is the process of obtaining it? You generally have to contend for it up to the point of civil war. This has become so much the custom in this country, that the ruling class never believe that you are in earnest until you get up to that point

Now, they tell you that the people don't care about reform. You don't find 100,000 men assemble on Newland Hill, in Birmingham—you don't find men assemble in vast multitudes in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and threaten that if the Bill be not granted in the course of a week's time, they will be on their march to London. Of course not, and I hope that nothing of the kind will come, for I hope that nothing of the kind will be necessary; but the fact that they taunt us with the absence of this, is a proof that they are, however unconscious of it, influenced by the notion, and, in fact, by the knowledge, that no great thing is ever wrested from the Government of this country by the people, except it be at the point of violent action. We are like subjects contending with a conqueror."

And so on the writer went—giving examples which it was not necessary for him (Mr. Lilley) to read. Next, the writer referred to what would be the feeling of foreigners, if they had their attention drawn to the state of things in England. He said:—

"Let one only imagine what a foreign statesman or politician would say, if our system were explained and proposed to him for adoption in his own country. If a Frenchman were advised to give four representatives to each 100,000 in Brittany and La Vendée, and one to each 100,000 in Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, he would consider his adviser insane. What would an intelligent Italian say, if it were proposed to give fourfold the proportion of representatives to Calabria or the Abruzzo that is given to Florence, Turin, and Rome? or what would a German say if it were suggested to him that a like advantage should be given to the inhabitants of Posen and East Prussia over those of Berlin and Cologne? Nay, what would Englishmen say if any of the rurals or ultramontanes in the French, Italian, or German Chambers should venture upon such a proposal? Yet this is precisely our present system, and its effects are similar in kind, if not in degree, to what they would be if adopted in those countries. Things, however, that are considered too bad for the people of any other land are deemed by some among us good enough for Englishmen, if only they have existed long enough, and we have got used to them, being as it were to the manner born. If at any time it is proposed to amend one of these manners, and to adopt in its stead one that has been approved of by our neighbors, we are at once told, what certainly is very true, that the proposed alteration is un-English; and this by the English Philistines is held a more than sufficient ground for its rejection.

"In every foreign country, without exception we believe, the principle of the assignment of representatives in equal proportion to the population of the districts represented has been adopted; certainly this is so in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Italy, and Spain."

To that he might add America; so that in nearly the whole world the principle of representation in proportion to population had been adopted, and he hoped that they would be able to frame the Bill at present before them in such a way—even with single electorates—that for the next fifty years, at least, it would

not be necessary to make any change in the system of representation in the country; unless indeed it was for the adoption of one of the more scientific modes which were being agitated in Denmark very strongly, and also in England. He referred to Mr. Hare's system in England, which in Denmark was represented by that of Mr. Andrea; in both, it was known as the system of proportional representation. In the "American Law Review" for January of the present year, a very able article appeared on that very subject, and he believed that in this colony they would yet have to come to it; but he was not, although a strong liberal, one of those who approved or liked frequent or strong organic experiments and changes in the system of representation. If they succeeded in making a fair measure of the Bill now before them, he hoped that it would remain the law of the country for years to come. He thought the system of single electorates was an experiment which might very fairly be tried, and that, at all events, they should endeavor to make it the best they could. He would, at any rate, give his best assistance to the Government to make it a successful experiment, and he hoped that for the sake of trying any theoretical change, they would not disturb it for years to come, if it should come at all near a fair and practicable solution of the question of representation. Hence, honorable members would understand how anxious he was that the Bill should be a fair and equitable measure. For instance, he should very much regret that they should leave the result of their labors in such a crude form during the present session that next year a cry should arise for further reform in that direction. He would be sorry to see that; for although representation was at the root of all political life, still, whilst they were agitating for further reforms in that respect, the business of the country—he meant what was ordinarily known as the business of the country—was at a standstill, and they were not doing much good, unless, indeed, their agitation and struggles should end in a practical solution of the difficulty for years to come. In the "American Review" he intended to quote from, the system of representation was discussed. He did not, at the present time, intend to dwell upon Mr. Hare's system or the Danish system; and although he did not altogether believe in the system of single electorates, yet as the honorable the Premier had made it a principle of his measure, he would support the honorable gentleman in carrying it through—quite through the whole Bill. He thought it was due to that honorable member, and also to himself and other honorable members, that that being the principle of the Bill, it should be carried out in its integrity, and have its trial. The writer in the "American Review," after discussing the various systems, arrived at a conclusion in favor of that of Mr. Hare, and awarded the palm to it. Mr. Hare's prin-

ciple applied to the whole of England as one constituency; but the writer seemed to think that that was a mistake, and that a more perfect system would be to have very large constituencies to return say ten or twelve members. The writer mentioned what he considered to be a blot on Mr. Hare's system, in the following words:—

“Mr. Hare himself seems to contemplate treating the whole of Great Britain as a single constituency, and electing the whole House of Commons on a single ticket. But this is unreasonable, and the suggestion of so unmanageable an undertaking has done something to discredit the whole scheme in the eyes of practical men. Ten or twelve representatives to a single district would probably be found to be a convenient number. In Denmark the constituencies return from three to seven members each. In this country the existing divisions of counties would probably, for the most part, be convenient for State elections, and the states would be districts of convenient size for elections to congress. But the larger States would probably have to be divided. Of course, the larger the districts, the more varied and the more exact is the representation.”

The article he wished to read from the Review was a very able one, and, as the honorable the Premier had taken a great deal of interest in the question of representation, he would be glad to bring it under his notice. Now, the following was what was claimed as the particular merit of Mr. Hare's system:—

“In the first place, the representative body itself would promise to be not only more justly, but more efficiently made up. Not only would the proper political organisations be more fairly represented, and that under conditions likely to bring out their best men, but other interests which at present have no hearing, or at least are heard of only through the politicians, could, if they saw fit, send their own men, and their best men, to speak for men. There could hardly fail to result a deliberative body far beyond what we are in the habit of seeing, in point of ability and character, embracing a much greater range of knowledge and experience, and embodying a much greater variety of opinion and conviction. Such a body, truly representative, and containing within itself the accredited agents of all parties and interests, need not look to the newspapers or to the lobby for facts or for arguments. It would be competent to do its appointed work of investigation and discussion, and gain in self-respect and in public estimation accordingly. The more this was felt to be the case, the more it came to be perceived that real head-work was being done, the more careful would all parties and interests become to be represented by their best men. It is true that the scheme of proportional representation would permit the extremists to send extreme men. But it would also permit moderate men to be represented by men of their own kind—a kind which the majority rule is sure, in times of excitement, when they are most needed, to send to the wall.

“Could the principle of proportional representation have been recognised in the composition of the House of Representatives twenty years ago, it would have introduced into Congress a large number of northern democrats and southern whigs,

occupying a middle ground, and holding the balance of power—men out of favor at home, but strong enough, both in numbers and position, to check the violence that led at last to civil war. But the aggressive pro-slavery party having, finally, under the majority rule, outvoted and silenced all opposition at home, and their northern allies, who might have held them in check, being also outvoted and silenced, no middle-men were left, and a breach become inevitable.”

The fact was that Hare's system was to give due weight to the opinions and convictions of minorities; of course, not to give way to them entirely, but to fortify and strengthen their opinions. Then the writer proceeded:—

“In the second place, as we need not repeat, the system of proportional representation would probably prove a vast stimulus to the political zeal and public spirit of the voter. The removal of arbitrary restrictions would expand the range and elevate the character of his choice. With districts large enough to return a considerable number of members, the elector is reasonably certain that his vote will not be given in vain, but that it will have a distinct and appreciable effect in securing the election of a candidate entirely to his mind. This could not fail to prove, as Mr. Hare says, a direct and powerful appeal to everyone who has any care for the community in which he lives not to neglect this public duty. And it is, curiously enough, a game in which there are no losers. Everybody draws a prize; every voter succeeds in electing his man. Some of the candidates, of course, fail of their election; but even they, for the most part, have the consolation of knowing that they have been distanced by their friends in the race, not driven off the course by their opponents. But among the voters nobody is outvoted or defeated. The most inveterate habits of political indifference would certainly give way before this certain prospect of casting an efficient and successful ballot.”

Now, on the contrary, a system of single electorates was of such a nature that it divided the country into so many arbitrary majorities. It would not be a real representative house. They might have, in fact, large accidental majorities represented, although they did not represent the majority of the people, and when the powerful majorities outside were not represented, there was a real national loss of power in the government of the State. The same thing was quoted by the writer in the Review:—

“In this point of view the most noticeable feature in the proposed schemes is, that however they differ in other respects, they all contemplate the abandonment of the system of single electoral districts, a system well enough adapted to secure a full representation of local interests, but obviously inadequate to give expression to bodies of men, united not by proximity of abode, but by similarities of thought and opinion. Of course the larger the districts are made the more fully is the system of proportional representation illustrated. Ten men elected from ten single districts would probably, as at this moment in Massachusetts, be all of a color, so to speak, the majority in each district holding substantially the same views as in every other. But if this State were

thrown into a single district, and the principle of proportional representation applied, there cannot be a doubt that the friends of protection, of free trade, and of labor reform, of civil service reform, and of revenue reform, not to speak of the partisans and opponents of the administration, or the now disfranchised democracy, would all nominate, and would most of them elect, representatives to their mind. Twenty men chosen from a single large district would exhibit still more precisely the shades of political opinion among their constituency, and the range of choice offered to each voter would be proportionately increased. The system of single districts, on the other hand, not only gives an entirely unnecessary and injurious prominence to local jealousies and prejudices, but imposes a restriction equally injurious and unnecessary upon the elector's freedom of choice; obliging him, in fact, at least as it is administered in this country, to look for his representative among his neighbors, rather than among his political sympathisers and friends. 'A greater tyranny,' says Mr. Fisher, 'cannot be conceived, than to force a large part of any population, even if it be only a minority, to commit the utterance of their wishes and the guardianship of their interests to a man they do not trust, and whose enmity they have won by the bitterness of a party contest.' It by no means follows, however, that important local interests need be neglected. 'In point of fact,' says Mr. Lytton, 'I believe it usually happens [in Denmark] that in all cases, except where a man happens to be of great and exceptional public eminence, the persons put forward for the representation of each constituency are connected by associations more or less direct with the local interests of the district which they are invited to represent. Indeed, it stands to reason that this must naturally happen.' The most notorious evil connected with the system, however, is that known as 'Gerrymandering,' by which is understood a skilful defining of the boundaries between different districts so as to secure to the party in power a larger share of representatives than its numbers fairly entitle it to. This is so easily done that it would probably be found that no party, since the process was invented, has ever had sufficient virtue to withstand the temptations it offers."

There was appended in a foot-note a description of the origin of the word "Gerrymandering," and there were drawings shewing the claws and feet, well defined, of one of those extraordinary Gerrymandering animals, which he would recommend honorable members to look at. It appeared that the word was not alone used in America, but was common in France and Belgium, and also in the Swiss Cantons. The writer, in a foot-note, remarked:—

"The term Gerrymander, as is well known, dates from the year 1811, when Elbridge Gerry was Governor of Massachusetts, and the Democratic, or, as it was then termed, the Republican party, obtained a temporary ascendancy in the State. In order to secure themselves in the possession of the government, the party in power passed the famous law of Feb. 11, 1812, providing for a new division of the State into senatorial districts, so contrived that in as many districts as possible the Federalists should be outnumbered

by their opponents. To effect this all natural and customary lines were disregarded, and some parts of the State, particularly the counties of Worcester and Essex, presented singular examples of political geography. It is said that Gilbert Stuart, seeing in the office of the *Columbian Centinel* an outline of the Essex outer district, nearly encircling the rest of the county, added with his pencil a beak to Salisbury, and claws to Salem and Marblehead, exclaiming, 'There! that will do for a salamander!' 'Salamander!' said Mr. Russell, the editor: 'I call it a Gerrymander!' The *mot* obtained vogue, and a rude cut of the figure, published in the *Centinel*, and in the *Salem Gazette*, with the natural history of the monster duly set forth, served to fix the word in the political vocabulary of the country. So efficient was the law that at the elections of 1812, 50,164 Democratic voters elected twenty-nine senators against eleven elected by 51,766 Federalists; and Essex county, which, when voting as a single district, had sent five Federalists to the Senate, was now represented in that body by three Democrats and two Federalists. It was repealed in 1814, and the death and burial of the monster were celebrated in prose and verse throughout the country.

"In England there are, except perhaps in London, no arbitrary political boundaries; but in Switzerland, where the district system obtains, the Gerrymander has long been at home. 'The history of free countries in all times,' say the Neuchatel Commissioners, 'including Switzerland and our own Canton, is fertile in examples of this expedient—a device so common that we hardly venture to give it its true name. But it is, in fact, fraud, jobbery, and malversation in office. The Government thereby misuses powers conferred upon it in order that it may secure a just representation to pervert and control the result of the election; it takes advantage of functions established for the good of the whole, to further the interests of a part. For this evil, inherent in the district system, no remedy has ever been found."

He thought he had now exhausted his observations on the basis of representation and on the single electorate system; and he would, therefore, approach the consideration of the Bill itself, and mention the amendments which he intended to suggest, and which he hoped would be adopted if honorable members thought they were likely to be of advantage to the country. The fact was, that it was to be hoped that the House would frame such a system of representation that it would be fair to everyone and understood by everyone, and that no one should feel, as Dr. Walker in his election sermon mentioned, he felt:—

"When I put my hand into the ballot box, that I am being used by somebody, I know not whom, for some purpose, I know not what."

In some of the bunching constituencies, both at home and in America—and probably in this colony—similar experience might, no doubt, be quoted. With regard to the Bill itself, he thought that the first two sections of it would require considerable practical alteration so as to make it work satisfactorily—the main part of it was the registration of

electors, the number of members, and the boundaries of electorates. He was satisfied that some amendments would be submitted by another honorable member, and then the honorable the Premier would see his way to adopt them or not; they would relate chiefly, he believed, to the compilation and collection of the electoral lists. He thought, also, that they would have to excise the fifth section, but for that he would give his reasons in due time. Now, he thought it could be said, that the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in making his redistribution, had not forgotten the claims of the North; and he could not help thinking, that the proportion of representation assigned to it by the honorable member was somewhat large, considering the total population of those districts. He thought the evidence of population in figures would shew that the population there was composed of a larger proportion of adult males, and was not therefore in such an actually settled condition as the population in the central and southern districts. It was pretty certain, he believed, that where there was an unusually large preponderance of adult males, there was less settlement; and that where there was a larger proportion of females, the population was more settled. That was, he considered, a just principle upon which to go. In regard to the northern groups, he found that they had twelve electorates under the Bill. They had an average of 971 adult males, which was larger than any other groups, and only 2,117 persons each, so that, he thought, they could rightly say that it was a less settled population than that in other parts of the colony. He was not disposed, however, to refuse to the North, the representation which was asked by the honorable the Premier in his Bill. There were growing populations, he believed, in most places; and if the clauses which he intended to propose were inserted in the Bill, any inequality in the representation could be rectified afterwards by a very simple expedient. The electorates to which he referred as forming the northern group, were Rockhampton, Blackall, Port Curtis, Normanby, Leichhardt, Springsure, Clermont, Mitchell, Bowen, Kennedy, Ravenswood, and Burke. Those were the twelve that he called the northern group. Then he came to the central group, and there he thought the honorable the Colonial Secretary had done some injustice, though he did not believe it was done intentionally. That group had five electorates with 1,115 adult males, and 3,152 persons each, and he thought the honorable member might be prepared, even if so doing involved giving another member to the House, to grant an additional member to that group. He thought that that could easily be done by carving another electorate out of the electorates now proposed; he thought it could be done if the honorable member was willing to do it. He was not going to enter into the question of boundaries, as, in the first place,

he was not sufficiently acquainted with the various districts; and in the second, because he considered that it was a matter which would have to be dealt with fully when the Bill was in committee, when every honorable member would no doubt take care that his own district was not unfairly treated. He had certainly no reason to complain of the way in which Fortitude Valley had been treated. He did not think the honorable the Premier had tried to gerrymander him out of his seat, and the Valley still lay smiling before him. In regard to the western group and perhaps one or two other places, the honorable gentleman had certainly shewn what might be called a fatherly care for the squatting districts, as they were termed. That group comprised three electorates, with 723 adult males, and 1,371 persons to each, so that he thought they were somewhat over represented. He thought that the electorate of Balonne was a mistake, although, he dared say, the honorable member for Maranoa, who was now away, would fight stoutly for it. His opinion was, however, that so small a population as Balonne had—591 adult males and 1,216 persons—should not be created into an electorate at the present time. He thought the adult male population was too small; but it was a matter for the House to decide, and, perhaps, it might be settled satisfactorily if the honorable member at the head of the Government would consent to give one or two more members to the Bill. He believed, from a close scrutiny, that the honorable gentleman had endeavored to act very fairly. Of course they knew that pressure had been brought to bear upon him by gentlemen outside, and perhaps, inside of that House, and, therefore, some allowance should be made. The honorable member had had a very difficult task before him, most unquestionably. In regard to the Downs that partiality was a little more glaring perhaps, although in respect to the adult males the honorable member had kept the proportion pretty well throughout in making the distribution. On the Downs they had 888 adult males and 2,947 persons to each of the seven electorates in that group; and when they compared that with the North, where he had shewn there were 971 adult males and only 2,117 persons to each electorate, it would be seen that the difference was considerably in favor of the North. The Ipswich and West Moreton group had 756 adult males and 3,041 persons to each of its six electorates; and then the Brisbane group, with eight electorates, had 911 adult males and 3,711 persons to each. That group included the East Moreton electorates as well, and his impression was, that instead of giving a portion of East Moreton to the electorate of Bundanba, it would be better to keep the electorate of West Moreton within its present limits, and give one more member to East Moreton. He thought that would be better, and he would submit it for the consideration of the

honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. He wished it to be understood, that in alluding to those matters he had no desire whatever to gain any local advantage for the Brisbane districts, although he thought the metropolis should be allowed to keep its weight. He thought that a great deal of agitation had been raised on that point, but he hoped that during the present session, when the question of representation was in a fair way of settlement, all reasons for local jealousies in respect to local matters between Ipswich and Brisbane would be at an end. If the central group, comprising Maryborough, Wide Bay, Gympie, Burnett, and Mulgrave, instead of having five electorates, were to have six, the proportion of adult males would be 929 adult males to each, and the number of persons to each would be 2,626, which would be very near the standard which appeared to have been taken by the honorable member at the head of the Government, and would be a larger proportion than had been given to the northern group. Then, in regard to the East Moreton and Brisbane group, if the number of members was made nine instead of eight, by cutting out the electorate of Bundamba and correcting the boundaries, the proportion would be 809 adult males and 3,298 persons to each electorate. He was inclined to think that if those alterations were agreed to, the Bill would be an approach to something like a fair measure of representation for the whole of the colony. He had not sufficient local knowledge to say whether or not the honorable the Colonial Secretary had attempted gerrymandering; but he had trusted the honorable gentleman, and believed that he had not done so, and he thought he had been very accurate, allowing for a little leaning towards the squatting districts. Now, he thought, that putting aside the technical and practical amendments that would be, he believed, suggested by another honorable member, the fifth section, which endeavored to obviate the necessity for a general election, would have to be cut out. He looked upon it as an attempt to interfere with the prerogative of dissolution, and for that reason it was most objectionable. Let honorable members consider what would be the state of the constituencies, if the honorable the Premier succeeded in carrying the Bill with that clause in it. New electorates throughout the whole colony would have been created, and men would have to be shifted from one roll to another, the boundaries would have been altered, and, in fact, the constituencies would be new. Besides that, since the last election, the franchise had been altered, so that there was a different franchise and would be different electorates; and thus, if the proposed Bill became law, the present House would cease to represent the colony, as the electorates would then be constituted. It was thus most necessary that they should not attempt in any way to interfere with the prerogative of dissolution, and that they should not attempt to foist

upon constituencies members who had not been elected by them. Again, there was the other very good reason, that the franchise had been altered. He was of opinion that during the present session the House as now constituted was quite competent to do any legislation; but he thought that after the close of the session—after they had fairly discussed and carried out the whole programme of the Government, as he trusted they would do, there should be a dissolution, so that the new electors and the new electorates should have an opportunity of returning members to that House. If his fellow colonists willed that certain gentlemen should be in power he was quite content; for with him it was *Vox populi vox Dei*, and he was always ready and willing to bow to the will of the people. All he earnestly desired was that they should have a House that could fairly be called a representative and a popular House, and he need scarcely say that he would be glad to see the long struggle in which he had been engaged since he left office satisfactorily concluded; and be relieved from it. He was responsible for the repeal of the two-thirds clause, and he also felt that he was responsible for the system of representation which was introduced in consequence of the repeal of that clause, and that it should be, as far as possible, just and equitable. It was the feeling of that responsibility which had made him so anxious and watchful in his endeavors to obtain what he considered a fair representative system for the colony. He repudiated on behalf of himself, and other honorable members on his side of the House, any desire to so manipulate the electorates as to return a majority of one particular class of men in future; but, on the contrary, he had endeavored to look upon the whole subject, as far as possible, in a broad and judicial spirit. He felt that he was, as it were, sitting in judgment upon the question, and that he should, as far as he was able from his experience and his reading, use every means in his power to obtain for his fellow colonists a fair system of representation. He did not think there would be much difficulty in persuading honorable members, when they saw the strong reasons which existed for excising the fifth clause, to adopt the course which he had suggested. If the Bill was merely to give additional members, the case would be different; but as the whole franchise had been altered and the electorates would be new, he considered there should be a new House. Now he thought that honorable members on both sides of the House should look upon the present question impartially, and he hoped with fairness. He had drawn up some new clauses, to which he was not wedded, as some amendments might be made in the details of them, but which he believed contained the germ idea of a system which might be introduced and adapted to work either for adult population only, or in the double-groove principle proposed in the Bill of the honorable mem-

ber at the head of the Government; at the same time they might lead to a settlement of the question of representation for some years to come. They provided for a further distribution by the Governor, who should, and no doubt would, be an impartial administrator, and not interested in cases of power, one way or the other. He proposed that the Governor should have the power when the number of persons in any electorate increased to a certain extent, to subdivide and redistribute the electorate, and give an additional member to the House. That would be the practical effect of the amendment. He also proposed that when the number of persons in any electorate decreased to below a certain number, that electorate should be joined to the next electorate, and that, if that should be brought above the average by so doing, it should be again subdivided by the Governor. He proposed to work that system until the House reached its ultimatum of members—for instance, with eighty members, with 5,000 persons in each electorate, there would be a population of 400,000. If it gave satisfaction, he proposed that it should be carried out until the number of members reached 200, when the population would be 2,000,000. He thought that when they arrived at that, they might very fairly leave the matter to be looked after by others. They could go on with the scale for all time to come, but he thought that they were not called upon to legislate for more than forty years in that direction. He had given also in the various electorates the number that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had given in his plan, so that the increase would be on the same scale. He thought that he had now gone over all the material points to which he had intended to allude; honorable members might doubtless have other suggestions to offer, but he thought that in the main they would be able to make the Bill a fair measure. He hoped that the amendments he had referred to, or something like them, would be adopted, so that the Bill might be made self-acting for many years to come; and he believed that if the honorable the Colonial Secretary adopted them, he would be conferring a great benefit on the colony in future years. If there was not some self-acting system, there would be of course agitation springing up from time to time; and perhaps it might be attended with results more mischievous than any had yet been. They must, however, always rely on the good sense of the great mass of the people, and take care that no injustice was done to any part of the colony. He trusted his amendments, or something like them, would be adopted, so that at no time would there be grounds for saying that great injustice was being done to any portion of the country.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. RAMSAY said he had listened with a great deal of pleasure to the very moderate speech which had just been made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. He

quite agreed with that honorable member, that in the discussion of the present very important measure that evening, all party and personal feelings should be excluded, and that honorable members should endeavor to frame such a measure as they thought would prove of benefit to the country. He believed that that was the intention of the honorable gentleman who had just spoken, and he hoped that a similar course would be adopted by other honorable members. He felt that he would not follow the honorable member through many of the remarks he had made; but there were one or two on which he would like to say a few words before he addressed himself to the principles of the Bill. The first on which he wished to say a few words was not a very important matter. The honorable member had stated that the electorate of Balonne should not have been created, as it was too small; but it was evident that the honorable member had forgotten that the reason why that electorate was introduced was, because if the Balonne and Maranoa were still kept together, the electorate would be too large, and thus it was thought necessary to divide them. He would, however, refer to them more at length presently. In regard to the honorable member's remarks in reference to the fifth clause—that it would be an interference with the prerogative of dissolution—he took an exactly contrary opinion. He believed that so far from interfering with the prerogative of dissolution, it would have an exactly opposite effect; for if they made no provision for a dissolution, the power of granting it would be forced upon the Governor. If, however, they said that in a certain event there should be a dissolution, then there would be an interference with the prerogative of dissolution. Those were the only points he thought it necessary to remark upon at present, and he would now proceed to give his views on the Bill before the House. In his opinion there were two great principles involved in that Bill; one was that of single electorates, and the other was the mixed basis of representation—namely, population, property, and the extent of territory over which population was scattered. Now, in regard to the first principle, he had not as yet heard any substantial or strong argument against it. He had expected to hear something from the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, but although he had heard a great deal about Mr. Hare's system, which he believed to be a good one, he had heard no good reason from honorable members, in their speeches before their constituents, or in that House, nor had he seen written in the articles in the newspapers, any good argument against the principle of single electorates. It had been said by honorable members that they did not like the principle, but their only reason was—

"I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But one thing I know full well,
I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

He thought that no valid reasons had been urged why they should not like the principle. The only reasonable objection at all he had heard, was that which had been mentioned by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, a few evenings previously, when he said that the effect of such a system would be to intensify local jealousies, and to introduce into the House a class of men who would take narrow local views; and that, in short, it would lead to something like class legislation. Now his (Mr. Ramsay's) idea was, that it would have exactly a reverse effect. He thought that the best possible way to get rid of local jealousies arising out of local interests, would be, to have every locality represented, and that the most advisable way of avoiding class legislation was to have every class represented in that House; for what did class legislation mean? It meant that that House would legislate in favor of one particular class; but by having single electorates every class would be represented, and therefore one could not have any great preponderance over others. The system of single electorates would also operate beneficially in another way—that instead of having three members returned by one constituency, combined together to carry out any particular object, there would only be one member. Now three members in a House of thirty-two would be about one-tenth of its power; but in a House of forty-one or forty-two, with the system of single electorates, one member would have comparatively very little power. He, therefore, felt that there was not much in the objection of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. Another objection which had been raised to the Bill out of doors—he believed it had not been raised in the House—was, that it gave undue representation to property; that was, that a man possessing property in different districts would be able to vote in each district. But he thought that that objection would apply more particularly to thickly populated districts than to other parts of the country. For instance, a man residing in Brisbane, and possessing property in several electorates, would be able to vote for the whole of them; whereas in the country districts, a person having property in more than one electorate would not be able to use his vote on account of the distance he would have to travel in order to use it. Again, the system would operate beneficially in this respect—that although a man might be induced to travel a long distance, in order to vote for three members, he would not be disposed to do so where there was only one member. He knew of instances which had recently occurred in his own district. He knew that persons would go to Ipswich to vote at the West Moreton election, because there were three members to be returned, and they said to themselves, "Three members are a great deal in the House"; but he thought that the same persons would not take the trouble of going had there been only one mem-

ber to be returned. Therefore, he thought, that so far as property was concerned, the proposed system would tell as much against it, as in its favor. But even supposing it did operate slightly in favor of property, he did not consider that that would be any very serious objection, and he was of opinion that they would be going too far if they ignored altogether the legitimate claims of property, in the Bill. Those were the only objections to the Bill he had heard of, and he would now give his reasons why he thought that the system of single electorates should be applied to this colony. The subject was one to which he had given considerable attention for a long time, and the more he had considered it, the more was he satisfied that justice could only be done to the colony by the adoption of some such system. It would be better, perhaps, for him to explain his views, by giving two or three examples. He would take one from the most distant electorate of the colony which returned two members, one from the central, and one from the coast district, which might almost be said to be metropolitan. He would take, in the first instance, the electorate of the Leichhardt—that was the most distant. It comprised an area of something like 44,000 square miles, and returned two members. The inhabitants at one end of that district had totally different interests from those at the other end, and, in short, had as little to do with each other as two districts could have. Now, supposing there were to be four members for that district, and two were to be put forward from each end and returned, how could there be any objection to having that district divided into two electorates? He contended that it was the only just course to pursue, so that, as far as possible, each interest in the district should be represented. He would next take his own district of Western Downs, which was about 120 miles long, and which comprised the Main Range, along the slopes of which there was a large farming population settled, and extended to the borders of New South Wales, where there was nothing but a purely pastoral population. Now, it would be quite possible for two members to be returned by either end—by either the pastoral population or the agriculturists. The farming population might have so largely increased that the farmers at Spring Creek or Highfields might return two members, who scarcely knew that there was such a place as Goondiwindi, and were totally unacquainted with that part of the country, and the interests of its residents or their requirements. Now, would it not be very unsatisfactory to gentlemen whose interests were westward to be represented by a farmer on the Main Range; or, to take it the other way, would it not be equally unsatisfactory to the farmers to be represented by gentlemen from the other end of the electorate who were engaged in pastoral pursuits, thus having no one to appeal to to represent their wants, but two

residents on the border of the district? Those were things that might happen, and, therefore, he said, let the farmers return their members, and the squatters their members. The third example he would give was, perhaps, the strongest of all. In that they found a metropolitan district, extending over 140 miles, and the members for which were virtually returned by Brisbane. No doubt, some honorable members would deny that, but it was true, nevertheless. He had had it from residents in the district that such was the case—that they did not think it worth while recording their votes at an election, as it was useless to do so, as they were ruled by Brisbane influence. Now, he did not find fault with the honorable members who represented that district, but he thought it would be more satisfactory if they were returned by the inhabitants of the district, as they should be. If the inhabitants of the Logan, for instance, were allowed to return their own member, it was not likely that they would choose a resident of the town, but whether they did so or not would be their own business; it was not fair, however, that a representative should be forced upon them. Now, in the case of towns, the example was not, perhaps, quite as satisfactory, but even in them he thought that the principle should be carried out; and he had been glad to hear the honorable member for Fortitude Valley say that he should support it in its integrity all over the country. It was, no doubt, right and proper that large and important districts should return more members than those districts which were smaller and less important; but yet it did not appear to him to be just that a resident in Brisbane should be able to have three votes, whilst a resident of Rockhampton or Toowoomba should only have one. In addition to the reasons already given in favor of single electorates, it was, he thought, more likely that the electorates would be represented by local men under the system now proposed, than by any other means; and that was, upon the whole, a great advantage. A district represented by utter strangers could only be half represented. The constituents had not the opportunity of seeing their members, or of making their wants known to them. It was not as when, the session over, the members stopped at home in their own districts and were accessible to all their constituents. Therefore, it must be an advantage to the House and to the constituents both, that each electorate should be, as much as possible, represented by a local man. There was still another reason in favor of this view which ought to have some weight with the House, and which was, that the operation of the system would always have a tendency towards the purity of election. Where an electorate was of large size, the possibility of personation was always greater than where the electors were themselves known to one another, as they were most likely to be in a circumscribed district. He could only hope that

under the Act of last session there would not be the same cause for objection, on the score of personation, as previously; yet there might well be as many checks as possible. Before leaving this subject, he wanted to allude to a curious mistake that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley fell into, in saying that in Victoria single electorates were established. Although that error had been corrected by a letter in the *Queensland Times*, he saw it repeated in the *Courier* of this morning, and a large portion of an article was founded upon an assertion which was entirely incorrect. He had in his hand a Victorian almanac, which informed him that in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria there were seventy-eight members for forty-nine districts; and he found that Collingwood, South Grant, and West Bourke, each had three members, and that a very large number of districts returned two members each. He merely alluded to this, so that the impression should not be made abroad, that the principle of single electorates had been tried and found to be unsatisfactory in another colony; and, as the principle was entirely new in this part of the world, it was an additional reason for discussing it at length. Had it so happened that Victoria had tested such a system of representation, honorable members might not discuss it so fully, and be willing to be guided somewhat by the experience of that colony; but, as it was entirely new, they should explain their reasons, and vote in favor of or against the principle. He now came to the second principle of the Bill—the one which excited more interest than the other, and which had been discussed in the House and outside, in the public journals and privately—it was, the proper basis of representation. The basis adopted by the Bill was as liberal as it was possible to be, considering the circumstances of this colony; it was as near as possible to manhood—adult male population; and it was not very far removed, as he would presently shew, from the general population of the colony. He would shew briefly what the general average of the districts was; and he would shew how small the deviation was, in a great many instances, from the general average. He took the groups as they were put in the Bill, and he would give them in the same way:—Metropolitan, West Moreton, Darling Downs, Western, Wide Bay, Rockhampton, and Northern. He found, first of all, that of the male adult population, less Polynesians and so forth, the average of the whole districts was 913. The average of the metropolitan group was 911. It was hardly possible that anything could be nearer than that: the metropolitan average was almost exactly that of the whole colony. The average of the Rockhampton group was 891, varying only 22 from the general average; Darling Downs, 888; West Moreton, 757; Western, 723. With respect to the Northern and Wide Bay groups, it had been said that they were not fairly treated: the average of the

latter was 1,115, and of the former, 1,132. They had both been alluded to by the honorable member for Kennedy, who, he was sorry to see, was not in his place; because that honorable member had made a statement with regard to them which was not correct—that it was a suspicious thing to see those districts the only two that were unfairly treated by the Government, they being the two that offered the greatest opposition to the Government. The honorable member must have been dreaming when he made that statement; because, looking at the Wide Bay group, he (Mr. Ramsay) found that it comprised Maryborough, Wide Bay, Gympie, Burnett, and Mulgrave. Now, the whole of those were at present included in the old electorates of Wide Bay, Maryborough, and Burnett; and of those, Maryborough and Burnett returned supporters of the Government: Wide Bay alone returned an Opposition member. So that the Wide Bay group returned three Government supporters. The honorable member for Kennedy overlooked that when he made the statement referred to. Now, when he (Mr. Ramsay) looked to the total population of the groups named, he found that, although there were discrepancies, the average was not very much different. The average of the whole districts was 2,929. Of the Northern, it was 2,649, being a little better than the whole. Rockhampton was a little better, being 2,243. West Moreton and Darling Downs were almost exactly the same as the whole, being respectively 3,100 and 3,005. The two which differed most were the Metropolitan and Wide Bay groups, 3,841 and 3,378 respectively; and the last, which differed most the other way, was the Western group, 1,431. The last was certainly over-represented, taking the total population as the basis of representation. But the House must remember that in those far distant districts, circumstances were very different from those of Brisbane; and on that account it was only right that those districts should have more representation than those nearer the seat of Government. In going through the groups, if honorable members could consider them justly, it would be found that there were no great anomalies—none greater than were admitted and acknowledged by the great liberals and reformers in England. He would read, as an authority in support of what he said, from a speech of Lord Macaulay, one of the greatest liberals and reformers, made on one of the greatest occasions—one on which a debate in the House of Commons lasted the unusual length of seven days—the consideration of the Reform Bill:—

“I praise them [that is, the Ministers] for not effacing the old distinctions between the towns and the counties, and for not assigning members to districts, according to the American practice, by the Rule of Three.”

He (Mr. Ramsay) must explain, before reading further, that the Reform Bill was, as

everyone knew, very strongly opposed by the Tories; and, in addition to their other arguments, they had brought forward the one that the Bill did not go far enough, inasmuch as it did not introduce equal electoral districts. Of course, it was not an argument they had brought forward seriously, but as a means of embarrassing the Government. Here were Lord Macaulay's words:—

“Under the present system, Manchester, with 200,000 inhabitants, has no member. Old Sarum, with no inhabitants, has two members. Find me such an anomaly in the schedules which are now on the table. But, is it possible that you, that Tories, can seriously mean to adopt the only plan which can remove all anomalies from the representative system? Are you prepared to have, after every decennial census, a new distribution of members among electoral districts? Is your plan of reform that which Mr. Canning satirised as the most crazy of all the projects of the disciples of Tom Paine?—

‘That each fair burgh, numerically free,
Shall choose its members by the Rule of Three.’

If not, let us hear no more of the anomalies of the Reform Bill.”

Well, he (Mr. Ramsay) thought that applied very much to the present case. He thought there were no anomalies in the Bill now before the House which were not justified by the state of the colony. He believed it was true that, under the United States Government, after every decennial census, a redistribution of the representation took place according to the population; and, although he could admire the American system of Government, and although there was very much that was really admirable in it, and although the country had advanced with astonishing rapidity, yet no one would say that that system was perfect. He thought that the great change brought about periodically was one of its greatest imperfections. It was one that prevented all the best men in America—intellectual men, intelligent men, honorable men—from joining in political life: they would not condescend, or, rather descend, to the artifices which were necessary to gain the popular vote. He believed that if this colony copied American institutions, what had been found to be the result there would be the result in Queensland. There was nothing that American politicians were not obliged to do for the votes of the people; and the country was almost involved in war, in order that certain votes might be gained in times of election. There was no such scheme in England under the Reform Bill, which was brought in by the most liberal men of the time. Nor was the principle of representation on the population basis admitted. London, with one-tenth of the population of the United Kingdom, had one-thirtieth of the representation. Again, if he looked at the county of York, with two millions of inhabitants, extending over a larger space than any other English county, which returned thirty-eight members; it did not

return them as members of the county at large, but those members were the representatives of nineteen towns and five ridings, and no one place returned a very large proportion of them. Now, if the case was admitted to be so strong in England by the most advanced liberals, how very much stronger did it not become here, where colonial reasons made the objection to a mere population basis much more powerful than at home. Here, the distances of the electorates were much more than in the old country. Colonial towns possessed no manufactures; they were no more than the distributors of the wealth of the interior; and it was not right that they should hold the same influence that some manufacturing towns held in old countries. The House must remember how very much better the inhabitants of Brisbane were able to look after their members, and how much better they were represented, than the inhabitants of the country. If a member for Brisbane made any speech in the House, or gave a vote, that was not satisfactory to his constituents, it was known at once. The electors saw by the papers what he had done, and, as the expression was, he was "brought to his bearings" very quickly. But a member for Warrego or Mitchell, with others, might vote for measures most destructive to the interests of his constituents, who could hear nothing of what he had done until long afterwards, and when it was too late to do anything by way of remedy. That was not the case in England. There, every member was as much under the eye of his constituents as the member for Westminster. Here, it was to be borne in mind, every honorable member of the Assembly was, in one sense, a member for Brisbane. If Brisbane elected no representatives at all, it would still be represented well in the House. Every member felt an interest in the place; it was the capital of the colony, and the representatives of the country were as glad to shew strangers a handsome city, handsome buildings, and a fine river, as any residents were.

MR. LILLEY: Hear, hear.

THE HON. R. RAMSAY: It was proposed to give Brisbane a very liberal representation. As he had shewn, it was proposed to give the average of the whole colony; and he thought that with that, honorable members ought to be content. He had no reason to say that they would not be content; or, that the provision made would not be accepted. On the contrary, as the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had spoken, he thought it would be accepted. He hoped that the Bill would pass. The honorable the Colonial Secretary did not stick to the Bill exactly as it stood; and he (Mr. Ramsay) would be very happy to give his aid to improving it, where need for improving it could be shewn. He hoped that honorable members would shew that they were sincere in their approval of the Bill, and that they would not attempt to make little or trifling alterations that would inter-

fere much with the passing of the Bill as it stood.

MR. THORN said that when he first saw the Bill, some months ago, he was under the impression that it ought be sent to a select committee. After awhile he came to a contrary conclusion—that it was a very statesmanlike measure, and that, with some modifications which could be made in committee, it would be a very excellent enactment. Consequently, he gave his assent to it. The principle of the Bill, as the House had been told by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, was single electorates—splitting up of the existing electoral districts. From the first day he had a seat in the House, he always advocated the single electorate system; and he was glad that the House had come to the same opinion as himself. The first time he addressed his constituents, he spoke in favor of that system. As he had before observed in the House, recent authorities in England were of opinion that there should be single electorates there, as under that system the representation of minorities would be completely destroyed. Again, take his own district for instance; it was a very costly matter to represent a very large district with a large population. He supposed that, now, West Moreton was the most populous, or, rather, the most settled, district in the colony. He felt it hard upon himself to represent such a constituency: if he continued its representative much longer, he should be under the necessity of having a paid secretary. That district extended from the Main Range down to near Brisbane. A good deal had been said by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley about the electorate of Bundamba. That was a mistake in the Bill. He thought there was some kind of "gerrymandering" in the Bill; and he had put it down to the honorable the Secretary for Public Works, because he thought that no honorable member on the Ministerial side of the House was so able as that honorable gentleman to carve out an electorate like that. However, he had found that he was wrong, and that the electorate had been framed entirely on the population basis. He thought that the metropolis was sufficiently represented under the Bill. Mr. Wentworth's opinion, when he framed the colonial constitution, was, that Sydney, with a population of 50,000 people, was not entitled to two members; and he (Mr. Thorn) thought the House could not go far wrong in following in the wake of such an authority as Mr. Wentworth. The Government behaved very liberally to the metropolis; because, honorable members must bear in mind that the metropolis was represented by members of both sides of the House. The honorable and learned Attorney-General was a resident of Brisbane, though he represented an outside constituency. He (Mr. Thorn) represented a country district, but he took as great an interest in the affairs of the metropolis as

he did in those of his own district. He had come to the conclusion that honorable members should not discuss the Bill in a narrow-minded light, but as representatives of the whole of Queensland, and not merely as delegates from separate districts. Now, there was a little "gerrymandering" on the part of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, in the amendments which had been printed by him. If the House adopted those amendments, there would be more "gerrymandering" than in the Bill, or in anything that was proposed by honorable members on the Ministerial side. He would point out that if the third clause of those amendments was carried, three West Moreton seats and ten others of the electorates would be blocked out when the next census was taken. In fact, the intention of the amendments was to give the power of those electorates into the hands of the inhabitants of the metropolis. At any rate, that was the opinion he had formed; and, he thought, if other honorable members would look at the amendments, they would come to the same opinion. He contended that another representative should be given to Eastern Downs. He thought that the increasing mining interest, and the population gathering around Stanthorpe, where there were now something like two thousand people, would be entitled to another representative in the House under the Bill. He was informed that before long there would be an addition of seven or eight thousand persons to the population of Eastern Downs; and it was now the duty of the House to make room for the requirements of that district. The tin mines were attracting population very fast. The Government might be prepared to provide for another member; and, in committee, he should see that Eastern Downs got another representative. There was another matter that he wished to direct attention to. Under the Bill, the House would increase the number of members to forty-one, and they might enact a larger increase. Seeing that, he asked whether the honorable member in charge of the Bill intended to have another Minister in the Assembly? He thought it would be impossible that the Government could get along in such a numerous House without another Minister, say, for education or agriculture, or both.

MR. LILLEY: No.

MR. THORN: The honorable member at the head of the Opposition benches might say "No," but he (Mr. Thorn) thought he was right. Again, when the House was increased, they should increase the quorum. Seeing what had taken place, lately, the quorum ought to be increased to one-half of the whole number of members of the House—if they were to have any more "deadlocks," and if they were to meet at three o'clock in the afternoon and sit until morning doing nothing. He would not go into the details of the Bill; but there was one

important matter in connection with it which he must not omit to mention. He referred to payment of members. He stated to the House and the country that he was now prepared to support payment of members, in connection with this Bill; but he would make it a condition that the salaries of Ministers should be the same as those of other members of the House. He thought that by such means only could a Government be got in the Australian colonies that would live any length of time. There was in his mind no doubt that payment of members, in that mode, would make the representatives of the country more independent than they were. In Victoria, members were returned upon small salaries, and staring them in the face were the large salaries of Ministers, which led them to aspire to a seat on the Treasury bench, as was natural. He would also support an elective Upper House, whose members should have a salary; for unless the Assembly gave members of the Council a salary, there was very little chance of a Payment of Members Bill passing the Upper House; and unless members of the Council went before their constituents, there was very little chance of their getting paid. The number of the Council was now twenty; and for the election of that number of members, the same qualification might be adopted as in Victoria, or the basis of the groups of electorates as laid down for the Bill now under consideration might be adopted:—For Brisbane group, five members; Ipswich group, three; Toowoomba group, three; Rockhampton group, three; Maranoa group, one member; and Kennedy group, two members. So that the single electorate system would not apply to the Upper House. The additional cost to the country, at £300 per annum for each of the twenty members would be only £6,000. He merely threw out the suggestion for honorable members to consider. He was a member of Parliament for four years, and he was afraid that legislation would not be satisfactory to the colony until some such measure as he had mentioned for payment of members had been carried out. He should be happy to support the Bill.

MR. HEMMANT said the question was one on which every representative should express an opinion, as the second reading of a Bill was the stage at which its principles were discussed. He had listened with very great pleasure to the speeches that had been delivered, and he should endeavor to imitate the tone which had marked them. On such a question honorable members should endeavor as much as possible to divest the discussion of a party character, and they should exert themselves to make the Bill as good a measure for the colony as possible, being themselves wholly indifferent to what its results might be in relation to political parties. The honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, had very correctly pointed out that the prin-

ciple of representation on the population basis did not exist in the old country. Although that was quite true, the House must bear in mind that there were a great many things which existed in this country which did not exist in England. If the honorable gentleman would call to his recollection the Financial Separation Bill, he would see that a great innovation was proposed by that measure, which was likely to become law, because that Bill took population as the basis for the apportionment of the public debt and the expenditure of the revenue of the colony. The second clause declared that

“The Colonial Secretary shall every year cause the population of the said four divisions to be calculated from the tables in the latest statistical returns available and the numbers so ascertained shall for the purposes of this Act be taken to be the actual population of the said four divisions respectively.”

Clause seven provided, further, that

“Should the estimated receipts set apart for general expenditure prove more than sufficient for that purpose the excess of such receipts shall at the end of the year be credited ratably and according to population to the several divisions. Should the receipts be found insufficient to cover such General expenditure the deficiency shall in like manner be debited ratably and according to population to the several divisions.”

So it appeared that according to one measure introduced by the Government, they were prepared to tax the country in proportion to population; but, when it came to representation, they chose a different basis. Now, he (Mr. Hemmant) believed, that in a country like this, where population and property were so intimately associated, population was the only intelligible basis. At the same time, it must be evident to every honorable member who had attended to the boundaries of one or two electorates—those he was most intimately connected with—how utterly impossible it was to carry the principle out to its full extent.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. HEMMANT: He and his honorable colleague for East Moreton had endeavored to make some change in the boundaries of the electorates of their district, with the view to obtain another member, and they had to acknowledge that difficulty. They saw, as other honorable members could see, that that district was entitled to another member; but it was a work of the greatest difficulty to divide that district in such a manner as, without entirely ignoring natural divisions, to produce another electorate which should have the proper number of people in it for an additional member. Still, while he admitted the difficulty, population should, in his opinion, be the basis of representation, and the House should endeavor to approximate, as closely as possible, to that principle. Very large allowance must be made for the circumstances of the country. So far

as regarded the adult male basis, it must have been reserved for the present Government to introduce such a basis of representation. He knew of no writer upon reform and representation that ever advocated it. He could see that there were very great objections to its adoption. He held that a married man was a much better citizen than a bachelor; at all events, the former was a very much larger taxpayer than the latter, and although his wife and family had no vote, yet it was right that, on their account, the married man should have a larger influence upon the representation than the mere wandering bachelor, who was here to-day and off to-morrow. He had heard it said that the squatters, or hirers of labor, would not give more wages to married men than to a single man, and that, therefore, the former had not more to spend than the latter. The honorable member who used that argument, entirely lost sight of the fact that the married man's family often included a number of bread-winners; and he (Mr. Hemmant) knew of many instances in which the wages of the children were more than the earnings of the father. If they were all contributors to the revenue, by their consumption of dutiable articles, he could not conceive why they were to be entirely ignored in the representation. He contended that the principle of the Bill was single electorates; and that was a question on which a great deal could be said on both sides. He thought that, as far as the present circumstances of the colony were concerned, whatever theoretical objections were urged against that principle, it would be well to give it a trial; because the result of the “bunching” in the representation of several districts was such as to cause great dissatisfaction. He would simply point out to the honorable gentleman who had asserted that Brisbane returned the members for East Moreton, that he did not contradict him at the time, because there was apparently some force in the argument; but it was a notorious fact that a very large number of persons resident in the country voted, for convenience, in Brisbane. He was quite ready to admit that it was desirable that East Moreton should be subdivided; and, that, in the community of interest, the proposed electorates of South Brisbane and Enoggera, which would take in the whole of the suburban interests of Brisbane, would be very good; and that the remaining portions of East Moreton, Logan, and Redcliffe, with the Oxley district, would be what were termed agricultural electorates. When he came to the town proper, the same remark did not apply. He held that if the city of Brisbane, instead of being divided, returned two members, that would be an improvement upon the Bill. But he supposed that there was no chance of carrying an amendment like that; because it appeared to him—if there must be a community of interest, which was so much urged upon the consideration of the House—that there was a community of interest amongst

the residents of Wickham and North Brisbane, and that it was desirable that they should form one constituency. The honorable gentleman who introduced the Bill had referred to the representation of interests, and had maintained that it was right that the important interests of the colony should be represented. He (Mr. Hemmant) would point out that so far as the proposed division of North Brisbane was concerned, the commercial interest was not represented at all. Under the old system of salary qualification, a large number of employés in Brisbane had votes. That qualification was done away with, and those persons were without votes for Brisbane. Most of them lived in South Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, or in some outside place. His (Mr. Hemmant's) partner and himself had in their employ thirteen or fourteen persons who had votes for Brisbane under the salary qualification; but, now, only one of those persons was qualified as an elector of the city; the whole of the others lived in the Valley, or Wickham, or Enoggera. So that the city of Brisbane, which ought to be the commercial centre, would be represented by a member returned by persons with very little or no interest at all in trade. With regard to the representation of interests, he would read a few words from Mr. Mill on that subject—"Dissertations," vol. iii., p. 73—reviewing a work by Mr. Lorimer:—

"He has also a negative merit, in our eyes not inconsiderable: he does not give in to the sophistical doctrine of a representation of interests. This theory owes all its plausibility to being mistaken for a principle from which it is totally distinct. As regards interests in themselves, whenever not identical with the general interest, the less they are represented the better. What is wanted is a representation, not of men's differences of interest, but of the differences in their intellectual points of view. Shipowners are to be desired in Parliament, because they can instruct us about ships, not because they are interested in having protecting duties. We want from a lawyer in Parliament his legal knowledge, not his professional interest in the expensiveness and unintelligibility of the law."

If the House considered the Bill upon the population basis, they would find many arguments which had been introduced by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, from the city of London, apply with force to the city of Brisbane. Brisbane and Wickham together had 7,572 inhabitants, and two members. They would be out-voted on any question by the three members for Mitchell, Balonne, and Warrego; and those three constituencies had only 3,000 inhabitants. He (Mr. Hemmant) thought, without sticking out for an absolute population basis, it was evident that that was hardly a defensible state of things. As regarded property, he had no doubt that the city of Brisbane contained within itself three times as large an amount as those three districts; and the

proposed representation would, on that basis, also, be an anomalous state of things. He believed that if the fifth clause of the Bill, which allowed present members to select and retain their seats for any electorate in their districts, were struck out of the Bill, a very great improvement would be the amalgamation of the constituencies of Warrego and Mitchell. They had together under 2,000 inhabitants, and had a distinct community of interest, being both squatting districts; and he could not see on what principle, now the House were revising the representation of the colony, those districts should have two members. He believed that, when they got two members, they were increasing rapidly in importance; and, although not entitled to them, yet they were advancing so much that it was thought they would be fully entitled to the representation granted very shortly. Instead of that, however, it was found that the number of their population was decreasing.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. HEMMANT: As it would not interfere with the seat of any honorable member, if a general election followed the passing of the Bill, a great improvement indeed would be made if Mitchell and Warrego were amalgamated, and he should move an amendment to that effect in committee. He would next point to the disparity between the representation of the Kennedy and the Brisbane groups. In round numbers, Kennedy had a population of 10,000 persons, and Brisbane had a population of 30,000, or three times the number of the first group. The Bill gave only double the amount of representation to the latter that was given to the former. Now, if the population of the two groups were of the same character, that would be unfair; but when the circumstances of their population were taken into consideration, the allotment of representation became still more open to objection than appeared at first sight. The population of Kennedy was a floating one; it was large, now, in consequence of the attractions of the gold fields; but, if fresh gold fields broke out in Victoria or South Australia, or in any other of the Australian colonies, that population of 10,000 would be reduced to 3,000 or 4,000. An occurrence very similar had taken place on a northern gold field. He had heard it stated that a few months ago the gold field of Gilberton promised to be one of the largest in the colonies; now, it was one of the smallest. What had occurred there, might occur anywhere else; and, as the House were legislating for some time to come, he thought it behoved them to consider that they should not allot to a floating population an undue amount of legislation. He would not for a moment assert that miners, or any other class in the community, were not entitled to representation; but there was another thing to be considered in regard to constituencies purely mining. They should not overlook

this fact, that, with the exception of mining, every interest in the community was bound up with and shared in the prosperity of every other interest. If the squatters were prosperous, the towns were prosperous; but that did not apply in the case of mining. It was possible for the miners to be in a high state of prosperity, and the rest of the colony to be in a hopeless state of insolvency. Whatever might be the state of the rest of the colony, it did not affect the weight or quantity of gold in the quartz. And it was, therefore, worth while to consider whether the House should allot to the floating mining population, representation to which it was not numerically entitled. In connection with the manhood basis of representation, the fact should not be overlooked that there was a large number of persons bordering upon manhood, who would soon be entitled to share in the representation. In the country districts the number was exceedingly few; but in the Brisbane group, the number of persons between fifteen and twenty-one years of age, was 1,619. Suppose the adult-male basis of representation established in the colony, after a few years there would be a sufficient number of persons grown to manhood in the Brisbane group to demand an additional member. In Maranoa, Warrego, and Mitchell, there were only 232 persons of similar ages. That was a thing which ought not to be overlooked in a Bill which had any element of finality about it. A good deal had been said about the fifth clause of the Bill. He had heard that it was not the intention of the Government to press that clause. He could hardly understand how any honorable member could vote for it, as it stood, and not be affected by it. Of course, constituencies like that of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and one or two others, whose boundaries were not altered, were not affected. But with regard to East Moreton, what a very invidious position a representative of that district was placed in. Say that after the passing of the Bill he elected to sit for the Logan: he would be constantly taunted in the House that he did not represent his constituents—that he had got his seat by a fluke. Apart from that, there were almost insuperable difficulties in carrying out the clause:—

"5. 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."

He had asked a great many persons what they understood by the "member who has sat for the longest time," and to define it? Would they allow a member who had sat for two or three constituencies, to date his sitting from the time he was first returned to the House—although he might have been out for years? Would they allow the honorable member for Leichhardt, Mr. Roysds, to date his service from the first time he sat in the House; or, would they allow him to add together the number of days that he had sat in the House? Or would they allow the honorable member for Brisbane, Mr. Handy, who had sat for Mitchell, to count his service therefor in making a choice for Brisbane? Would they allow another honorable member for Brisbane, Mr. Edmondstone, to count the time he had sat for East Moreton, and to make his choice? Again, the honorable member for Wide Bay might change his seat for Mulgrave, and the honorable member for Burnett, Mr. Walter Scott, one of the newest members of the Assembly, would be left without a seat altogether. He did not think there was any way out of the difficulties of that clause, without naming the district for which each member should sit. He had not heard any honorable member point out the way in which it was proposed to get over the insuperable difficulties that it presented, or the way of computing honorable members' service. The proper course was for the constituencies themselves to choose their representatives; not, to "put the cart before the horse," and allow representatives to choose the constituencies for which they would sit. He laid stress upon the matter, now, because the clause might embarrass the committee in the discussion of the Bill; and because it would be impossible to carry an amendment for amalgamating the districts of Mitchell and Warrego, if that clause remained. His honorable colleague, Mr. Griffith, had brought forward amendments which would be of a very useful character, in connection with the compilation of the electoral rolls. The clauses that he had prepared would enable all persons to possess the franchise and to get their names transferred to the new rolls under the qualifications of the Elections Act. Since that Act was passed, he (Mr. Hemmant) had heard a great many complaints with regard to its objectionable provisions, and the deposit of one shilling for a voter's right. Now the very same provision was inserted into the Reform Act of 1832, but the outcry against it was so great that it was found necessary to repeal it; and he thought that a short clause might be introduced into this measure that would repeal the clause in the Elections Act, which required that that sum

should be paid; because, though the amount was very trifling, and might not be objected to, except by the more uneducated portion of the community, it was, nevertheless, looked upon with great disfavor, and any member representing a large constituency would be met by the same objection. With regard to the new seats proposed by the Bill, he thought the question as to them would be more properly discussed in committee than in the course of the second reading of the Bill; but it appeared to him that two or three new constituencies had been created without their having a sufficient population. He referred particularly to the case of the Maranoa and the Balonne. Though the Maranoa might have had a population too large for one member, still the population was not sufficiently numerous for two, yet a portion of it had been created into a separate electorate—the Balonne. The Maranoa was a squatting constituency, and though it had a large population, he did not see why it should have been singled out for division and additional representation, seeing it was bordered by the two smallest constituencies in the colony, the Mitchell and the Warrego, which were also squatting constituencies, and each of which, with one member only, was over represented in proportion to the numerical importance of their respective populations. While referring to this matter of discrepancies, he thought the discrepancy between the amount of representation proposed to be given to Brisbane and to Rockhampton could not escape observation. The Brisbane group of constituencies, with a population of about 30,000, was to have eight members, and the Rockhampton group was to have the same number. Now he could not see what reason there was for such a disparity. If eight members were deemed to be sufficient for the Brisbane group, surely less than eight members would be sufficient for a population of less than half the number in the Brisbane group. In the Bill for Financial Separation he did not see anything as to the proportion of the adult male population; but it seemed that the arrangements in respect to that measure were such that any discrepancy was to be debited to the total population. Now, when they came to the question of representation, he found that a different basis was adopted. He trusted, however, that when they came to deal with the Financial Separation Bill, there would be no difficulty in dealing with it on the adult male population basis. With regard to a statement that was made by the honorable member for Western Downs, as to the advantage of the single electorate system, he understood the honorable member to say that the advantage of the system was this, that he could not see why, as under the present system, a voter in Brisbane should be able to vote for three members, while a voter in Rockhampton could only vote for one. Now, that, he did not think, was a tenable position;

for supposing a constituency with a hundred voters returned two members, and another with only fifty voters returned one member, there could be no harm in allowing the electors for the larger constituency to vote for two members, while those for the smaller constituency were restricted to one; for in each case there would be a representation of fifty. There was not, therefore, so far as he could see, any hardship in the matter. The honorable member for West Moreton had said he trusted that, when this Bill became law, the quorum of the House would be increased. Now, for his part, he considered that whatever number of members the House might consist of, the present quorum was quite sufficient; and he hoped there would be no attempt made by the majority in the House to have the quorum increased. He believed that a great deal of their present difficulty had arisen from the unusually large number of members required to form a quorum; and nothing, he thought, had tended so much as the large quorum required to continue the recent dead-lock so long. He had looked carefully into the amendments to be proposed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and he thought the principle embodied in them was one that should be adopted. Whether the principle was altogether right or not, he was not, however, at the present moment, prepared to say. He had himself intended to propose several amendments of a somewhat similar nature. They were to the effect that wherever it could be shewn by the statistical tables furnished by the Registrar-General, which were to be the basis of taxation in the Financial Separation Bill, that any constituency had, say, for the sake of argument, 7,000 persons contained within its boundaries, the Speaker should at once issue his writ for the election of another member for that constituency; and that, wherever it was shewn that the population of an electorate had fallen to 1,500, it should merge into a neighboring constituency. That, he thought, would have been a very simple way of meeting the difficulty; and he did not think that the honorable member for Fortitude Valley would consider it necessary to wait for the taking of the census, in order to make an alteration of that kind; for if the tables were correct for the purposes of financial separation, they would be equally correct for the purposes of representation. He would support the second reading of the Bill, trusting that some important alterations would be made upon it in committee. So far as the constituency of East Moreton was concerned, he thought that, considering the number of its population and the rapidity with which it had increased in wealth, it was entitled to have an additional member given to it; and that instead of the electorate of Bundamba, a number of parishes, in which the inhabitants had a community of interest, might be formed into a constituency, which would tend to some extent to correct the disparity that existed between the representation of the

Brisbane group, and the Rockhampton and Kennedy group.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that the observations he would address to the House in respect to this measure would be very few. The practical effect of the debate upon the Bill would, he thought, be nothing, for they seemed all to have made up their minds to pass the second reading of the Bill; but it might be as well to come to some conclusion as to collateral matters. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had spoken against the single electorate system; but he thought it was possible to shew, that it was the only system that was fairly practicable in this colony at the present time. The honorable member, also, went into an explanation, though not a long one, of Hare's system, or what was called the scientific system. Under that system, which provided for the representation of minorities, every phase of opinion would be somewhat represented. Anyone who studied the system, must admit that it was theoretically perfect; and under it single electorates would be swept away. It would, however, as he had said, secure the representation of every phase of opinion; whereas under the single electorate system there might be a large number not represented, and it might so happen that the majority would not be represented in the House. Were that to be the case, it would follow that the single electorate system would be a bad system. The principal objection to this system was, that it did not represent minorities; but once they got rid of the representation of minorities, which could only be carried out under Hare's or some such system, they must fall back upon the old English system, which consisted in the representation of men, though not as individuals, but as neighborhoods; and aggregates into which they formed themselves—not as individuals, but as neighbors with respect to their pursuits, the classes to which they belonged, and the phases of their opinions. Now, under a perfect system of representation such as Hare's, which was impracticable here, there was no doubt that the single electorate system was somewhat awry; but if they gave up the representation of minorities, it would be found to be a fair system. Though he must admit that the system of returning three or more members for one constituency was somewhat defective, it had the effect of securing the representation of minorities to some extent, and so far was good; but again, on the other hand, it enabled party leaders to mass their forces in such a way as to give to constituencies returning more than one member an undue influence—so the one thing, as it were, corrected the other—and taking those circumstances into consideration, he thought the single electorate system was a fair and a just one. The reason why he thought that Hare's system would be impracticable here was, that here they had given every man a vote; and, by Hare's system, it was required that every person who had a vote

should make out certain voting papers; but, as honorable members knew, it was a most uncommon thing to get a declaration that was properly filled up; and, of course, it followed from such being the case, that it would be impossible to get the working population to exercise with accuracy under the Elections Bill the peculiar powers which the adoption of Hare's system would give them—many of whom would be altogether new to the exercise of the electoral right. Now, under such circumstances, it appeared to him that the election of members would virtually fall into the hands of professional politicians and party leaders, and Hare's system, which was directed to the prevention of that and of party feeling, would be altogether nullified. One honorable member had said that the Bill was not founded upon any principle, and that the standard of population was the best principle upon which to base a Bill of this nature. Now, he must deny both of those propositions; and he denied in particular that it was not founded upon any principle, for he maintained that it was founded upon as fair and practicable a principle as it would be possible to devise. Honorable members should bear in mind that they had not a chessboard to deal with, or a plane surface which they could cut up into so many electorates of equal dimensions, putting a certain population in each, but that they had to deal with a colony over which the population was very unequally distributed, and where it was necessary that the natural boundaries should be adopted, in order to make any Bill workable—and all the artificial schemes that might be devised would not enable them to do away with the natural boundaries. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that in the preparation of the Bill they should adopt, for the division of electorates, those natural boundaries that were easily recognisable—and that was the course that was adopted here. The next thing they had to do was to equalise the population, as far as it was possible to do so, for each district; and, looking at the various interests that had to be considered, that was a matter of considerable difficulty, but he thought it had been very fairly met; and it might be said that, taking those questions into consideration, the Bill was founded upon the principle of representing, not only the male adult population, but also the general population. There was this also to be said, that legislation of this sort must be founded upon a practical basis—it must be framed in a way that was likely to produce the greatest benefit to the community. It was not sufficient to make laws that would please the fancies of mere theorists; and he thought the honorable the Colonial Secretary, with the information at his command, had drawn out a very fair Bill, and one which he hoped might last for some years to come. But that it would last for long no one could expect. An instance to shew that this might be the case had occurred

within the last few months. He referred to the township of Stanthorpe which had risen into importance within a very short time indeed. A few months ago, the population of that township consisted of only twenty or thirty persons; and he believed that now it would soon require to be represented. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had said that provision might be made in a measure of this kind for the gradual increase of population in different districts of the colony; but he (the Secretary for Lands) thought it would be impossible to do so. By Hare's system it would be possible; because, under that system, it did not matter, if a district was to be separated, whether it had the proper number of population or not; but under this system, who was to decide where the boundary line should be drawn, and who was to decide what part of the district was to be cut off and created into a new district? The proposition, if carried out, would lead to a mass of difficulties that he did not see his way out of; but no doubt the proposed amendment of the honorable member would receive ample consideration. He did not think, however, that the proposition was so valuable a one as the honorable member himself seemed to consider it to be. In America, the system was different; and some confusion seemed to exist in the minds of some honorable members as to that system. The system in that country as to the House of Representatives, was this: The State returned to the House a certain number of members according to the population. Now, that, amongst a number of independent States, was a perfectly good and just system to adopt; but it led to the cry that the American system was founded on a population basis. In the election of members, however, the several States were subject to the same anomalies as existed in England and in this colony. A State, for instance, might be entitled, on the population basis, to return three members; but a town or small district in that State, containing one-tenth of the population, might return one of those members, so that, with a population of only one-tenth of the whole, such town or district had a representative power of one-third. The American system, it would therefore be seen, was not founded upon population. Now, it was the practice of scheming politicians in America to divide the States in the way that was described as "gerrymandering," and a great many vices existed under the system of representation there. He did not think that, so long as they had territorial divisions, it would be possible to get rid of the belief that, in the division of districts, the party in power was, in some way or other, practising "gerrymandering." Now, he thought that if honorable members would look at the maps, they would be somewhat surprised at the very fair way in which the electorates had been divided; and, with the exception of Bundamba it would be evident by the form of the electorates that, in making the divisions,

there was anything but gerrymandering. But the particular form of that electorate was forced upon the Government, because of the difficulty there was of getting the requisite number of population to constitute it in any other way; and if any way of getting out of the difficulty could be shewn, it would be at once adopted. He hoped that the Bill would have a good effect, and that it would last for several years—though he did not think that it would last for more than four or five years, because prosperity was setting in so rapidly in some districts that the Bill would have to be amended. It had been said that the Warrego and the Mitchell were decreasing in population. Now, that was not correct; for though they had decreased from temporary causes, they were now increasing, and each had a larger population than when members were allotted to them; and the tide of population and prosperity was setting in in those districts with a rapidity that few honorable members were aware of.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he considered that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government was certainly to be congratulated upon his having prepared a Bill for the redistribution of the electorates, in a way that would provide, as fairly as he thought it was possible for anyone to do, for the equal representation of the several districts of the colony. The Bill, he thought, was as fair a one as any man could be expected to produce, especially when they considered the difficult nature of the question, and the very difficult position in which the honorable gentleman was placed in respect to it. He must say that the measure appeared to him to be altogether devoid of anything like what they might call a natural political bias—considering the opinions of the honorable member himself, and the state of parties at the time it was introduced. He trusted, therefore, that every assistance would be given to the honorable member to make the Bill even more fair than it was at present. He must say that he was not altogether satisfied with it, nor did he believe that everyone on either side of the House was fully satisfied with it. So far as he could see, he was unable to discover that there was any particular principle in the Bill whatever, except that of single electorates; and he said so notwithstanding the observations of the honorable member who had just sat down, in defence of the measure. The honorable member for Western Downs had said that there was yet another principle in the Bill, and that it was one with reference to the basis of representation; but when the honorable gentleman came to explain what that principle was, it appeared to be one that consisted of a mixture of all the systems that professed to be based upon population, extent of country, wealth, intelligence, and the way in which population was spread over the country. Now if any broader or more general basis

than that should be pointed out, it would, he must confess, greatly surprise him. The honorable member had also pointed out that in some parts of the colony, such as the Western Downs, East Moreton, the Leichhardt, and some other populous districts, the system of single electorates was preferable to any other, because it was impossible to find in those large tracts of country populations sufficient, and having at the same time an identity of interest to entitle them to return two members. Now there was no proposition which was true at all times, and under all circumstances—at any rate none that he was aware of, especially in respect to representation; and therefore a proposition that might be true and accurate, and even applicable as regarded one part of the country, might not be so with respect to another. As to the pastoral districts, there was no doubt that the provisions of the Bill were very fair, but as to the towns, such as Brisbane, they were not. Why, for instance, if the city of Sydney were to be cut up into as many single electorates as it returned members, the arrangement would be worse than that of the municipal wards of the city. He therefore maintained that the principle of single electorates was not good always. As he considered that the basis which should be adopted was one that would secure the representation of the greater number of the people, and as he believed that the amendments which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley would have that effect, he considered the principle of them ought to be adopted throughout the measure; and holding that opinion, he would, of course, support them. With regard to the principle of total population being accepted as the basis of representation, the honorable member had argued most ingeniously and perseveringly in support of the principle upon which the Bill was based; and the arguments of the honorable member would have great weight if they were correct, as no doubt the honorable member was fully convinced they were. The honorable member quoted, amongst other authorities, from Lord Macaulay. Now he apprehended that the speech of that eminent gentleman on the Reform Bill was not likely to be so accurate as the propositions he put forth on the subject, when he came to consider the matter carefully. However, they were not here placed under the strong political bias that Lord Macaulay was at that time; and it was also a notorious fact that the statements which were made by that gentleman were more distinguished for their elegance than for their accuracy. The statements which were made by him were not, therefore, always such as could be taken as a guide. A rhyme such as the one which the honorable member for Western Downs quoted, was very likely to carry away a great many of the less educated portion of the community, and lead them to believe that the principle which it expressed was a correct one. He preferred

taking another authority on the subject of representation, and it was that of Mr. Hare, who, in treating of the representation of small towns, or small populations, such as those of the squatting districts, said:—

“The glaring anomalies and inconsistencies of a system which enables a great number of the members of the House of Commons to be elected by towns, insignificant in wealth and population, when compared with other places, often in their immediate neighborhood, which are without such powers—a system which cannot now be defended on the grounds which were formerly urged in its support—renders some extensive alteration indispensable, if the representation is to be placed on a rational or satisfactory basis. It has been a common thing for the representatives of such places, and the advocates of the system under which they hold their privileges, to refer to the smaller boroughs, as favorably contrasted with the metropolitan and other larger constituencies, by the more independent tone which their members are able to assume.”

He apprehended that that opinion was as likely to be correct as the opinion of Lord Macaulay. The honorable member for Western Downs had also stated as a reason why towns should not have so large a share of representation as the more distant and thinly populated districts of the colony, that their members were more amenable to the influence of their constituencies than the representatives of distant communities were. Now he could not accept of that as a sufficient reason why the inhabitants of towns should not be equally represented in proportion to their population as the inhabitants of distant constituencies. The Bill had been pretty well debated to-night, but he, nevertheless, desired to make a few observations upon what he regarded as the most important part of it—that was its making an addition to the present number of members. That was the great principle of the Bill, and it was the chief object for which it was brought in. Now, with regard to the fifth clause, he apprehended that it would not have been so unfair if it had not been for the passing of the Elections Act of 1872, which, of itself, he had thought would have necessitated a dissolution, and a general election, as soon as the new rolls were completed. When there was such an increased extension of the franchise as was made by that Bill, he felt confident that there must of necessity be a dissolution, in order to secure that fuller representation of the people which it was the professed object of the Bill to secure. So strongly was he impressed with that opinion that he did not think, when he was elected, he could retain his seat longer than to the end of the present session. Now, he thought that under a review of all the circumstances affecting the question, it was most unjust to insert a clause which would have the effect of obviating the necessity of a dissolution, and a fresh election under the Elections Act of 1872. Some of the instances

of the divisions of districts, also, as proposed by the Bill, were most unjust. Brisbane, for instance, was to have only two members instead of three; and a considerable number of the electors were to be transferred from Brisbane to the electorate of Fortitude Valley, and some were to be transferred from Fortitude Valley to the district of Enoggera; and the village or township of Enoggera consisted of about half-a-dozen houses. Now, under such a system as that, any honorable member who might represent half-a-dozen houses would be entitled to the same weight in the House as the member who represented a large constituency. The clause would have a similar effect in respect to Ipswich and other constituencies. He should be delighted to see the clause passed, so far as he was personally concerned, for it would not be a pleasant task to have to go through another contested election. However, he felt bound, as a matter of public duty, to oppose the clause; but whether it was carried or not, he did not think it would affect the fate of the Bill. If the question of the second reading should go to a division, and the Bill was carried by a majority of the House, he would bow to their decision. As to the sixth clause, which was the clause with respect to which he had circulated certain amendments, he maintained that as it stood, it would have the effect of disfranchising every elector in the colony, and it would, therefore, be necessary for them to begin again—to start afresh, in fact, in the same way as when the colony was first established. Now, everyone who was at all acquainted with the way in which electoral rolls were made up would admit that the difficulty of preparing fresh rolls now would be far greater than it was when the colony was first established; for at that time the population of the colony was not only small, as compared with what it was now, but persons were appointed to collect the names of those who were entitled to have their names placed upon the rolls; but, now, the claimants would have to send in their claims themselves, and it would be particularly hard that those who had been at the trouble and expense of having their names placed on the new rolls during the last month should be disqualified, as they would be by this Bill. All their trouble would go for nothing, and they would, in fact, find that, as soon as they had done all that it was in their power to do to qualify themselves as electors, they were disfranchised, unless they again went to the trouble of having their names placed upon the rolls. Now, under those circumstances, if a dissolution was to take place after this Bill was passed, it would be found that the rolls would not contain half of the names of those persons who were entitled to have their names upon them. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that some provision should be made for the names on the rolls at present being retained upon the new rolls that would have to be made up. With the

view of meeting that difficulty, he had drawn up a clause, which he would propose for insertion in the Bill, and which he hoped would have the effect he desired—that of having the names at present on the rolls placed upon the new rolls. With regard to the division of districts, he quite agreed with the remarks of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, when he said that the Western districts were too largely represented in comparison with other districts. He was fully aware of the force of the arguments that had been adduced on the other side of the question, but still he did not think it would be right to allow the present opportunity to pass without protesting against such a distribution as was proposed being made. Now it was not as if those districts contained large populations, for some of them contained smaller populations than any other districts in the colony. The Balonne, for instance, which was to be a separate district from the Maranoa, contained the smallest population of any district in the colony. The population of the Mitchell was also very small and was not likely to increase rapidly; and as to the new district of Burke, it consisted chiefly of two gold fields, but which might, in a year or two, have a large population—say, nearly as large as Rockhampton; but, on the other hand, it might in the course of that time be less than it was at present. With regard to the division as to population, he thought the metropolitan group of districts had been very unfairly treated; and so, also, had been the districts of Maryborough and Wide Bay, as compared with the districts of the Western group. As to the Bundamba district, he scarcely thought the honorable the Colonial Secretary could have been in earnest when he said he thought that it must be right because it seemed to displease everybody. Those who would compare the population of the electoral body, would see that it had been a matter of necessity to frame the district in the way that had been done. He was not without hopes, however, that it would be found possible to retain the old boundary between East and West Moreton, as far, at least, as Bundamba was concerned. Some petitions had been presented from persons resident in portions of the proposed Bundamba district, in which they pointed out that Brisbane was their market town, and urged that they should not be politically severed from the Brisbane group, and attached to the Ipswich group. He had been told that the present boundary between the East and West Moreton districts was, also, practically the commercial boundary; that all the farmers and others in West Moreton went to Ipswich as their market town, and that those resident in East Moreton came to Brisbane. Now that being the case, he thought it would be well to allow the existing boundary between the two districts to remain. Before sitting down, he wished to state that it was altogether a mistake to

suppose, that the members for East Moreton were returned chiefly by the electors for the district resident in Brisbane, for in the case of his own election, the majority for him in the country districts was double what it was in Brisbane. He had only to add, that though in some respects he disapproved of the Bill, he would heartily support the second reading.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said he could not allow the motion before the House to pass with a silent vote on his part. The question was one of so great importance, as to deserve the most serious consideration of every honorable member. Now, he must say, that he considered the inhabitants of North Brisbane had great reason to complain against the Bill; and the first complaint he had to make against it was, that the redistribution of the electorates was placed entirely upon a wrong basis. That it should be based upon mere adult population was altogether wrong. That was a novelty that no one in the world could have expected to be introduced into a measure of this kind. But it was introduced in this Bill, and under it North Brisbane would be deprived of one-third of its representative power; and that was a wrong which the inhabitants of the city ought not to be obliged to put up with. No doubt the honorable the Colonial Secretary had great reason to be satisfied with the way in which the Bill had been received by the House; but there had been so many alterations suggested, that the honorable gentleman must feel that though the Bill had been lauded to such a degree, it was anything but a satisfactory measure. The honorable the Minister for Lands had greatly lauded the Bill, because of the way in which natural boundaries had been adhered to; but it was altogether absurd to say that such had been the case, as was shewn in the case of the new district of Bundamba, which, besides stretching up to Ipswich, comprised a part of both banks of the Brisbane River. Now, he would ask, if there could be a better natural boundary than that of a river? There were other districts where similar natural boundaries had not been observed; and, he must say, that whoever made the divisions, had made them in a most bungling manner. If the Bill had been framed upon the basis of general population, instead of the fancy basis of merely adult population, the divisions could have been far more satisfactorily made, and there would have been a more equal representation. With the amendments which the honorable member for Fortitude Valley proposed to make upon the Bill, with the view of providing for additional members in the case of an increase of population in any particular district, and thereby to obviate the necessity of having again to legislate upon the question of representation, he fully agreed. The principle was one which he hoped to see introduced into this Bill, or any similar measure that might

at some future time be brought forward. As to the principle of single electorates which was one of the characteristic features of the Bill, he thought it would work well, and that it would prevent many of the abuses that existed under the old system, especially in the way of bunching. The honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, in the course of his speech, said that if the Bill were passed, it would become necessary to increase the quorum of the House. Now, he altogether disagreed with the honorable member in that opinion, for he thought the present quorum would be quite large enough. If the quorum had not been so large, they would not, he was convinced, have had the deadlock so long. For his own part, he believed that this was simply an experimental measure, and that there was no finality in it. With regard to any measure of reform, he fully concurred with Mr. Bright in saying—

“Whenever a Reform Bill is brought into the House of Commons by any Government, be as watchful and exacting as you like on the subject of the franchise; but never, I beg, take your eye for one moment from the question of the distribution of the members, for in it lies the great subject of dispute, and, unless you guard your rights, you will have to fight your battle over again, and to begin it the very day after the next Bill has passed.”

Now he believed that applied particularly to their own case in the present instance. He did not believe there was any finality in this question—not even though there was a provision in the Bill to meet the case of increase of population in any particular district. The honorable the Colonial Secretary, in introducing the Bill, stated that it provided for a slight increase of members, and that every member would represent one particular constituency; and he seemed to recommend it also upon the fact that—the electorates being small—the particular interest of every constituency would be more specially represented in the House than they were at present. The honorable member alluded to the sugar-growers, to the agriculturists, and to others; but he (Mr. Edmondstone) believed that in all such cases it would be wrong. He would read what Mr. Bright said on the subject:—

“I believe it is almost essential to a good member of this House, so far as it depends upon external circumstances, that he should have among his constituencies, a variety of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer would call ‘interests’; persons of various classes, occupations, and opinions. I think they keep him better to his duty, modify his opinions, and make him a more valuable member of the House than he is likely to be if he represented only some special interest.”

There were several statements and paragraphs similar to that, and which simply disclaimed altogether upon any person being elected with the view of advocating the interests of any particular class; and that appeared to him to be a fault in the proposed

Bill. He certainly did regret very much that there had been any departure from the old system of concocting a Bill for the representation of the community, any departure from the system of having the gross population as the basis—in other words, he considered that the basis of the Bill should have been the gross population of the colony. He was not aware that there was anything else for him to say, as, although the matter was one of very great moment, he had not given it that great amount of consideration which it deserved.

Mr. KING drew attention to the state of the House.

A quorum having been formed,

Mr. KING said that, in discussing the Bill now before the House, he must commence by repeating the observation which had been made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and other honorable members who had spoken, that it was extremely desirable that the Bill should not be dealt with in any party spirit. It was extremely desirable that that course should be pursued by honorable members on both sides of the House, for the reason that honorable members might be certain that any temporary party triumph that might be gained at the present time, would be sure to lead ultimately to the loss of that party who gained the triumph. If a Bill was intended to inflict a vindictive punishment on the electorates returning opposition members, the Government were, no doubt, strong enough to carry such a measure; at the same time, in doing that, they would be rendering certain their own downfall; and their destruction, as a political party, would be inevitable. He hoped, therefore, that the Bill would not be approached in that way, but that every honorable member in discussing it, would remember that he was dealing with a most important subject—one that would affect the future of the colony for all time to come, as the character of that House would be affected by the character of the constituencies which were to be formed. He would also say that, to a very great extent, the character of the people was guided by their representatives, and he ventured to say that the high character the English people possessed in the eyes of the world, was owing to England having had men of such high character to guide its affairs. There was a time in the history of England when one class always held the power; and when that power was held by the great vassals of the Crown, the people recognised the justice of that power. Afterwards, the power of the people became more recognised, and change after change was made, until, at last, they found that the English Government, from almost a despotism, had come to be the most liberal, and, although presided over by a monarch, was more free than any other in the world. Now, in order to obtain that result here, it must be borne in mind that the sovereign power rested in the people, and that the Government had no right to appear in that

House as a Government, except as the representatives of the entire people. Now, the Bill they were about to pass would establish the grounds upon which certain gentlemen were to rule the colony, and it was, therefore, essential that that Act should be such as would be just to the whole of the people. They all knew that in ancient times the government of a country was carried on by the whole of the tribes assembled in council; but as those tribes grew large, and as kingdoms grew out of them, it was found impossible for them all to attend, and, therefore, representatives were chosen. Consequently that House should be the representation of the whole people of Queensland. If it was not a representative body, representing the whole of the people of Queensland, then, he would ask, by what right did they govern the people? It was merely a right delegated to them by the people, and not from any right of their own, that they now governed. In speaking of the Bill now before them, one difficulty they had to encounter was, that there was a want in it of any fundamental principle. They had been told by the honorable the Premier that it contained a variety of principles, but seeing that some of those were conflicting principles, it was tantamount to having no principle at all; for if there were two conflicting principles it could not be said that there was any principle at all. They were told that it was based partly on population, partly on property, and partly on extent of territory. Then, again, they were told that it was based partly upon adult male population—that, however, was not a correct basis. He was bound to contend that population, pure and simple, was the only proper basis for representation in that House; and he made that contention on the ground that it was the population in this colony that paid the taxes and all the expenses of Government, and that, therefore, it was only just and proper that population should be the basis, and that the people should have the power vested in them of creating the Government. A great deal had been said and quoted in the course of the present debate about the anomalies existing in the representation of England; and it had been argued that because the city of London had not the number of representatives to which it was entitled on the population basis, that they should not make a claim to have representation on that basis in the colony. He had already shewn, on a previous occasion, that such an argument was not applicable to this colony, because, in the first place, they did not ask for the exact fraction of representation to which every and each district was entitled; but they only asked that, as was the case in England, the places where population was large should be more liberally represented than places where there was little or no population. They found also that although London had not the number of representatives to which it was entitled in proportion to its popula-

tion, it still had a great many more than any small boroughs. Again, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley had referred to some remarks made in an essay in the "Westminster Review," on the subject of representation; but he (Mr. King) now wished to refer to some passages which that honorable member had not read, because it had been said that as population was not the basis in England, it should not be the basis in this colony. He might mention, however, that with Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and other eminent politicians at home, the question of redistribution was a subject which was now exciting great attention, and one which would soon require to be dealt with. But because it had not yet been dealt with at home, was not any reason why it should not be dealt with in the colony; for it might just as well be said that the ballot should not have been introduced in the colonies before it was in England, whereas it was well known that the colonies were the first to introduce it, and the results of it proved to be so good in Australia that the United Kingdom had actually followed their example. Now, the portion of the article to which he wished to refer said:—

"If it is admitted, and it can hardly be denied, that the object of representative institutions is to enable the national will to manifest itself, so that the government of the country may be carried on, and laws may be framed in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people, what defence can be made for such a distribution of representation as this? It is obvious that our present system might entirely fail in fulfilling the very end for which representative government exists. We might have a majority in the House of Commons that represented, not the majority, but an almost insignificant minority of the nation. This is not an imaginary danger; as a matter of fact at the present moment fifty out of the fifty-nine representatives of the large towns are Liberals, while the strength of the Conservatives is drawn from the small boroughs and small county constituencies; a very slight, and far from impossible, change in the representation of a few insignificant country towns, famous for anything but purity or independence, might give a Tory majority at the next general election; and this, even although the large towns and large county constituencies should prove more thoroughly Liberal than they are at the present moment. Should this be the case, and should a party eager for the possession of political power attempt to carry on the Government, relying upon a majority in Parliament that did not represent a majority of the nation, it would be fraught with the gravest danger, not merely to the institutions of our country, but what is of far more serious consequence, to that peaceful development of our political progress, which has so favorably distinguished England from all other European countries for nearly two centuries. The attempt to rely upon a Parliamentary in place of a national majority cost Louis Philippe his throne, and plunged France into that series of revolutions alternating with *coup d'états*, that state of anarchy tempered by despotism, that has formed the history of that coun-

try since February, 1848. When Sir R. Peel heard of that event, he said to Mr. Cobden, 'This is what the Protectionists wanted me to do; and now we may see what the consequences would have been.' Is it altogether impossible that a Minister less sagacious and patriotic than Sir R. Peel might make an attempt similar to that of M. Guizot, trusting, as many a ruler has done ere now, that things might go on as they were for his time, and, after that, the Deluge?"

He would now read a few remarks made by Mr. Gladstone, to shew that one who might be considered not a light authority, was in favor of distribution:—

"There is,' he said, 'the great question of the franchise; many of us may think that that great question may advantageously receive at an early period, further attention. There is the question of the distribution of seats, and there is also that of boundaries. These are all very large questions, and perhaps hardly any of them have been settled entirely to the satisfaction of the whole House.'

"In a subsequent debate, last year, after explaining that he had been misunderstood if it was supposed that he had intimated that the Government were intending to make any proposals on the subject, he went on to say: 'I stated the other day what I repeat now, that in my opinion the principle of the recent measure for the extension of the franchise reaches much further than the measure itself, and that the time will come when it will be carried to its legitimate conclusions.'"

Again, he found that Mr. Bright, who was another of the great authorities and leaders in the House of Commons, was known to be still more in favor than Mr. Gladstone of a redistribution of seats. Mr. Bright said, after premising that the Bill of 1832 gave too large an influence to the counties and landed interest:—

"I wish you, and I wish your countrymen everywhere, to watch this point with the keenest eye possible. Repudiate without mercy any Bill of any Government, whatever its franchise, whatever its seeming concession may be, if it does not distribute the seats which are obtained from the extinction of small boroughs mainly amongst the great city and town populations of the kingdom. The question of distribution is the very soul of the question of Reform, and unless you watch that you will be deceived; and when the Bill is passed you may possibly turn back to lament that you are not in the position in which you now find yourselves."

Again, in his speech at Rochdale, early in the following year, after referring to the necessity which existed for the adoption of the ballot, Mr. Bright said:—

"I come now to a question which I was about to say is much more important than either of the others, but which has been very little discussed at public meetings; that is, the mode in which the seats should be distributed among the constituencies. Let me tell you as I have told other assemblages, that the working men who are not now enfranchised should particularly study this point, that, although to give a man a vote may

oe to please his sentiment of independence and equality, and he may like to go up and poll with his richer and more free neighbor—yet as regards the legislation, and the composition of Parliament, and the action upon your Government, the giving a man a vote, or 1,000,000 of men votes, may be made of no effect, no value whatever, unless that which I call the soul and jewel of your representative system be fairly considered and equitably adjusted."

He thought that, after hearing those confessions of opinions from two great leaders of liberal parties, honorable members of that House could scarcely insist upon it that they should cease to regard population in the distribution of seats, because they had not yet done so in England. He wished, however, to go to the manner in which population had been distributed in the schedules of the Bill before the House before he went any further, as he would have to say something on other points afterwards. He found that the average number of adult males to each member, in a House of forty-one members, was 913, and the population of all sorts, 2,769. He found also that the colony was divided into seven groups, the first of which was East Moreton, to which the number of adult males allotted was pretty near the mark, whilst there was a considerable surplus of population. In the Ipswich and West Moreton group the number of adult males was rather short, but the population was still more than would be required to qualify the number of members to that group. When they came to the Downs they found that the number of adult males was as near as could be brought, but rather short; but that the population was sufficient. In the Balonne, they found that 723 adult males was considered sufficient, with a total population of 1,371. In Wide Bay they found that each member would represent 1,115 adult males, with a total average of population of 3,552; whilst in the Rockhampton group they found that each member would represent 891 adult males, with only 2,104 of a total population in each electorate. In the Kennedy, which had been very unfairly treated, the number of adult males to each member was 1,132, and the total population 2,066; whilst the manner in which the Wide Bay group had been dealt with was the most extraordinary of all, and it certainly was the worst treated. For the following reason, that whilst it had only been allotted five members, with six members an average of 929 adult males would have been given to each member, with an average total population of 2,610. That would be as nearly as possible the number to which they would be entitled. It was somewhat remarkable that in previous Bills which had been introduced by the present Ministry, the district of Wide Bay had been allotted six members, but in the present group it was found that for some reason or other one member had been taken away. It was the more remarkable, because in his speech introduc-

ing the Bill, the honorable the Premier had assured the House that in giving to West Moreton one more member than it was entitled to, provision had been made for its rapidly increasing population. If that was the case, and one extra member was given to a district where the population was increasing, surely one should have been given where the increase had taken place already; in fact, seven should be given to Wide Bay, as it was well known that there was no part of the colony that was increasing at such a rapid rate as the northern portion of Wide Bay and the Burnett. Owing to the new settlement at Bundaberg, and the large rush of persons there had been to Mount Perry, it was not too much to say that there were several thousand more men in those districts than when the last census was taken in September. Now, if any proportion was to be made for any increase in the population which had actually taken place under the eyes of the Government since the last census was taken, he contended that that district was entitled to it. He would also point out that if territory was to be taken into consideration at all in the provinces into which the Bill proposed to divide the colony, it was only fair that there should be some balance of power between the several provinces. There was a Bill before the House which proposed to divide the colony into provinces, and he contended that to deal with one differently from another—to give it a less number of members than the other possessed according to its population, was to commit a great injustice. The Kennedy and Wide Bay districts were, no doubt, at the present time those parts of the colony of Queensland where the population was most increasing, and if there was to be any disregard paid to the census taken last September, then he submitted that those districts were entitled to more members than the census would shew them to be entitled to. Honorable members who had referred to the Kennedy, appeared to think that because it was principally inhabited by the mining population, there was some danger of a fluctuation in that population, and that consequently it would not deserve the full representation to which it was at present entitled. But he could tell honorable members that there was no fear whatever of the population of the Kennedy diminishing from what it was at present. An honorable member had spoken about the decrease of population at the Gilberton Gold Fields—but what was the reason of that? Why, that gold fields had been opened up which were capable of giving employment to 10,000 men, whereas there was now only a population of 2,000 upon them, and they rushed about from one place to another. But the men who had left the Gilbert had not left the district, but had only gone to the Etheridge, and there were many persons who had since come to the colony, who had either supplied their places at the Gilbert, or had

also gone on to the Etheridge; who were not at either when the census was taken. It was extremely probable, that after the return of the exploring party which had been sent to the North, discoveries would be made known which would cause another rush from the old diggings; but the places of those who left would be taken, and claims paying as well as they were now, would not be abandoned for ever—they would only be idle till the news went down to the South. When he was in the Kennedy district, some short time ago, every steamer from the South was bringing from 120 to 130 men, and as there were now three or four steamers trading to the North, some idea could be formed of the rapid increase there must be to the population there. He trusted, in dealing with the present question, that honorable members would not consider that because the mining population was opposed to the present Administration, an attempt should be made to defraud it of its just rights. If they objected to the present Government, they had a perfect right to do so, for they had an equal right with the squatters to hold opinions, and had the same right to send men to represent them in that House. He would tell the Government at once that if the present was made a party measure, it would be all the worse for honorable gentlemen opposite, because the Bill, even in its present shape, would strengthen his side of the House; and if an attempt was made to disfranchise the mining districts because they were inhabited by miners, and to give additional representation to the pastoral districts, the Opposition might accept the Bill simply as an instalment and as giving them some additional strength, and then next session they would come back to the House and ask for another Redistribution Bill, and not cease until they had obtained it; and as they would then be stronger the fight would be fiercer than it had ever been, and be continued till they had a better Bill. But he believed the honorable member at the head of the Government would not adopt any such policy as not to allow the Bill to be dealt with in a fair spirit; and if he had alluded to it, it was not because he thought the Government would pursue such a suicidal course. He had merely pointed out what would be the effect upon the other side of the House if any but a just and equitable Bill was carried. When the honorable the Premier was introducing the Bill he spoke about the representation of interests. Now he (Mr. King) believed, in common with many other honorable members, that the representation of interests was about the very worst thing they could have introduced into that House. He did not see how just representation could be carried on if each honorable member who went to that House, went there not to represent the colony generally, but only one particular interest. If that was the case Government would have to be carried on by a series of compromises. He believed that each honor-

able member ought to consider, not what the effect of any measure would be upon any particular interest, but upon the whole colony. He believed that honorable members should try not to conciliate one interest only, but the whole interests of the colony, and the great classes of their constituents, who had divergent interests. He believed that if an honorable member went to that House, believing that he was only to conciliate one interest, he would be the greatest nuisance they could have. But if interests were to be consolidated, what amount of representation should be allotted to them? The honorable the Premier had told them that there were so many seats that might be said to represent the squatting districts—the honorable gentleman said there were eleven, but he (Mr. King) made out that there were fifteen; but the number, however, had very little to do with the question. The question arose, upon what ground could a certain interest claim a share of representation in that House? He contended that if the pastoral interest was to be represented, the population represented by it should be taken into account. Now, he found, on reference to last year's census, that the number of persons employed by the pastoral interest amounted to 11,360 persons, which was something less than one-tenth of the whole population, and yet it was granted, even on the honorable the Premier's own admission, more than one-fourth of the entire representation—that was the modest demand made by the Bill. Let honorable members now observe how the pastoral interests were guarded in the Bill. He had spoken before of the groups into which the honorable the Premier had divided the population, and he had compared the representation of different districts, but now he would take those groups into pieces and compare the representation of the agricultural with that of the pastoral interests. Now, the Downs constituencies would return seven members, and if the group was taken to pieces it would be found that the three electorates of Toowoomba, Aubigny, and Cunningham, had a population of 11,675, whilst the other four pastoral electorates, with a population of 8,758, had a preponderance of one more member with a less population. He next came to the Rockhampton group, and he found there a population of 7,298 returned nearly double the number of members that a population of 9,000 returned.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE called attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr. KING resumed: The great anomaly of which he and others complained at the present time, was, that a majority of the House was returned by a minority of the people. He now found that although there was a Bill giving universal suffrage to the people, yet 21 members would be returned by 42,604 of the population, whilst 44,343 persons would only return 11 members. He found that

eleven squatting constituencies with a population of 19,000 persons would return 11 members, whilst 10 town constituencies with a population of over 38,000 would only return 10 members, and agricultural constituencies in the same way; so that the Bill proposed to give to those constituencies which were only squatting, double the representation which was allotted to the others. If honorable members would take the trouble to compare the tables of population carefully, and look at them in a different way than that in which the honorable the Premier looked at them, they would find that the colony was not divided into groups, but that a line was drawn north and south. In the one, the population was very great, and in the other, it was very small; and it would be found that, if they now gave the coast constituencies less representation than they were entitled to, very great difficulties would arise in future years. But one of the great pleas which had been brought forward for the redistribution of seats as proposed, was property. They had been told that where there was no population, there was property. Now, in the old days, it was said that property had a claim to be represented, because it was taxed; but by a most extraordinary anomaly, it was found that, in this colony, there was only one class that paid direct taxes, and that was the mining class, which was to be the class least represented. There was hardly any other direct taxation. Out of the £22,445 received last year from the miners there was only about £5,000 paid by the banks for the right of issuing notes, which could hardly be a called direct tax. At the present time, in the United Kingdom, it would be found that property contributed nearly one-half the taxation, whilst here the whole direct taxation, with the exception of the sum paid by the banks, which was hardly worth mentioning, was paid by the mining class. But let them see whether there was that property which was to be represented, where there was no population. In England, real estate was property, but in this colony they found that the property sought to be represented in that House was personal property which could be moved away at any time. Why, taking the stock which was really spoken of as being property—what was it? In the unsettled districts there were 35,183 horses, 467,210 cattle, and 6,395,353 sheep, whilst in the settled districts there were 48,175 horses, 609,420 cattle, and 1,768,265 sheep. The surplus horses and cattle in the settled districts amounted to 12,992 horses and 142,210 cattle; and the surplus sheep in the unsettled districts to 4,627,288, and taking the value of them to be a million and a-half, what would be the value of other property in the settled districts as against that? In the first place, it would be found that there were 52,000 acres of land under cultivation. That could not be estimated very low, and if it was estimated at £20 an acre, there was a

million at once; but it was quite possible that, although some was not worth £20 an acre, yet a great deal of it was worth more. Then again, there was a million acres of purchased land, which cost £1 an acre. Then again, there were 1,643,574 acres taken up under the provisions of the Act of 1868. In the settled districts there were 21,000 houses, and in the unsettled, 6,000 houses, leaving 15,000 more in the settled districts, and they might take it for granted that there was a corresponding amount of improvements in the houses in the settled districts. Referring to that subject, the Registrar-General, in his report, stated:—

“In the towns, especially the larger ones, the houses, although presenting an immense variety both in size and quality, may, on the whole, be deemed to satisfy all reasonable requirements for permanent habitation; and amongst the agricultural population, the domiciles, as a rule, if rough, are comfortable enough; but in the bush, whether on stations or mining districts, in very many cases, the structures that do duty as habitations are often of the rudest materials and construction, provided with furniture and fittings to correspond, and affording but poor protection against weather.”

So that from what the Registrar-General said it did not appear that the houses in the unsettled districts were of very great value. It was well known that in the settled districts the value of buildings, without taking into consideration the stock in them, was of greater value than the stations and everything connected with them. Yet they had been told that the only property which was to be treated as property, was that which walked about on four legs, and which at any time could be driven across the borders to South Australia. Again, on comparing the revenue derived from land for pastoral purposes, and that derived from land for agricultural purposes, what did he find? Why, that whilst from pastoral rents and assessment there was a sum of £111,126 7s. 11d.; from land sales, conditional purchases, homesteads, and under the Leasing Act of 1866, there was a sum of £152,338 8s. 1d., or, in other words, the agriculturist contributed half as much again as the pastoral tenant. Yet, in the face of that, the representation of the pastoral districts was double that of the agricultural districts. Again, in the estimated revenue for last year, he noticed that from the sale of land £10,000 less was received from the pastoral than from the agricultural interest. He did not consider it would be well for him, at the present time, to speak in reference to the fifth clause of the Bill, as already, although several honorable members had addressed themselves to it, no one had attempted to defend it; he therefore hoped that it would be struck out. But if there should be any attempt to stand up for that clause, he should, for one, give it a most decided opposition. He would not occupy the time of the House any longer, at that late period of the evening; but would

conclude by reading a few remarks made by Earl Grey, in his work on "Parliamentary Reform," which he considered were very applicable to this colony, at the present time :—

"Experience had proved that, in the House of Commons as then constituted, public opinion was so weak, and influence of another kind so powerful, that the conduct both of Parliament and of the Executive Government was biassed in a manner detrimental to the general welfare of the nation. Clear evidence of this was to be found in the manner in which the country had for many years been governed, and especially in the heavy burden of taxation imposed upon the people. There could be little doubt that some branches of the public expenditure had been maintained upon a scale beyond what was required by the real interest of the nation, with the view of securing the support of those who had a commanding influence in the election of the House of Commons."

Now, it was found that there was a party in that House most desirous of maintaining its position, and it was found that measures introduced by that party were opposed to the interests of the people of Queensland; and therefore it was most desirable that all future representation should be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people of Queensland. He trusted that the present Bill would be placed upon that basis, and that it would be just and equitable to all.

Mr. GRAHAM moved—

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. FYFE (who was most indistinctly heard) was understood to say that it was very unusual for an honorable member to move the adjournment of the debate without making a speech; but, as the honorable gentleman was only a young member of that House, although he was convinced he would become one of the leading members of it, he thought the usual practice might be departed from.

Motion carried.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the debate be adjourned until the following day, to take precedence of all other business.

Motion carried.