

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE 1872

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 19 June, 1872.

Electoral Districts Bill.—Ways and Means—Appropriation Bill.—Clerks of Petty Sessions Bill.]

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

Upon the reading of the Order of the Day for the resumption of the adjourned debate on motion for the second reading of this Bill,

Mr. GRAHAM rose and said, that it appeared to be a matter of opinion amongst honorable members whether the Bill now before the

House was based upon one principle or two. Both sides had agreed that it contained one principle; that was, single electorates. He would, therefore, offer a few remarks upon that, in the first instance. Although some honorable members had stated their impression that, theoretically, a better system might exist—that Hare's, or some other system, might be better in theory—than the one proposed in the Bill, yet he thought it had been universally allowed that, in practice, the single electorate system was far better than any other that was likely to be agreed to; and, as honorable members on both sides had expressed their desire to give it a fair trial, it was unnecessary for him to say any more upon it. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, stated yesterday that he regretted that the principle had been carried out in its entirety; as, in some of the most populous constituencies, two members might have been given. The electorates of Brisbane City and Wickham had been specified as alike in interest and population, which might with advantage have been made one electorate, returning two members, instead of two electorates returning one member each. Although he (Mr. Graham) might agree to some extent that no harm would be done by that arrangement, yet he could not see that the division would do any harm; and he thought it probable that better representatives would be secured for those districts which were divided, so that each electorate should return one member, than if they returned more than one member. In the formation of the House, it was very desirable that not only should different interests, but the interests of the general population also—it was desirable that public feeling—should find voice amongst the representatives of the country. It was desirable that the Assembly should be composed of men of different professions and different modes of private life. There were lawyers in the House to attend to legal matters, and members engaged practically in the pastoral interest who could give information on questions of diseases in stock, also members of the learned professions; but the commercial interest was always badly represented in the House. At the present moment, honorable members did not look to the city of Brisbane or to Rockhampton for representatives of the commercial interest; they had to go to East Moreton, which was ostensibly an agricultural constituency, for a member, who was a representative in the commercial interest. He (Mr. Graham) did not think that the commercial interest was properly represented in the House, if honorable members could not give an authoritative opinion, when they were placed in possession of facts connected with that subject; and had commerce been better represented than it was, they would have seen the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, when he exposed the malpractices of certain Sydney

merchants, productive of fraud and perjury, better backed up than he was—if commercial men were sitting on those benches. As the country had found by experience that the bunching system did not make the large centres of population and commerce return mercantile men as their representatives in the House, perhaps under the division system of single electorates and a separation of interests, something better could be looked for. He did not mean to say, for one moment, that the gentlemen who now represented Brisbane were not excellent members, excellent legislators, and honorable men; but they were not mercantile men. There was a better chance of that interest being represented under the new system than now, at all events. Agreeing, as he did, with the principle of single electorates, the question arose, whether there was not another principle in the Bill. Some said there was none. He believed it was held by the Government, and those who were the chief supporters of the Bill said, that it was based upon adult male population. Any person who looked down the list of figures which was given with the schedules to the Bill, would see that, in point of fact, it was based upon the adult male population of the colony. It was perfectly impossible that any natural boundaries, or any other divisions of the country could be taken which would not leave the electorates unequal in point of numbers; and, judging of the list, as a whole, honorable members must allow that the adult male basis had been followed very fairly all through. The principal objections to the divisions of the electorates had been, because the electorates did not follow the population basis. But honorable members should remember that the Bill did not pretend to follow the population basis; it was professedly based upon the adult male population of the country. Therefore, if they wished to attack that part of the Bill, they should attack its principle, not the details: it would be no use at all, after they had allowed the Bill to be read the second time, to complain that the population basis had not been exactly followed in some individual case; because the Bill did not intend to follow the population basis. He could shew that the population basis was neither a desirable nor a good basis for the House to adopt. In the first place, in outlying districts of the colony, the census had been very incorrectly taken. Honorable members living in the interior were very well aware that the census returns were not very accurate. He could say so much for the district he represented. It was exceedingly difficult to prove to demonstration where the error lay; but it so happened, that in his district, he could point out its occurrence in a remarkable manner. In looking at the gross returns of the census for the municipality of Clermont, he saw so many adult males and so many females; but there were only twenty-five minors—that was, males

under twenty-one years of age. The census was taken at a certain time, when the National School was opened but a few weeks; and there were twenty-five boys on the roll of that school, and he believed, none of them over fourteen years of age. The difference might not be large; there might not be many persons in the municipality between fourteen and twenty-one years; but such a return demonstrated that error existed, and when it was found to have occurred in one particular, they might believe that the census was unreliable in other respects. Those honorable members who knew the outside districts, were aware that it was impossible to take anything like a correct census. The population was not known there, nor so accessible as it was in towns and streets; men were sometimes in one place and sometimes in another. In his district, though there were the towns of Clermont and Copperfield, the settled population was comparatively small, and yet, doubtless, there were as large a number of people over the rest of the district as in those towns; they were only now beginning to settle down on their allotments and farm the land; and he had no doubt that in a short time the census would be taken correctly enough. There was another point of view from which the House must consider the question of population. He thought every honorable member must be aware that a great number of men were at work on the gold diggings, at the mines, and on the stations, and even on the farms in the country districts, whose families lived in town. Thus, if a man, with a family in town, resided on a gold field, or in a country district, he counted only as one in the population of the district in which he worked; while his family, counting seven or eight persons, or even more, in the city of Brisbane, or in Rockhampton, or in whatever town they might be, were taken at their full number in the population of the place where they lived. That was the case all over the colony; and it must be so for some time, because the cost of living was very much less on the coast than in the interior, and men could keep their families in the coast towns for very much less than would support them inland.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. GRAHAM: Indeed, many men went to the mines and to stations to work alone for some months before taking up their families, as a considerable expense was incurred in moving them up country. If, therefore, the population basis was taken as a guide, honorable members would find that the result arrived at would be very unfair to the inland districts. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, had made a remark with which he (Mr. Graham) thoroughly coincided—that married men not only supported themselves but their families, and paid much more taxes, and deserved much more representation, than bachelors. But, at the same time, if the House allowed that a married

man was entitled to a larger share of representation than a bachelor, he did not think the former was entitled to eight times as much representation as the latter.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. GRAHAM: As the honorable member for Wide Bay had stated, and wisely too, that the largest population should have the greatest number of members in the House; yet, for the reasons given, the most populous places could not be represented in the House in exact proportion to their population. Another observation was made by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, which deserved a little attention—that in the settled districts, such as East Moreton and the city of Brisbane, there was a very large number of young men verging on the age of twenty-one years—between sixteen and twenty-one—who would in a few years from this time amount to a sufficient number to warrant their having additional representation. He (Mr. Graham) would remind the honorable member that the great majority of youths in this colony, who were born or brought up in the chief Australian towns, as soon as they reached the age of manhood, went into the interior; and he thought it was very proper that they should do so. A great deal was heard of the dulness of the times, of lack of work, when, only a few miles off in the country there was plenty of employment, and wages were very high. Whatever might be said to the contrary, in point of fact, the towns were supported by the country, and no obstacles should be allowed to remain in the way of the dwellers in the country. He did not think the House could find fault with the Bill because it did not follow the population basis. If the population, as it was known, was taken as a guide only so far as to give the most populous districts the greatest number of representatives, without going the length of giving them representatives in proportion to their population, the House would deal very justly and fairly with the whole question of the representation of the colony. He did not think he need say anything more about the principle of the Bill. It was allowed by honorable members on both sides of the House to be in the main a good Bill, and one that had been honestly framed. He did not believe they could pass any Bill that would not be an improvement on the existing representation; but he thought that the measure under consideration, taking it as a whole, was an exceedingly good one. Considering that for years past the representation was in the hands of two or three districts of the colony, he thought that the other districts had great cause for congratulation that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had brought before the House so liberal and just a measure for the colony as this Bill was for all. He granted that, at first sight, it seemed to be unfair that those districts which had a small number of males in their population—Warrego, Balonne, and Mitchell—should be represented by the same number of members as

the large districts, having three or four thousand of a population; yet, at the same time, he thought that, on the whole, there was no reason to complain. He confessed that he thought the distribution would be better and more homogeneous if Balonne, Warrego, and Mitchell, which were set down for three members, were to return but two, and if the third member was given to Wide Bay. Wide Bay was the only district that had been treated at all unfairly. It had a large population, which, though a mining population, yet was the most settled mining population in the colony. The town of Gympie was fairly established, and it had been proved beyond cavil that the reefs were permanent, and that they would last as long as the present generation of members lasted. It could not be said of that district, as it could of some other districts, that the population was of an evanescent character. And, taking Burnett, there was no doubt that in the course of two or three years, from the opening of the copper mines at Mount Perry, the population would be multiplied four or five times what it was at present. The House might, therefore, justly give the Maryborough group another member. He did not propose to take more than one away from other districts; and that he would leave to the House to decide. He thought the Bill would be improved if they adopted his suggestion. At the same time, he was perfectly content to take the Bill as it stood, without any change at all; for it was a good Bill—reasonable and just. He considered that the district he represented had been very fairly dealt with, and he hoped that other districts of the colony would be as satisfied as he expected his to be.

MR. HANDY said that, as he stated on a previous occasion, he had not intended to address the House on the second reading of the Bill, but as he understood that it was now the intention of all honorable members to express their ideas upon it at this stage, he would venture a few words. He was fully aware that the subject was one that should be discussed in a calm, deliberative, and unprejudiced spirit, free from party influences and local partiality; it was one that should be considered in a broad, open, and honest way, honorable members keeping in view only the benefits to be ensured to the colony by the passing of a good measure. Before addressing himself particularly to the Bill, he could not help referring to the words of the honorable member for Clermont. It was a matter of regret, and no one regretted it more than himself (Mr. Handy) that the city of Brisbane was not represented by a commercial gentleman. But the House must know that the people were free to elect whom they liked. It was a matter of sincere regret that East Moreton was not represented by an agriculturist—a cotton grower. But, if the electors would choose whom they liked, no one had any reason to complain. At the last election for Brisbane he was very anxious to get a com-

mercial gentleman to stand, and he would not have entered the field if he could have succeeded in inducing him to come forward. He should have been very glad to have seen such a gentleman offer himself as a candidate for election. As to the principle of the Bill, it was, in fact, very hard to find any in it. Some honorable members had said, and he admitted it, as the general principle, that it was single electorates—if that could be called a principle at all. When the Additional Representation Bill was withdrawn, before the adjournment, and when the whole House was understood to accept the single electorate system which was then promised, as a consequence he had no objection to it, on that ground, though he should prefer another principle of his own, and one that met his views of representation for the colony better than the single electorate system. However, as he regarded the single electorate system as adopted by the House, he was quite willing to accept it, and to regard the Bill as the best that could have been framed under the circumstances. He quite disapproved of the adult male basis of representation; it was not the proper one. The total population was the only correct basis, at all times. Reference had been made to the fact, that in England the redistribution of the representatives under the Reform Bill was not carried out on the population basis. However, after a little search, he had found some anomalies which existed under the English Reform Bill. He would mention the following:—The cities and boroughs of England, exclusive of universities, contained a population of 7,140,241, and returned 319 members to the House of Commons, while the rest of the population, 20,310,621, elected 339 members—a minority of the people thus electing a majority of Parliament. Again, nine counties, exclusive of towns in them separately represented, having a population of 514,783, with 30,647 voters, elected eighteen members; while the West Riding of Yorkshire, having a population of 797,779, with 37,319 voters, elected only two members. Again, the Tower Hamlets, with a population of 539,111, and 23,534 voters, elected two members; while the borough of Honiton, with a population of 3,427, and 278 voters, returned two members. Each electorate had the same legislative power, yet one had 157 times as much population, 82 times as many electors, and 132 times as much rated property as the other. Such were some of the monstrous anomalies which existed under the English Reform Bill; but they originated from the fact that population was not taken as the basis of redistribution under that Bill. It had been argued from that, that population was not the proper basis of representation, and that, as the principle was not adopted in the Reform Bill in England, therefore it was not to be adopted in Queensland; and it was said that the state of things in England was quite compatible with purest liberty, national greatness, and national prosperity, and that

the House could not do better than follow some such loose practice. He begged to remind the House that the operation of that principle at home had been found very inconvenient: at this very time, agitation existed for the remedy of the consequences of its adoption; and honorable members ought to see that they ought not to adopt any other than the population basis of representation, lest they should fall into or bring about the same anomalies as existed in the old country. He quite agreed with what had fallen from the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, and the honorable member for Clermont, that the adult male basis was not the proper basis; and that the population basis was the best, and that the family man should have more representation, and was entitled to it, than the bachelor. He quite agreed that representation could not be allowed for every member of the family;—that would be going too far. The honorable gentleman who had introduced the Bill did say actually that he could not find any one fixed basis, and therefore the Bill was founded upon a mixed basis, partly of adult males, partly of total population, and partly of property. He (Mr. Handy) could quite understand that it was very difficult indeed, considering the circumstances of this colony, to frame a Bill purely on one basis; and the more the subject was examined, the more difficult and trying it was found to deal with the fluctuating state of the population of this colony, and to define the electorates by natural boundaries. However, as the Bill was presented to the House, and as it had been approved of, and having conceded his opinion at the time it was announced first, he agreed with it in the main; and he was quite willing to attribute to the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government a fair share of commendation for his measure. It was so striking that some parts of the colony to be represented by one member had a population so very small compared with other parts, that he had taken the trouble to collect from the printed slips which honorable members had received the following facts:—Mitchell contained 591 adult males, and a total population of 782, and was allowed one member; while in Brisbane City, the proportion was 884 adult males and a population of 4,142 for each member. The member for Balonne, also, would represent 591 adult males, and a population of 1,216. He (Mr. Handy) agreed with the honorable member for Clermont, that that, compared with the representation proposed for other districts, presented an anomaly; and that the fairer and more just way would be to amalgamate Balonne, Warrego, and Mitchell, and to give them two instead of three members, and that it would be a better approximation to the basis assumed for the Bill, than the division proposed. With regard to Brisbane, he must say, decidedly and unhesitatingly, that it would not be sufficiently

represented under the Bill; and he thought that what was intended as Brisbane proper might be justly divided and two members given, or one for each new division, carrying out the single electorate principle. He admitted the difficulty of satisfying all parties with the Bill, and of forming all the electorates in a way to ensure general approval; and that being so, he would be satisfied to get as nearly justice as he could secure. It had been intimated that the fifth clause ought to be excised; and, on principle, he agreed with honorable members who had expressed that opinion. But, speaking for himself personally and individually, he did not care to be on the hustings every month or every few months. He had been four times a candidate for election during the last two years; and he had had enough of it, to satisfy him for a time. But, yet, if it was the will of the House, he had not the slightest objection to go again before his constituents. If the fifth clause should be expunged, and a general election was to follow immediately after the passing of the Bill—sitting members not being allowed to select their constituencies under the new distribution—well and good. If the House were competent to carry out the programme of the Governor's speech, they were competent to do any other work which might come before them. He thought that the House could deal with everything that had been brought before them; and that when the public affairs had been comparatively adjusted by the passing of this Bill and other necessary legislation, the dissolution and general election might appropriately follow. However, he had no objection to whatever was considered fair by the majority; and, if it should be decided that they should go to the country forthwith, he was willing to go, but with this condition—that nothing more should be done after the Bill, neither railway, nor land, nor any other kind of legislation, until after the general election, when the new Parliament would take up the public business. That was his view. With regard to the question of quorum in a House with the additional members, he agreed with those honorable members who said that the present quorum was large enough, no matter what might be the number of the House. The quorum ought not to be increased at all, as it had been found very inconvenient heretofore to get sixteen members together for the transaction of public business. Sixteen, with the Speaker in the chair, were more than half the House at present; and it would be unwise to increase such a quorum. Certain amendments had been mentioned by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, which he (Mr. Handy) would very cordially support, and he would be much pleased to see them carried, so that the Bill would be a readjusting measure under which there would be no more political dead-locks, with the people crying out for reform, and so forth,

such as had been seen. It would be a glorious achievement to pass a measure of representation that would be self-adjusting and self-compensating. The amendments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley were much preferable to those mentioned by the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant; because, in the former, the Governor was the arbiter and impartial judge, removed from the strife of politics in the House, to decide the claims of increasing populations to independent representation in districts which became entitled to it or otherwise. He (Mr. Handy) thought it was better to leave such an important function to the Governor than to the Registrar-General or other authority mentioned by the honorable member for East Moreton. On the whole, the Bill should have his support. When it got into committee, he thought the schedules would be so amended that justice would be done to all parties; and he thought honorable members would not attempt to "gerrymander" the boundaries of any district, but that they would make them impartial and just, so that the Bill should work beneficially for everyone. It had been said, over and over again, that special interests ought to be represented; but he thought that it was utterly impossible to represent separately every interest in the colony. The House ought to leave the people to elect whom they liked to represent the several interests in each electorate. No doubt, in the outside pastoral districts, where there was only one interest, it could be done; and for that reason he supported the recommendation that Balonne, Warrego, and Mitchell should be amalgamated, and be represented by two members instead of three, and that the third member should be given to the central districts, or the Maryborough group. That would be more like fair play than the proposed arrangement under the Bill. Referring to Bundamba and East Moreton, he considered that honorable members on both sides of the House would admit that East Moreton was entitled to an additional member. Those were the only interferences that he should like to see made with the arrangements under the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would remark that circumstances altered opinions in some cases. He thought that if the honorable and learned member who had just sat down, represented Mitchell, now, instead of Brisbane, the House would not have heard such a speech from him as had been made for disfranchising Mitchell. The honorable member's opinion was very much changed since the last time that he heard him addressing that constituency. At that time the honorable member expressed the opinion that Mitchell was the finest and the most wonderful district in the country. He (Mr. Morehead) did not say anything like that; but he would say that he had heard nothing in the House which would justify them in disfranchising Mitchell, or Warrego, or Balonne. The dis-

tricts of the colony were divided, for the purposes of the Bill, into groups; and, although, in its particular group, Mitchell had a smaller population than any other constituency, yet, as compared with other groups, it stood very well. In the first group, the average number of adult males, exclusive of Polynesians, Chinese, lunatics, prisoners, &c., was 911; in the second group, it was 907; in the third, 888; in the fourth, 723; in the fifth, 1,115; in the sixth, the group in which Mitchell was, the average was 891; and in the last, 1,134. It might be fairly said that the Maryborough group and the Bowen group were not adequately represented; but it would be recollected that in those groups the population was much more fluctuating than in any others; in fact, many honorable members had personal experience of the character of digging populations, "Here to-day and gone to-morrow." He had, himself, such experience in New South Wales, some years ago, on a gold field where the population was, one year, estimated at 21,000; and the next year, it was 4,000. And the same thing might occur here. The Government had done right in maintaining that the clearly settled population ought to be dealt with so as to have more representation than the population that was liable to fluctuate. He said that in the Maranoa group, and in the districts connected with Rockhampton, the population must increase, more particularly in Mitchell and Warrego. The Minister for Lands would bear him out in saying that, in consequence of the large amount of forfeited country which had been taken up within the past few weeks, under conditions of improvement in the way of providing water, there must be a large increased and settled population introduced into those districts, as the persons taking up country were bound to expend money upon it. That shewed that the development of those districts had commenced. It was now found that runs, which, a few months ago, had no purchasers, were now taken up at very advanced rates upon the upset price. He (Mr. Morehead) thought it would be very improper and unjust if the House altered the subdivision, so as to disfranchise Mitchell, Warrego, or Balonne. The latter was a district which had advanced rapidly. He might further mention that it would not be fair to disfranchise a district to which a member had been given when it had a less population than now. He had too high an opinion of the House, no matter how rabid certain honorable members were, to believe that the House would carry the amendment with which the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, threatened them.

Mr. HANDY, in explanation, said he did not suggest that Mitchell should be disfranchised; on the contrary, he had recommended that Mitchell should be increased by a portion of Balonne, and that it, with Warrego, should return two members.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mitchell had been already added to, by having a portion of Leichhardt

put into it. If the honorable member for Brisbane would look at the map, he would see that for himself.

Mr. STEPHENS said he did not see that it was necessary to take up the time of the House upon the principles of the Bill. They seemed to be generally set down, as—first, single electorates; and, second, the basis upon which they were framed. With regard to single electorates, he must state, that in all electoral systems known to the House, a large majority, fully two-thirds, of the electorates were single. The only question was, whether the single electorate scheme should be carried out to its full extent. There scarcely seemed to be any principle involved in that, upon which to waste time. The effect of insisting upon single electorates would be a tendency in favor of giving undue prominence to local interests, and influencing legislation for local purposes—for the spending of public money upon local objects—in preference to legislating or expending money for the benefit of the whole colony. The great objection appeared to be the difficulty of dividing some of the districts, so as to give each single electorate its fair share of representation, and the effect in that way, was, in his view, that the majority of the people should not be represented in the House, which was very bad. With regard to the basis upon which the Bill was established, honorable members were all agreed about one thing—that the mere fact of the introduction of the Bill, the object of it, was to improve the representation of the people of the colony. Any improvement in that direction must be a step in the right direction. His own opinion was, that the best basis was a pure population basis. In that, all interests requiring representation were included, and by that they all got their fair proportion of representation. It was not necessary to discuss that question at any length, for the reason that he was not aware that anyone who had advanced it in the debate, proposed to cut up the country into squares or fair portions, each having the same population; though many honorable members held that representation ought to be based upon population. The maintenance of this principle or argument, did not involve that the division of the electorates must be mathematically correct, but simply that every step taken for the improvement of representation, should be in the way of giving the largest share of representation to the largest number of people. If they all agreed to that, it merely left the question—How far the principle had been carried out in the Bill? He had heard no defence of deviations from that population basis, except, on the ground of irregularity of boundaries, so small as to be justified by other circumstances. It was advisable to make the Bill as nearly a reasonable approach to the population basis as possible, to ensure its being accepted as a satisfactory one by the public, and to avoid in the future the evils that would

undoubtedly result from a majority in the House representing a minority outside. That, he thought, was of importance. For six or eight years, indeed, almost since Separation, the question of representation was under discussion; and it was advisable that the House should, if they could, settle it for some time. It would be a very great benefit if they could accept some nearer approach than it made to the population basis, which should be sufficient to enable them to insert some clause in the Bill by which it would be self-regulating in its operation, and by which they would avoid discussions of the subject in time to come, leaving the representation of the country clear of party influences. Something more ought to be expected from honorable members under those circumstances than when their attention was being constantly drawn to the effect a question would have upon them for party or private purposes, which it was only human nature to be alive to; and he was sure that it would be best for all, if they could agree upon some defined principle by which the measure before the House could be made self-regulating. He did not think there need be any great difficulty about laying down such a principle; and he would not now go into details. There was before the House a list of forty-one electorates, giving an average population of about 3,000 to each representative. Of course, it would be quite competent, if preferred, to take adult males, but that did not affect the argument he was now using. It appeared to him that no possible harm could occur, while very great good would accrue, if it was agreed that, whenever, from the Registrar-General's figures, as provided for in the Financial Separation Bill, any electoral district had a population of double that average, or 6,000, the Governor should then be competent to divide the electorate into two electorates, and that each should have a member; and if any two adjoining electorates got an increased population together up to 9,000, it should be competent for the electors in any portion of those districts to petition the Governor to allot them an extra representative for themselves, or for a portion of the population so applying equal to the average. Under either of the conditions described, the Governor should be permitted to issue a writ for the election of a member for the new district. He (Mr. Stephens) advocated some such arrangement as now existed under the Municipalities Act. The residents in any part of the country were competent to petition the Governor to have their town erected into a municipality; or the ratepayers forming part of any existing municipality could apply for separate municipal privileges; and, upon receipt of such petition, the Governor could proclaim a municipality. He did not see why the House could not apply the principle to the higher representation. It would not have the effect of taking away a single member of

the Assembly as now proposed; and he did not think anyone would go in for taking away a representative from any district which had a member now. As observed by the honorable member for Mitchell, it did look somewhat ungracious to disfranchise any district to which a member had been granted under less favorable circumstances than now existed; but, of course, if the principle of equal representation was carried into effect strictly, that must be done. However, the House were not defining that extreme measure; they were endeavoring to make the best that could be made of the Bill under consideration. He did not see that there would be any difficulty in enacting that, whenever any portion of the residents of existing electorates attained a forty-first quota of the present total population, over and above the average, or forty-first part, allowed as the basis of the representation of the electorates into which the colony was proposed now to be divided, the Governor should have power to erect that quota into a new electorate, with its own representative. He merely threw out the suggestion, now; but it would be discussed in committee. The representation question would thus be removed from the arena of party politics, and in such a manner as to stop agitation. As the House were pretty much agreed, whether honorable members liked or not, that the plan of single electorates was to be adopted, he should merely enter another protest against carrying it out strictly; and he should endeavor to place before the House some cases in which he thought the Bill did not provide sufficiently against some gross irregularities, and which made him quite certain that if the Bill should pass in its present form it would not be accepted by the country as a satisfactory settlement of the representation question. He had taken the trouble to write out a list of the electorates; putting those with the largest population first, and so on, that with the smallest being last. He found that seven electorates, with the largest population; represented 29,651 persons; the seven smallest had a population of 8,807. Those populations would be represented by an equal number of members! By no process of reasoning whatever could that be called an approach to the representation of the people. There was something else to be taken into account. He would take the four smallest electorates, Mitchell, Warrego, Burke, and Balonne, which contained unitedly a population of 4,026; while Fortitude Valley, which headed the list with the largest population of the forty-one electorates, had 4,739, and one member. The electorates of South Brisbane, Gympie, Toowoomba, and Maryborough had each nearly the same population, or a total of, say, 17,000, and yet they would return no more members than the four electorates which he had mentioned before. The disproportion was too great altogether,

if it was intended that the Bill should settle the question of representation even for a time. He would now take the three electorates of Leichhardt, Springsure, and Clermont, which together contained a population of 4,781; for which, again, there were three members, with a similar population to that of Fortitude Valley, with one member. It was a gross absurdity, and a gross anomaly, that such a difference should exist in the representation of the population of different districts. He would now take the twelve smallest electorates — Mitchell, Warrego, Burke, Balonne, Leichhardt, Springsure, Clermont, Kennedy, Normanby, Northern Downs, Maranoa, and Caernarvon, all of one interest; and those twelve had a smaller population than the four electorates of Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane, Gympie, and Toowoomba. He could not conceive why those small electorates should have twelve members, while a greater population situated in another part of the colony had only four members. He was aware that the argument had been used three or four times in the debate, that the people in distant places ought to have a larger representation than those at or near the seat of Government; and the honorable member for Mitchell had said that those who settled down ought to have larger representation than an unsettled population. There was a good deal of truth in the statement of that honorable member, who last addressed the House. But he (Mr. Stephens) maintained that the population of those twelve electorates just named was unsettled, being only in temporary occupation of the country, squatting or gold mining, and principally adult males. Everyone knew what had occurred, and might occur again, in some squatting districts. Warrego, some years ago, had a population of 1,157 persons; now, it was 943, having decreased 214. The population of Mitchell, also, had decreased, nominally. He (Mr. Stephens) thought the whole of that district was occupied by something like twenty-six leaseholders and their servants; and that should be remembered, to be set against what was said about the settlement of such districts. But he thought it would be sufficient to point out this fact, that the squatting system was, in truth and by law, admitted to be a temporary occupation of the country; and it was so from the first law passed on the subject—the Orders in Council. Squatting was recognised as a temporary occupation of the country, to be done away with whenever a settled population required to take up the country. He thought that squatting might very fairly be set down as a temporary occupation, as it was one which, according to law, would have in the course of time, to give way to another and permanent form of occupation. Now that, he thought, might very fairly be set down against any claims which might be urged on behalf of those districts for increased representation on account of their

distance from the centre of Government. If they were to allow those claims to the full extent, and act upon them, they might have an attempt made to have the present temporary occupation of the land changed into a permanent occupation, and they would then have again to fight the battle as between the pastoral tenants and agricultural settlers. He therefore thought that taking the reasons which had been advanced on both sides into consideration it would be better for them to see if they could not manage to rectify some of the glaring irregularities and anomalies that would be created by the Bill in the matter of representation, and some of those he would endeavor to point out. One of those gross irregularities, as he would term them, was to be found in the case of Fortitude Valley, to begin with. That electorate had a total population of 4,793, and only one member, while 782 of a total population in the Mitchell was also represented by one member. While upon this subject he would allude to some alterations which he thought it would be advisable to make in the Bill. Now, he would admit that, looking at the large majority of members there was on the Government side of the House, the Bill in its present shape was as good a one as honorable members on the Opposite side could desire to see brought in by the present Ministry; and he would give the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government every credit for having made as near an approach to fairness as they could expect from him, for there was no doubt that a strong influence and a large amount of party feeling had been brought to bear upon him to prevent him acting justly in the matter of the representation of the people towards the several districts of the colony. Now, he did not see why the Maranoa district should have an additional member given to it by the creation of the new district of Balonne. Though it would be ungracious to take away any of the additional members proposed for any district of the colony, but he thought the Balonne, the Warrego, and the Mitchell, one of them being a new district, might very well have been amalgamated, and the three formed into two electorates. As to the Balonne, he fully agreed with the argument of the honorable member for Western Downs when he said that the population of the district from which it had been separated was too large for one member, and yet too small to entitle it to two. Now, he would be quite willing to accept of that as a good and sufficient reason if the rule were applied to all the other electorates of the colony, for if the population of the Maranoa was considered to be too large for one member there were other districts which for the same reason should have received an additional amount of representation; and if the rule was not made to apply to those other districts he must put it down as an unsound one. Now, he quite agreed with other honorable members who had preceded

him in condemning the Bundanba electorate as it stood in the Bill; and, without taking away from the representation of any of the electorates out of which it was formed, he would be quite willing that the district should be represented in this way—by allowing West Moreton to continue to have its present number of members, and without altering its boundaries, and giving to East Moreton an additional member. If that were done the average measure of representation would be maintained; and he had always held that East Moreton and West Moreton should have the same number of members for the representation of the population within their respective boundaries. Now, in the next place, he thought that the Wide Bay and Burnett group of districts had a good claim for additional representation. The numbers of the population in this group of districts were, for Gympie, 4,292, and for Maryborough, 3,994, and those two electorates were considerably beyond the average.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: How are you to divide them?

MR. STEPHENS: Well, that might be dealt with in committee; but it was a question which might lead to a considerable discussion if they were to go into it at present. He had no doubt it could be arranged in committee, if the Government were willing to grant an additional member for that district. However, the question would come more properly before them, perhaps, when they were dealing with the schedules in committee. The principle that particularly affected the system of single electorates was to be found in the difficulty there was in making an equitable division of some of the electorates. He thought that a much easier and more equitable system might have been found than the one which seemed to have been adopted here; and it was to this not having been done that he attributed most of the inconsistencies in the Bill. He did not, however, see that there need be much difficulty in getting over that when the House went into committee on the Bill; and if they were to put an additional member in the third class for the Wide Bay and Burnett district, he thought they might very fairly and reasonably get over the difficulty, so far as those electorates were concerned. Now, coming to the case of Warwick, that township had a population of 2,973, and he, therefore, thought it ought to be allowed to stand as it was—that the electorate should continue to exist within its present boundaries—but that it should have an additional member; for the great increase of population which had taken place in the district since the last census, on account of the discovery of the tin mines in the district, would very soon lead to a demand being made for an additional member for the district. Now, Toowoomba, Aubigny, and Cunningham, had each a population of about 4,000, while the average of the population in the

other electorates in the same district was between 2,000 and 3,000 each; and he thought therefore that it would be only reasonable to make an addition of one or two members for that division. Then they had the Maranoa, the Balonne, the Warrego, and the Mitchell, with a population unitedly of 4,896, or a population for each of about one-third of the population of each of the other electorates he had mentioned, the population of which unitedly amounted to 11,875. Now, that being the case, he thought that attention ought to be drawn to the gross over-representation proposed to be given to some districts having a small population as compared with the measure of representation which it was proposed to give to electorates having a large population. At the same time, he would not like to knock out any of those districts to which it was proposed to give additional members, but he would like that they could come to some understanding by which they might be able to give additional representation to other and more populous districts. As he had stated before, he considered that the whole question of the division of the colony into single electorates was necessarily one of compromise, because they had not urged that, for the purposes of representation, it should be cut up into squares, each square containing as nearly as possible the same amount of population. He would, however, be glad to see the Bill, with the compromises that might be come to respecting it by both sides of the House, made such as would enable them to accept it as a satisfactory solution of the subject of representation for some time to come. Now, there were some of the clauses of the Bill to which he would like to refer briefly, and the first was, the fifth clause. That clause proposed that the sitting member for the divided district should have the option of choosing which of the divisions he would sit for. Now that, to him, appeared to be a complete reversion of the usual practice which gave to the constituencies the right of choosing who should be their representatives. He must say that he was very much astonished when he saw a clause of that nature in the Bill; and it was one which he did not think the House would agree to. The only reason he could see for this clause being inserted in the Bill, was the one which was given by the honorable the Colonial Secretary last session, when a similar question was under consideration during the discussion on the Elections Bill—that the House could not expect that any honorable member would support a clause that would have the effect of unseating himself. Now, honorable members should recollect that last session they had passed a Bill extending the franchise, and that therefore the members of the next House would not be elected under the same franchise as the present House, nor would their election be confined to the same electors. This fifth clause proposed that the sitting member

should have the right to choose what portion of the divided district he would continue to sit for. Now, it appeared to him monstrous that such should be the case. The only case of the kind that occurred to him at the present moment was that of the Long Parliament, when the members resolved that they would not allow the House to be dissolved. Now, the principle embodied in this clause was precisely to the same effect as that of the resolution passed by the Long Parliament when they declared that they would continue to sit. Now, whatever anyone might think about the proceedings of the Long Parliament, those who passed that resolution did not deny that it was a most unusual thing to do. However, the clause might be more properly and more fully discussed in committee. The next clause to which he would refer was the ninth, which provided for claims to vote being sent to specified clerks of petty sessions. Now, he would point out to the House what appeared to him to be unsatisfactory in this clause, because he was not sure that any of them exactly knew the way in which the rolls for the different districts of the colony were prepared. Some of them, he believed, were prepared and revised in one way and some in another. In fact in some cases the rolls were revised in one court; in others in two courts; and, in some cases, he believed the work of revision was not done at all. Now, he thought that this was one of those cases to which they should apply some definite principle; and he would suggest that they should take the plan which had been adopted in England, and that was, without defining any court of petty sessions in which the work of revision should be done, they should come to a decision that the work should be done before some court having a jurisdiction in the district in which the voter resided, or possessed a qualification to vote. Now, the effect of a provision of that kind would be that they would have two lists for the East Moreton electorate; as everyone residing within the jurisdiction of the petty sessions court of Brisbane, would send in their claims to the clerk of petty sessions in Brisbane, while those residing in the Logan district would send in their claims to the clerk of petty sessions at Beenleigh. Now, the practice in England was something of that kind, where there was a borough roll and a parish roll, and every elector had to vote within the district over which the local court of petty sessions had jurisdiction. By way of illustration, for instance, persons residing within the Beenleigh district would have to vote within the district over which the local court had jurisdiction; and no qualified elector, residing in Brisbane, could go to Beenleigh to vote for a member for East Moreton; and, on the other hand, no qualified voter, residing within the jurisdiction of the local court of Beenleigh, could come to Brisbane to vote. Now, by the adoption of that system, everyone would know what particular portion of the district he ought to go to in order to record his vote.

He could not see why any qualified elector should have to go an unnecessarily long distance in order to register his claim to vote, or to record his vote. It should be sufficient that he should go for the one purpose to the nearest court of petty sessions, and that, for the purpose of voting, he should not be required to go outside of the district over which the local court of petty sessions had jurisdiction. He thought that this clause might be greatly simplified, so that it would provide for the elector knowing distinctly the district of the electorate in which he ought to record his claim, and where he was entitled to record his vote. Although he had several objections of a particular kind to the Bill, he would nevertheless vote for its second reading; and he would, at the same time, do all in his power, when the Bill was in committee, to assist in making it as good a Bill as possible for remedying the anomalies which it would create if passed in its present shape; and to make it a measure that would be so generally acceptable, that it would not be necessary again to deal with the question of representation for some years to come. He thought it would be well to endeavor to remove many of the anomalies that would occur under the provisions of the Bill; and he believed that, with moderate compromises, they might be able to make it, in the end, a measure that would be acceptable, to a reasonable extent, to both sides of the House. In saying that much he wished it to be understood that he did not mean by his observations to dictate to other honorable members as to what extent they should go in the way of rendering the measure more generally acceptable than it would perhaps be in its present form. There was, of course, as was well known, a large majority on the Government side of the House; and honorable members on the Opposition side could not, therefore, with any degree of reasonableness, expect that their views should be carried out, or that all the amendments they proposed, with the view of making the Bill more acceptable to the several constituencies throughout the colony, would be agreed to. He would, however, venture to express the hope that whatever amendments might be proposed from his side of the House, with the object of providing for a more equitable representation of the people, would receive the careful consideration of honorable members who sat on the Government side. Considering the large majority which the Government had in the House, it might be somewhat unfair for honorable members on the Opposition side to expect that their views or opinions, as expressed in the amendments which might be proposed, should be carried out to the full extent; but all they would ask was that they should receive a reasonable and fair amount of consideration.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was surprised at the exceptions which had been taken by the honorable member for South Brisbane

to the ninth clause of the Bill, because, from the way in which it was framed, it seemed to him that it would meet with general approval. The clause was framed for the purpose of obviating any difficulties that might be found to exist as to the courts of revision for each particular district. He considered that if the clause was passed as it stood, it would be found to be of great benefit in the working of the Bill. It was not his intention to occupy the time of the House at any great length; but he desired to say that he thought the debate, so far as it had gone, testified very highly to the great care with which the Bill had been prepared, and to the excellence of the manner in which the honorable the Colonial Secretary had framed its provisions. He thought the debate had shewn one thing very clearly, and that was that it was quite impossible, in the establishment of any system of representation, to adopt any single principle or rule for the framing of electorates. If there was any principle or rule by which such a system of representation could be framed, he thought the debate shewed that it could not, and ought not, to be one that was based upon general population. The honorable member for South Brisbane seemed, throughout the whole of his speech, to feel a difficulty in defending that principle. The honorable member told the House that he was no advocate for the adoption of a population basis that would require the country to be cut into equal squares throughout a whole district, giving to each such district equal proportions of population. Now, to give up that point was, he considered, an entire abandonment of the whole principle; because, if the population basis was to be adopted—and there would be no difficulty in making out electorates, each of which would contain the same amount of population—but if the system was to be adopted at all, it must be adopted in its entirety, and if they did not do so, they must admit that there were other principles which would have a superior influence in the framing of any such measure. Though this was the only system that could be worked out with anything like mathematical accuracy at the outset, honorable members must see that it was one which it would be impossible to preserve; for, as soon almost as the House had framed a measure upon such a basis—the giving of an equal number of population to every electorate—some disturbing influence would be certain to arise, which would alter the balance of population in the several districts, and therefore the whole of the work that had been done would be thrown away, or it would have to be done over again. For instance, a land-owner might subdivide his property, and dispose of it, in a way that would induce a number of the residents in a neighboring electorate to remove to the electorate within which his property was situated; or there might be a large number of people attracted from one district to another on account of

discoveries of gold, copper, tin, or other minerals; and in any of those ways the principle of the population basis would be disturbed. He, therefore, considered that it would be impossible to work out any system that was based upon the principle of the representation of equal populations; or to work out any system that was based upon any one particular rule. In dealing with a question of this kind it was necessary that they should take into consideration the particular circumstances of the different districts of the colony, and endeavor to give to every district that amount of representation to which it was fairly entitled; and at the same time provide against any district being over represented, or under represented, according to the extent of its population. They must endeavor to give to every district that measure of representation which it had a fair claim to. Without taking into consideration those two principles in dealing with a question of this kind, it would be impossible to devise any system of representation that would be practicable. Now those were the two principles which the Government had taken into consideration in the framing of this Bill. They had looked to the claims of those districts where the population had increased, either from the introduction of new interests or from the natural increase of population, or from larger settlement in the towns and agricultural districts. They had taken such increase of population into consideration, and had given additional representation to those districts where they considered it was required, and that was the reason for the addition of nine new members to the House, as proposed by the Bill. In arriving at a basis, they had adopted another principle, but it was one which had been affirmed by the House in the measure that was passed last session—and that was the basis of the adult male population, in some instances; and he might here remark that the fallaciousness of the argument of the honorable member for South Brisbane, when speaking of the Balonne as not being entitled to a separate representative, was shewn by the simple fact that the male adult population of the Maranoa and the Balonne—which latter district was formed out of the Maranoa district—was larger than the male adult population of any of the other districts in the colony. Now, that fact alone, he thought, shewed that the district of the Maranoa, as at present, was entitled to more than one member. He trusted the House would approve of the subdivision of the districts as proposed. He must say that he thought it would be somewhat anomalous for the House to reject the principle of a male population basis in regard to this Bill, seeing that, by an Act passed last session, they gave votes to all the adult males throughout the colony. What the Government desired to do was to give the greatest number of members to those constituencies that possessed the greatest number of electors. It

might appear that, according to this principle, the Kennedy district would be unduly represented under this Bill; but, as was admitted, the population of that district was not at present so great as it might shortly be expected to become, he thought they ought not to give much force to any objection of that kind. By this Bill they had given to the Kennedy group of districts a third of the number of the new members which it was proposed to add to the House. Now, if the population of that district increased as it had done during the last few years, it would be a very simple matter to add one member or two for the district, as the population increased. The principle of single electorates, which was one of the principles of the Bill, had met with general acceptance. Some exceptions had no doubt been brought against it, but he did not think they were of such force as would justify the House in departing from it. The only exception of any force which he had heard urged against it was one that did not satisfy him; and it was this, that the system of single electorates would have the effect of intensifying local feeling, and that the members who would be elected under it would only be delegates from their respective constituencies. Now, supposing that, for the sake of argument, every member was sent in for the purpose of advocating the local interests of the district he represented, what prospect would there be, unless the claims were fair and reasonable, that they would be favorably entertained by other honorable members? And it struck him that if honorable members came there determined to advocate the local interests of the districts they represented, they might do so to the injury of the interests of the colony generally. It appeared, therefore, to him that there was no reason to fear anything on that ground. With reference to the fifth clause, he was perfectly prepared to hear honorable members opposing it, because they were bound to find fault with the measure in some way. It would be too much to expect that honorable members should accept it without objection; but he hoped that when they came to consider the Bill in committee, it would be found that it had been framed in the best way that a measure of the kind could be framed. As to the provision that honorable members who had been elected for districts which would be severed under the provisions of this Bill should continue to hold their seats, and that might not be for any lengthened period, it was one which he did not think would be attended with any injurious effects. As to the proposed amendments of the honorable member for East Moreton upon the sixth clause, he believed that if they were adopted, they would have the effect of preventing the introduction of new members into the House for a longer period than would be the case by the way as proposed by the Government. He thought it would be found, when the Bill was under consideration in committee, that the

course proposed by the Government was preferable to the one set forth in the amendments of the honorable member. It might appear at first sight that there was something very taking in the proposition that there should be a preliminary revision of the rolls; but he was inclined to think that there were some practical difficulties in the way which would prevent the House from accepting of it. With reference to the proposed amendments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, though he did not intend to go into their details, there was one thing in them which struck him, and that was, that looking at the figures set forth in them, and comparing them with the figures in the tables accompanying the Bill, the effect of the amendments, if carried, would be to cut out some of the electorates which the Bill proposed to create; and he did not think the House would sanction a proposition that would have such an effect as that.

Mr. JOHNSTON said it appeared to him that the purpose of this Bill was to grant that which the House and the country had demanded for a number of years past—namely, additional representation; or, at least, representation proportionate to the population of those districts which had applied for it for a considerable time past. He thought that by the Bill, a very fair division of the colony had been made, for the purpose of securing an equitable representation; and, therefore, before going further, he would state that he should certainly support the second reading of the Bill. There were some features in the Bill which he did not approve of; but he would be willing that they should be considered in committee, and if the provisions he objected to should be adopted by a majority of the House, he would be satisfied that they should have a fair trial. The system of single electorates was one which he was not prepared at once altogether to assent to. It seemed to him that the adoption of that system would be like launching on a sea which none of the state ships of any of the other Australian colonies had yet entered upon. It might be found to be full of shoals; but still, with the aid of an experienced pilot, they might be able to navigate the course in a safe and satisfactory manner. There were, he thought, many objections to the system of single electorates, and some of them he would endeavor briefly to point out. Amongst the rest, there was the difficulty of dividing electorates which had a community of interests into separate electorates; because, by doing so, they would separate that community of interest which it was desirable to retain in the matter of the representation of the colony. However, if the Bill should be passed, and become law, the Government for the time being, whoever might be in office, would have a great deal more to contend with in satisfying the demands of the representatives of the single electorates than they had under the present system. Now, the district of West

Moreton returned three members, and the district of Ipswich also returned three members. Under the provisions of the Bill, both of those districts would return members for separate districts; and they would all have separate claims for local improvements, and, consequently, separate claims for the expenditure of the public money; and he believed that under such an arrangement they would be likely to overlook the general interests of the community; and the effect would be, that it would be more difficult to deal with them than it was under the present system of electorates. Additional representation, however, was a matter that had been clamored for for several years past, and he was, therefore, willing to consent to the second reading of this Bill; but he believed that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were responsible for the introduction into it of the principle of single electorates. For his own part, he believed that even before the repeal of the two-thirds clause, they had power under the constitution to give additional representation, where it might be found necessary to do so, without dividing the colony into single electorates. He thought that the repealing of the two-thirds clause was a great mistake, because he believed that under their old constitution they possessed more power for the extension of the franchise than they would under the principle now proposed. There was no provision made in the Bill to give them the same power for that purpose; and the only way in which it could be bestowed was the one set forth in the amendments proposed to be made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. In those amendments provision was made for a gradual increase of representation, dependent on increase of population in particular districts. Under these amendments the Governor in Council would have power to allot a new member to any district in which the population had so far increased as to entitle it to further representation than it had at present. Now, by this Bill they would open a way for the Government that might be in power at the time to increase the representation of any particular district to which they might desire to give an additional member. Some remarks had been made as to several of the new electorates which it was proposed by the Bill to create, not having a sufficient claim for separate representation, either on the male adult or general population basis. Now, there was no doubt whatever that it was a matter of sheer impossibility that any Bill could be framed that would give an equal amount of representation to every district in the colony; but he thought that the Bill before the House fully provided for meeting any disparity that might exist in as fair and equitable a manner as it was possible to do. If they looked at the whole of the electorates they would find that there was very little discrepancy between them in the matter of population, whether upon the adult male

or general population basis. If they compared the northern, the central, and the southern group of districts, and compared the population of each, they would find that in the northern group there was a population of 25,050, which had allotted to it a representation of twelve members, or, on a general average, one member to every 2,087 of the population. He would admit, however, that amongst the northern electorates they might find two or three which, on the basis of population, might not be entitled to have a separate member allotted to them, on account of population; but, on the other hand, it would be seen that the whole of the northern districts had such a community of interest, as entitled them collectively to the number of members which was allotted to them under this Bill. Now, in the Gympie and Wide Bay districts there was an average on the population basis of upwards of three thousand to every member, and therefore he thought that the whole of the northern group was entitled to receive a further measure of representation. Then, when they come to the Darling Downs district, they found that it was equally fairly dealt with on the adult-male population basis. There was in every one of the electorates in that group, on an average, a population for every member of about 2,900. There were other portions of this district the claims of which would properly be considered in committee. For instance, he considered that, in consequence of the great increase of population which had taken place, within the last few months, in the Warwick district, and the further increase that was likely to take place there, the district was entitled to have an additional member allotted to it. He believed that the extent of settlement which had taken place in that district entitled it to an additional member, and that, he thought, could be effected by granting a member for Carnarvon. Then, coming to the Ipswich and West Moreton districts, they found that the average measure of representation was that of one member to 3,000 of the population; and those two districts were quite satisfied with the measure of representation which they at present possessed. Then, in the Brisbane group, they had a population of 29,690, and for the representation of that district there were eight members; so that the population represented by each member was on an average about 3,700. Now, that being the case, he did not think there could, under the present system of grouping districts, be any reasonable objection offered to the addition of one member for East Moreton. He did not think that any honorable member would object to that; and by dealing with the Bill upon such a basis, they would, he thought, succeed in making it a measure that would be acceptable, not only to the House, but also to the colony generally; because in that way they would be most likely to succeed in meeting the requirements of the country as regarded the equitable

representation of population, and also the representation of its wealth and intelligence. Now, by adopting such a course as that, they would, he believed, be able, under this measure, to settle the question of further representation for some time to come. There were other matters in the Bill which would require to be carefully considered; but the present, he thought, was not the proper time to discuss them. The proper time to deal with them would be when the House was in committee on the Bill; and he would reserve any further remarks he might have to make upon the Bill till then, as he did not desire to unduly occupy the time of the House. He would now only add that he would cordially support the second reading of the Bill.

Dr. O'DOHERTY said that, before the question was put, he wished to say a few words in reference to this most important measure. He very much regretted that he was compelled to be absent from the House during the greater portion of the very important debate that had taken place; and therefore it was with considerable hesitation that he now rose to express his opinions upon the subject. The matter, however, was one of such importance that he thought he would not be justified if he did not say a few words, and give to the House the ideas he entertained upon it. He felt it was all the more necessary he should do so, because, judging from the debate as he had read it, as reported in the newspapers, it seemed to him that a disgusting state of harmony had existed in the House since the cessation of the dead-lock; and that honorable members had seemed to be disinclined to express what were their real feelings in reference to the question. Now, he for one had no hesitation in saying that the Bill—and he expressed what were the opinions respecting it outside of the House—was one of an extremely insidious nature. It was a Bill in which it seemed to him the cloven foot was shewn in the plainest possible manner. It was a Bill that, under the guise of liberality, had been very ably manipulated with the view of, as far as possible, consolidating the power of that great pastoral party who now occupied the Government benches. For his own part he thoroughly agreed with the views that had been put forward by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley as to what were the leading principles of the Bill. The Bill contemplated the division of the colony into single electorates, and he would even go further than the honorable member had gone in condemning it upon that ground; for he held most emphatically that one of the results of its being passed would be the establishment of a system of rotten boroughs in this colony, such as it took very many years to abolish in the old country. It seemed to him that, in the outside districts where the pastoral tenants ruled with supreme sway, no other result could be expected from this measure than the consolidation of the power and influence of that party in the colony; and holding as he did

the opinion that the pastoral party were able to exercise an undue influence upon the public affairs of the colony, he could not but believe that a Bill of this kind was calculated to increase and consolidate the power of that party in the outside districts, and that, therefore, such a measure would be injurious rather than beneficial to the general welfare of the colony. The honorable member for Ipswich, Mr. Johnston, had charged honorable members on the Opposition side of the House with being mainly responsible for the introduction of the principle of single electorates into the Bill. Now, he must, for his own part, deny that such was the case. The first time that he heard this principle enunciated was, when the honorable the Premier brought in his Bill for a partial system of redistribution last session. That was the first time that he had heard the principle enunciated. Now, it was quite true, that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were quite taken aback with the announcement of that principle at the time, and consequently there was not such a strong opposition offered to it as there might otherwise have been. It was thought at the time, that the Bill was one that was not likely to pass; and therefore, there was not any earnest discussion in reference to it. That was the first time that he had heard the principle mentioned in the House, and he must therefore deny that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House were responsible for its introduction into this Bill. He thought that the introduction of that principle into the Bill was a great mistake; but he might be wrong, and he hoped he was; and as far as he could gather the opinion of the majority of the House upon the subject, it did not coincide with his. Another principle of the Bill which he objected to was, the one which was contained in the fifth clause. The principle which that clause proposed was one that authorised members to allot themselves to the people, instead of permitting the people to select whom they would have to represent them. He had looked over the allotment of seats for the district for which he had the honor to be a member, and he must say that he felt quite at a loss to determine as to what portion of the North Brisbane district he would select to represent. It was possible that he might make a wrong selection, and besides that, he might not be acceptable to the inhabitants of that portion of the district which he might select to represent. The principle, he considered, was an extremely bad one, and he recognised in it a desire purely and solely, on the part of the Government side of the House, to retain the reins of place and power in their own hands. Now, that might be a perfectly legitimate motive, and if the House permitted it, he would have little or nothing more to say on the matter; but he did not believe that such would be the case. However, he thought it was his duty to raise his voice against

this principle in the Bill, because he believed it to be a wrong one, and that it would be attended with anything but beneficial results to the colony; and there was an old saying which might apply in this case—that Providence would not concur in the efforts of any party who were actuated by unworthy principles; and he had no doubt that however ably the Ministry and their supporters might arrange their plans for the purpose of consolidating their power under this Bill throughout the country, they would find that Providence would step in and confound their calculations. The honorable the Minister for Works, as he had often previously done in other cases, had let the cat out of the bag in this instance as to the purposes of the Ministry in regard to this Bill. That honorable member had told them over and over again that there were certain great interests in this colony which should be represented, and the object which the Government had in view in the passing of this Bill, was to see those interests represented in the House; and he had stated that it was the great black labor interest which he thought was not sufficiently represented in the House, and the representation of which he thought would be beneficial. Now, when this Bill was passed, the effect of it would be to bring in some of the black labor planters amongst them, and, for his own part, he would not be displeased to see one or more of their representatives in the House; but he hoped that while the effect of the Bill would be to bring that interest into the House, it would also have the effect of introducing a stronger interest to bear upon the legislation of the country. Now, he had not altered his opinions in any way whatever as to the injurious effect that the representation of black labor would have upon the general legislation of the country: no more than he had altered his opinion that it would stay the progress of the colony to give an increased power to that class which was now so largely represented on the Government side of the House, and who would become the allies of the black labor planter—namely, the pastoral interest. However, he believed that Providence would interfere to confound all that—for even during the last week he had witnessed one of the most encouraging illustrations of what Providence had done for the colony naturally. He had recently been visiting on business one of the most industrial gold fields in the colony, and one which exhibited a brighter prospect than almost any other mining district in the colony. He referred to the Gympie gold fields, and he had no hesitation in stating that they would, in the course of a few years, see that district populated by four, five, or six times the number of the people upon it at the present time, and it was populated to the extent it now was in spite of what he considered to be the most atrocious mis-government; and in spite of the neglect of the honorable member of the Ministry who

was responsible for the management of the gold fields. Capital and science were being brought to bear in the development of that gold field, and he had no doubt that it would, under their combined influence, yield in great abundance. He had no doubt whatever that under the combined operation of capital, labor, and science, the richness of that gold field would be developed to an extraordinary extent. The general impression on that gold field was that Gympie would prove to be the Ballarat of Queensland; and he hoped the Government would yet see the wrongness of their conduct in respect to the mining interest since the opening of that gold field, and would endeavor, in future, to facilitate its becoming, as it was naturally fitted to become, one of the chief sources of the prosperity of the colony. Now, at the present moment, the main street of Gympie was in a state that was positively disgraceful; and by inquiries he had made he had been informed that only £200 had been spent upon it since the district was first discovered to be auriferous. In fact it was as much as a man's life was worth to drive along the main street of the township in open day. Now, considering the enormous amount of wealth which that gold field had given to the colony, it was a disgrace that such a state of things should exist there; but that was only an illustration of what they had seen so much of in the colony, and that was that nothing but the pastoral interest and everything connected with it should receive encouragement. Now, he spoke in that way because he could not give his approval to a Bill which he believed would not have anything like the beneficial effect it was represented that it would have; at the same time he believed that in spite of all the calculations of those who had had to do with the framing of the Bill, it would be attended with beneficial effects, because he believed that the discoveries of gold and tin that were extending daily all over the colony, and the other sources of wealth which were being raised up, would lead to the settlement of large populations whose influence would be so strongly felt that it would subvert all the Ministerial calculations in the framing of this Bill. It was scarcely necessary for him to say that he would not attempt to oppose the second reading of the Bill. He hoped sincerely—though he had little confidence that such would be the case, that they would, when in committee, find such a measure of assistance as would enable them to make the Bill one that would be more acceptable to the country than it would be in its present shape. Now, he must do the honorable the Premier the justice to say that he believed he would go very much farther in order to do fuller justice to the several divisions of the colony; but the honorable gentleman had some of his supporters beside him in whom he (Dr. O'Doherty) had certainly not very much faith; and he thought that they would have very much

difficulty in committee to make the Bill one that would be anything like acceptable to the country. He hoped that when the Bill was under consideration, they would find a sufficient expression of opinion and support from honorable members on the Government side of the House, as would justify honorable members on the Opposition side in pressing for the omission of the clause, so that the whole question of representation should be left open to constituencies; and that instead of their being subjected to the selection of honorable members, the reverse should be the case—that honorable members should subject themselves for approval or rejection by their constituencies. He would only further say that he would support the second reading of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he thought it was hardly to be supposed that the honorable member for North Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty, would have allowed the Bill to pass without raising some objection to it. Now, he would ask, what could be the object of the honorable member in pointing the finger of scorn and distrust towards the Government in respect to this Bill, unless it was for factious and party purposes? Until the honorable member rose, it seemed that every other member of the House was disposed to assist in making this Bill one that would be satisfactory to the country. Honorable members on both sides of the House seemed, in fact, to be inclined to assist in making the Bill one that would be beneficial to the country. That appeared to be the desire of every honorable member who had paid attention to the discussion that had up to the present time proceeded upon the Bill; but the honorable member for North Brisbane, who, as he had himself stated, had been absent from the House during the debate, seemed to think that matters had been going on too smoothly—and as he himself had stated, he thought they were going on disgustingly harmoniously. If there were a few other honorable members as evilly disposed as the honorable member for North Brisbane seemed to be, the fate of the Bill would be jeopardised, and it might become a question as to whether it would be allowed to pass. What, he would again ask, was the object of the honorable member in opposing the Bill in the way he had done? Did he wish to secure the disfranchisement of a large number of the population? Was it because he was frightened of the representation of the sugar planters in the House? Or was he afraid that the constituency of Brisbane might become wiser, and that they would return a different class of electors? If the honorable member had any reasons for opposing the Bill in the way he had done, why did he not state them? The honorable member had specially referred to the fifth clause of the Bill; now, the principle contained in that clause was one of the chief grounds upon which the measure was based, and on account of which it had

been so largely supported. There were no facts stated by the honorable member in support of his objections to the clause. All he had done was to express his fears as to the probable operation of the Bill; and he had done so at a most inopportune moment. The honorable member, it seemed, had been on a journey, either in search of Providence or of gold. If the honorable member, in the journey he had referred to, was following his profession, and, consequently in the pursuit of gold, what right had he to quote Providence in connection with his journey; and if he was only following his profession he had no need to inform the House of it in connection with this Bill. He could not but consider that it was something like rank blasphemy, for the honorable member, having gone on a journey in pursuit of gold, to come here and talk about Providence in connection with his journey and the provisions of this Bill. The allusion, he thought, was a most unfortunate one. He had endeavored to point out, what he really believed to be the case, that there was not any clear understanding on the part of the honorable and learned member for Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty, on the subject of the Bill; and the manner in which that honorable member had treated it shewed that he had not any very clear understanding of it. Now, as he thought the remarks made by that honorable gentleman were rather blasphemous—

Dr. O'DOHERTY rose to a point of order. He really thought the honorable member was carrying his language too far, when he accused him of blasphemy—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member was himself wrong, in the first instance, in wandering away from the question before the House; and the honorable member could therefore scarcely complain at his remarks being referred to by another honorable member.

Dr. O'DOHERTY would most emphatically complain of his language being termed "blasphemous"; and he thought he had a right to claim the protection of the honorable the Speaker. He was not aware in what way he had strayed from the question before the House; but if he had done so, and the honorable the Speaker had called him to order, he would have bowed to the decision. But he was not aware that he had strayed from the question. The honorable member had accused him, he supposed, of talking about Providence; but he was quite willing to believe that Providence had not much to do with the honorable member's conduct. The honorable member went across the House to him, and said to him, "For God's sake, do go in and say something against the Bill"; and he took the honorable gentleman at his word. He would appeal to the honorable the Speaker again, to know whether the honorable member was in order in terming the language he used as "blasphemous?"

The SPEAKER thought the honorable member made use of the word "Providence" in his speech, and that he had wandered away from the question before the House. The honorable the Minister for Works afterwards rose to speak on the question, and adverted to what had fallen from the honorable member.

Dr. O'DOHERTY must protest—

The SPEAKER must inform the honorable member, again, that there was no question before the House, except "that the Bill be now read a second time."

Dr. O'DOHERTY said he would, then, rise to a point of order. He would ask for the ruling of the honorable the Speaker, as to whether the honorable the Minister for Works was justified in speaking of his language as "blasphemous?"

The SPEAKER said that if the honorable member had done so, he was certainly out of order. He was not aware that the honorable member had used the words, and he trusted that he would withdraw them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said he was quite willing to withdraw them; but when the honorable member introduced the word Providence several times into his speech, he thought he had a right to pass some strictures on the use of such language. Now the honorable member had made a statement which was altogether devoid of truth, when he accused him of using the words, "For God's sake." He was not in the habit of using such language, nor was he aware that he had used it, nor did he believe he had used it. He might have asked the honorable member to get up and say something to vary the discussion, although he did not remember having said any more. As he had remarked before, he could not understand what was the object of the honorable member in the speech he had delivered—whether it was that he had been in close confab. with some one, or had got a closer insight into matters by his visit to the gold fields, he could not say—or whether it was that the honorable member did not believe in what he had termed, to a friend of his, "the disgusting harmony which was prevailing between honorable members on both sides of the House on the Bill," he could not tell; but he thought that a more unfortunate time could not have occurred for the honorable member to try and introduce an element of contention into the debate, as honorable members on both sides were endeavoring to give a really good Bill to the country. Yet the honorable member was trying to cast a slight upon the Government.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The honorable member was always doing so, for the purpose of keeping himself popular with a certain section of the Brisbane people—that was the character of the honorable member. But what did he find when he looked at the party so stigmatised by the honorable mem-

ber? He found that the gentlemen so stigmatised had given to the people the most liberal Bill that had ever yet been given—they had given them an Elections Bill, one of the principles of which was manhood suffrage. That was what the people of the country could never wring from the party to which the honorable member belonged. No; the people were indebted to those gentlemen who sat on the Government side of the House for that salutary measure; and yet the honorable member was forgetful of gratitude for that, and even when the Government were offering another concession to the people, which they never could have got from the honorable member's party, the honorable member got up and taunted honorable members of the Government with wishing to give a preponderance of power to a certain class. It very much reminded him of the conduct of a countryman of the honorable gentleman's, who, when the British Parliament, some years ago, was voting twenty millions for the purpose of relieving Ireland from the starvation it was then in, got up and called God to witness that the English nation were allowing the Irish people to starve. It reminded him again, that during last session, when the Government were giving everything to the people that they could wish or demand, the honorable member was the first to get up and taunt honorable members on his (the Government) side of the House with being squatters and opposed to the progress of the people. Why, what had the people got from honorable gentlemen opposite, he would ask? Much as he despised the Land Act of 1868, on account of its incongruities, still it had been a valuable measure, as it had been the means of settling thousands upon the lands. Now who gave that Act? Why the squatters, and what was called a squatting Government. Who passed the Pastoral Relief Bill of 1869? Why, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, who asked the squatters to assist him in passing a good squatting Bill. If those measures he had mentioned were good, how was it that the honorable member could now get up in his place and taunt honorable members on the Government side of the House with being the enemies of the people? How could he do that, when it was proved on reference to the records of the House that it was only from the Government side of the House that the people had got anything at all? He regretted that he had been warmed into the present state of feeling by the ill-timed remarks of the honorable member for North Brisbane, and he would now endeavor to get out of it; but he certainly thought that the Brisbane people, if they consulted their own interests—if they wished for the well-being of their city, and the colony generally—would restrict the honorable member in future from doing so much harm to them as a constituency, and to their part of the colony. He did not know whether, in the absence of the honorable

member for South Brisbane, he should state what he had intended to say, but on the previous day there had been a very curious debate introduced by the honorable and *injured* member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant. He said "injured," as it appeared that the honorable member had suffered more injury by the action of the honorable member for South Brisbane in his management of the *Courier* newspaper than any other honorable member of that House, as the honorable gentleman's speeches, which were generally very good, had been totally ignored by the honorable member for South Brisbane in the *Courier*. On the previous day the honorable member for East Moreton had very properly introduced the matter to the House, and the honorable member for South Brisbane then made a statement, which he had not allowed to appear in the paper of which he had the management. But he (Mr. Walsh) did think that in behalf of truth and justice, and in accordance with ordinary practice, it would have been far better if the honorable member had allowed that speech to be published. He would repeat again that the charges made on the previous day, by the honorable member for South Brisbane, against his subordinates, in the reporters' department, were both cowardly and untrue. He had used the same words in the presence of the honorable member, and therefore had now no hesitation in repeating them. He would say again that the attacks made by the honorable member on his subordinates were unnecessary, and he was sure they were utterly untrue. He thought it was not to the credit of the honorable member that he did not allow the remarks he (Mr. Walsh) had made, to appear in the *Courier*. He believed that there was not a word of a political character that was sent to that paper which the honorable member did not alter. And yet, he would again repeat, for doing that for which he was responsible to the proprietors, the honorable member received £200 a-year. He had taken the trouble to make those remarks again, for, although they might not appear in the *Courier*, he would take good care they appeared in "*Hansard*," to be treasured up for the honorable member at some future day. The honorable member for South Brisbane had appeared to object to the Bill before the House, because, to use the honorable gentleman's own words, it would give undue prominence to local interests. Why, that was the very essence of the Bill, and he contended that every interest should be represented in that House—whether it was the sugar or the cotton, or the Ipswich or the Brisbane interest. The remarks of the honorable member appeared to him so extraordinary, that he almost believed the honorable member was prompted by some dread of a particular interest. He did not hesitate to say that the sugar interest would become so remarkable and influential, that it would be naturally dreaded by the honorable

member for South Brisbane, and others like him; and that, therefore, such honorable members were afraid of those local interests being represented in that House. Then the honorable member dwelt, in his usual way, upon the necessity of having a population basis. Now, he had before commented upon that point, and if honorable members would refer to one of the early volumes of "*Hansard*," they would see that at that time the honorable member distinctly advocated representation on an adult male basis. But now, the honorable member found that that would not answer his purpose, and he disliked the Bill because he found that in its composition, to a certain extent, male adult representation was taken into consideration. The honorable member next said that the great object of the Bill should be to represent the people. Well, he supposed they all agreed with that—who objected to it? Certainly not the honorable the Premier, who, during the last two or three years, had introduced measures for the representation of the people—who had also introduced a Bill for manhood suffrage. Surely that was in favor of the representation of the people. Why, the whole object of the Bill before them was to represent the people, and not, as now, only a section of them. He quite agreed with the very admirable remarks which had been made by his honorable friend, the Attorney-General, that evening, in respect to a population basis, taken in its fair sense. As had been clearly shewn by that honorable gentleman, large populations in this colony were constantly shifting about from one place to another—here to-day and gone to-morrow—and therefore, to fix the basis of representation on the total population would be to adopt a very false basis. He remembered that one honorable member had alluded to the Gilbert diggings; and in respect to them, he might say that it was believed by most persons that that would be the most thickly populated gold field in the colony. He firmly believed that it would be, and he believed now that they would be found capable of affording employment and support to the largest number of people on any gold field; but, at the present moment it was very thinly populated—in fact, almost depopulated—in consequence of counter attractions in the district. Gold-mining populations, as it was well known, were constantly changing from place to place as attractions arose, and to go simply upon a population basis under the circumstances would, therefore, be most unwise and unjust. For instance, those men who had left the Gilbert to go to Ravenswood might return to that place; so that, in considering the matter of representation, they should not only take the present, but the future prospects and interests of places and populations. He was not at all satisfied with the Bill, as far as his own electorate was concerned, and, in fact, he had to charge the honorable the Premier with neglecting that district. He thought that the

Maryborough and Wide Bay district should have, at least, another member—if it had two more, it would not be over-represented; but, as had been pointed out by his honorable friend to the House, if particular claims respecting particular districts were allowed, similar demands would be made by others—there would indeed be no end to them; and it would be almost impossible to frame a Bill with any chance of passing it. He was not, as he had just said, quite satisfied with the way in which his own district was treated; but he was quite sure of one thing, that in framing the Bill the Government had thrown aside all party or political feeling, and that they had endeavored to do what they considered justice to all parts of the country. They had undertaken a most difficult and invidious task, and if they failed in carrying it out, it was simply because the task was beyond their power to grasp; but he very much doubted whether, if a committee had been appointed to bring up a Redistribution Bill, it would have been able to bring up one more to the satisfaction of the country, and to more impartially separate the electorates. He very much doubted indeed whether, even then, they would have arrived at greater perfection than the Government had been able to arrive at, at the present moment. Before he sat down he was compelled to refer again to some remarks which had been made by the honorable and learned member for Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty. That honorable gentleman had made some allusions to the state of the main street at Gympie, and said that it was in such a state that he was in danger of his life when traveling it. He supposed that that Providence of whom the honorable member had so frequently spoken, had been the honorable member's friend in need on that occasion. But why the honorable gentleman should have been in danger on that, the first occasion of his visiting Gympie, he was at a loss to know, for, to his knowledge, thousands and thousands of persons were constantly traversing that street, and he had never yet heard of one single instance of the loss of a life or limb through it. How was it, he would ask, that the honorable member, on his first visit, was in danger of losing his life? Was it after dinner, when the honorable member was walking?—or, at what hour of the day or night?—for he was perfectly certain, from his knowledge and experience of the spirit of the people of Gympie, that as long as people were sober, and walked up and down for legitimate purposes, there was not the least danger of their lives or limbs. He thought the honorable member should give the House some explanation of how it was that his life was in danger.

Mr. THORNTON said that he thought that with all the bad effects Gympie had had upon the honorable member for Brisbane, the honorable gentleman still looked very well, and although he might complain of the bad

streets there, he had never had to run for his life, on Gympie, as it was rumored somebody else had to do. He thought the Bill before the House was, on the whole, a very reasonable Bill, although it was very nearly putting him out of an electorate, as really he could not comprehend what electorate he would have to represent by-and-bye, as the district had been so subdivided that he did not know where his electorate would be. He thought that the measure was a very good one, and would suit his district very well indeed. He might say, that there was a dispensation of Providence in his case also, for owing to the recent tin discoveries, there had been an addition to the population, which had made what was cut out for a pocket borough really a very liberal one. He would rather see the Bill pass in its present state, than have it in any other shape.

Mr. FYFE rose to address the House, when

The SPEAKER informed the honorable member that he had already spoken on the question before the House, and that it was not competent for him to speak again, unless by leave of the House.

Mr. FYFE would explain—

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Spoken; No, no; and Order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that with a view to put a stop to the difficulty, he would move—

That the honorable member be now heard.

Question put and passed.

Mr. FYFE said that he did not think the few remarks he was about to make were of sufficient importance to require the special sanction of the House; but at the same time, as the Redistribution Bill was, of all other Bills which had been brought under the consideration of honorable members, of the most importance to the country; and as he represented a very large and important constituency, he felt it was his duty to make a few observations. He was aware, however, at the same time, that it was the intention of the House that the Bill should be read a second time. He considered that the proper time for considering matters of detail, such as the number of members which ought to be allowed to certain electorates and the division of the electorates, was when the Bill was in committee, and he was not, therefore, going to make any remarks upon them, as to whether one member should be taken from one place and given to another or not. In regard to the amendments to be proposed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, he must say, that he considered that they were of the very gravest importance, as should they be passed, they would have the effect of placing almost unlimited power in the hands of the Government of the day—in fact, a power which would enable them to continue in office for the next fifty years, should they choose to do so. He certainly thought the honorable member never intended to give the

Government power to take the census when they pleased, as if that was the case, it would enable them always to have large majorities, and they could remain in power as long as they liked. But for them to have power to take the census whenever they pleased, as allowed by the first clause in the amendments—

Mr. LILLEY: No.

Mr. FIFE: Perhaps the honorable member would explain it; but he certainly thought that power was given. It struck him, that in a progressive colony like Queensland, it should be specified by the Bill when the census should be taken, instead of leaving it to the Government. He thought that three years should be the time—although he believed that it was now five years—inasmuch as in a rapidly advancing colony, where the population was spreading in the manner described by the honorable the Minister for Works, it was necessary that a census should be taken at comparatively short intervals. He believed that those amendments would be moved, and therefore it was almost useless to discuss them at the present time. He would merely remark, that if there was any necessity for a great organic change, it should have occurred when the last census was taken, and the Government should then have abolished the other branch of the Legislature, as at present constituted, and have had two representative Houses; but no, nothing was then done. He looked upon the present Bill as merely an instalment of justice to the people; and yet it was, in the opinion of many, simply a consolidation of the pastoral interest. He believed himself that that interest would be consolidated if the Bill was passed in its present form, but he had no doubt that it could be manipulated in committee in such a way that it could be made to represent all classes of the people. He did not believe altogether in the adult male population basis, but rather in the total population, and he would state his reasons for so doing. For instance, at Rockhampton there was about half-a-million of property, and wives and children were to be nowhere, according to the honorable member for Wide Bay; but he considered that if ever a district required more representation than it had at present, it was Rockhampton, which should have three members instead of two. He was glad, however, to find that the honorable the Colonial Secretary had no objection to allow a portion of the electorate of Port Curtis to be taken off and given to Blackall, although it would have been better if the electorate of Blackall was not created and the three members given to Rockhampton instead. He considered it was a dangerous experiment to change electorates in a young colony, although it was all very well in an old country; because it would take such a time to get an additional representative, from the population in any particular electorate not increasing sufficiently to justify giving one to them. He believed therefore that the Bill would be better in its present

form, than if amended in the manner proposed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. If these clauses were carried, the Government would remain steadily in power for the next twenty years, and he considered it was a matter of the greatest consequence whether a Government, which was supported by squating interests, should remain in power that time. It was right that the principles of so important a measure should be thoroughly discussed, and he had been, he must say, somewhat astonished at the honorable the leader of the Opposition agreeing to the Bill so entirely as he done. He had been under the impression that many days would have been occupied in discussing it; but the ground had been taken from under his feet, and he thought, therefore, it would be useless to discuss it any further until it was put into committee. The principles of the Bill had been affirmed almost unanimously by the House, and it was not for him to create any ill-feeling by opposing them; yet he might say that he was thoroughly opposed to single electorates, as for the next ten years such a system would consolidate the Government now in power; nor did he believe in the grouping of electorates. Now, if Rockhampton had been placed on the schedule of the Bill as it ought to have been, it would have had three members—one could have been taken from Ipswich, and given to it. He thought that some scheme of reform should now be adopted, which would so settle the question of representation, that no addition or alteration would be necessary for years to come. So far as he was concerned, he should vote for the second reading of the Bill, as he knew it was useless to object to it, but he trusted that some changes would be made when it was in committee.

Mr. FERRETT said that he had in the first place to again compliment the honorable member for Fortitude Valley on the way in which he had discussed the Bill now before the House; but he could go much further, for after the honorable member had gone very fully into the matter, he had introduced his amendments, which he (Mr. Ferrett) would not go into at present, because the proper time to do so would be when the Bill was in committee. It was with some regret that he should not be able to support the honorable member in connection with those amendments, as the purport of them would be to disfranchise a large portion of the colony, more particularly that portion which he had the honor to represent; and if the honorable member went into particulars, he would at once perceive the injury he would inflict by them. It appeared to him, according to the third clause of the honorable member's amendments, that there would be only about ten electorates that would be qualified to return members at all, and again, if honorable members would look through the amendments, they would perceive that immediately after the passing of the Act, any Government that was in power could have a census taken whenever they pleased, and

thus disfranchise a large number of electorates. Now, whether such a power as that was advisable, he would leave to the House to say; at any rate, he would not be inclined to act so suicidically to the district he represented, as to accept such a provision. If they went further through the amendments, they would discover that the principal object and aim of them was not a fair representation of the people. It had been argued more than once in that House, that, if Brisbane never had a member, it would be well represented, inasmuch as it was the seat of Government. It was well known that all honorable members were open to the importunities of residents in the place where Parliament was assembled, and for that reason alone Brisbane would be adequately represented even if it did not return a single member. He would go further along the amendments, and say that nothing was taken into account in regard to the outlying districts; and, in putting the case fairly before the House and the country, he would put it in this way:—How would Brisbane members feel if they had to go to the Warrego to represent Brisbane? Yet, they were very severe upon the members of the outlying districts who had to go to Brisbane to represent their constituencies. Then, again, in the taking of the census, whilst it was almost impossible to get a correct return in the outlying districts, every soul in Brisbane was readily counted; and also many of those who did not belong to the city or district were included in the return of it, because by accident they happened to be there at the time. He had himself been included in the census returns for Brisbane three times, when he had no right to be; and he believed that, in the same way, hundreds had been returned as belonging to Brisbane who had nothing whatever to do with it. Thus, he argued, it might be assumed that the total population basis was not the correct basis upon which representation should be founded, although it had also been disputed that the adult-male population was not the right one either. He thought that the matter had been very well dealt with by the honorable the Colonial Secretary in the Bill, although, at the same time, he did not agree with that Bill in many of its provisions, which he scarcely thought he would be able to support—in fact, he did not think there was a single honorable member in that House, outside of the Ministers themselves, who could support it in its entirety. Yet, as he supposed that it was the best they could get under the circumstances, and was, no doubt, an improvement on the present system, he thought they might as well pass the second reading, and endeavor to put it, when in committee, in such a shape that it would work well. At any rate, it was worth while seeing if they could not improve on the present system. It was a matter for congratulation that the Bill gave, especially to the North, some fair measure of

representation. But on going back to the electorate he had the honor to represent, he must say, as he had before observed, that there appeared to be an anxiety in the amendments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley to disfranchise that group. He believed that, if those amendments were carried, the effect would be easy for any gentleman at the head of the Government to, at any time, just quietly blot out three of the six members which now represented Ipswich and West Moreton, and he did not doubt but that it could be done to some other districts in the same way. He certainly thought that the honorable member had not seen the effect those amendments would have when he prepared them, as he would give the honorable gentleman credit for being fair and honest in his intentions. With regard to the amendments of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, he did not see his way clear to support them as they were at present, as he thought they would operate most unjustly in the outlying districts. He did not suppose the honorable member had taken into consideration the fact that, in some of the outlying districts, magistrates might be a hundred or two hundred miles apart, or he would have seen that it would be a great injustice to ask the House to pass the amendments. Again, in his own district, it would not be right to ask a bench of magistrates to assemble at Ipswich. In regard to the general principles of the Bill, he could say nothing beyond what he had said; and as it was only a repetition to say that it was evident that the Bill would pass its second reading, it would be quite useless for him, therefore, to say anything that might bear the construction that he wished it would not pass. With regard to the schedules, he must say that he could not agree with many of them, but he trusted that, with the assistance of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, and others, they would be able to come to some conclusion by which they could make a fair and reasonable measure.

The SPEAKER was about to put the question, when

The COLONIAL SECRETARY rose and said that he presumed that every honorable member who intended to address the House had done so, or he would not have risen, as he now proposed to make his speech in reply. He thought he might say that he had every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which the Bill had been received by honorable members on both sides of the House. He had never flattered himself that it would be agreeable to all honorable members, or, as he had said before, to any honorable member. He had no doubt that every honorable member might find some fault with it, but at the same time he thought he might feel gratified that, on the whole, the objections which had been made by some honorable members had been quite counterbalanced by the approval of other honorable members, in respect to

almost every particular which had been objected to. To go no further than the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and the honorable member for the Kennedy, who had first addressed the House on the Bill. He found that what one honorable member complained of was approved of by the other honorable member. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley thought that he (the Colonial Secretary) had given undue preference to the northern districts, as regarded the number of members allotted to the Kennedy; whilst the honorable member for the Kennedy, who usually voted on the same side with the honorable member, complained of exactly the reverse, and argued that the northern districts were not sufficiently represented in the Bill. He thought that that might be taken as a fair sample of the objections which had been made all through the debate; and although he had been quite prepared for all the taunts which had been made by some honorable members, he thought he might, for himself, and for the members of the Government generally, express satisfaction at the manner in which the Bill had been received. If it only went through committee in the same manner in which it had through the second reading, he thought that they could look forward with hope and confidence to getting through the Bill and schedules, and making it a fair and equitable measure. The only amendments to the Bill, which had not yet been submitted to the House, or that he had seen, were those made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, and which, of course, would come under discussion when the Bill was in committee. He must say that he agreed, to a considerable extent, with the objections which had been taken to the amendments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and it appeared to him that that honorable member had hardly given the same amount of attention to the question that he usually bestowed on important matters; for, if he had done so, he must have seen that he proposed to confer upon the Government the most dangerous powers that could possibly be given by any Legislative Assembly to any Government. The honorable member proposed, as far as he (the Colonial Secretary) understood him, to throw into the hands of the Government, a power that he for one could never assent to—

MR. LILLEY: The Governor.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: He would allude to that part of the question presently; but as the honorable gentleman had mentioned it, he would point out to the honorable member that whenever the word Governor was mentioned in an Act of Parliament, it was the Governor assisted by his Executive Council.

MR. LILLEY: That is a mistake—it is not so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY was perfectly certain that, whether it was a mistake or not,

it was one under which they all labored; and although the honorable member for Fortitude Valley thought it was a mistake, he did not. At all events he was quite certain—whether it was a mistake or not—that the power proposed by the honorable member's amendment was one which no Governor would receive from the House without consulting his responsible advisers, and whether the honorable member meant the Governor or the Government, there could be no doubt that the power proposed to be offered to the Governor in the amendments would in fact be wielded by the Government of the day. Now he, for one, could never consent to place in the hands of any Governor, and he might say, of any Ministry of the day, the powers proposed by the amendments. Were they ever so honest a Government, they could, under those clauses, manipulate the electorates in all shapes they pleased; they could, he believed, if the amendments were imported into the Bill, manipulate the different electorates so that they could almost invariably ensure a majority in the Assembly; and, so far as he could see, they would enable the Government in office when the Act should come into force, to retain their position as long as they liked. That was a power which he would give to no Government, nor did he think it was a power which any Governor would receive from the Assembly, or would exercise under any circumstances. If the Governor should exercise it, he (the Colonial Secretary) was perfectly certain his Excellency would only do it in the usual constitutional way, "with the advice of his Executive Council" for the time being. He presumed the amendments would be debated in committee, and he should refer to them no farther than he had done at present. He thought that the failings he had pointed out were sufficient, but there were others also, to prevent the House passing them. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had not, he thought, given the subject that consideration which he usually bestowed upon questions which were introduced to the House by him. In the amendments of the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, so far as he (the Colonial Secretary) had gone through them, he did not see much harm, though they required considerable correction, which the honorable member himself admitted when introducing them, in consequence of his ignorance of the different localities where courts of petty sessions were held, or where it was resolved to hold them. But, to supersede, as it was proposed, clause five, by the amendments before the House, would be a mistake.

MR. GRIFFITH: Clause six. "Five" was a printer's error.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, his principal objection to the amendments was grounded on error, that they were to be taken in substitution of clause five; and, as they were not to be so taken, of course he need

not go into his objection on that point. Although he had not much objection to them as a whole, it appeared to him that they would come before the House a great deal better than at present, as amendments on the Elections Act of 1872. There was very little doubt that that Act must be amended shortly.

MR. GRIFFITH: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: After working it, although there were no great failings in it, yet there were technical defects which rendered its operation extremely difficult; and he thought it would be well if the honorable member for East Moreton would not attempt to import his amendments into the Bill before the House, which was one for the distribution of the electoral districts, and not one for the regulation of election of representatives. He hoped that the honorable member, after receiving a promise that the Government would be willing to consider his amendments favorably, would bring them forward as reasonable amendments on the Elections Act, as he thought it would be a mistake to introduce such in the Redistribution Bill. There had been more objections made to clause five of the Bill than to any other; and he must say that, to a great extent, he agreed with them. He never did like the clause; but, as he had observed, there was a great difference in his bringing in the Redistribution Bill, and introducing a provision which would require honorable members to go before their constituents. As soon as the Bill became law, and when the electoral districts had been properly defined, and all the arrangements under it made, it would be desirable to have a general election; but it would never do for him, in bringing in such a measure as this, to insist that honorable members should disfranchise themselves. If the majority of the House said that the clause should go out, he had no objection. But he had an objection to an Act being passed that should compel a general election at any particular period of the year. That would be a mistake. Circumstances might arise—no one could tell what might occur—honorable members had had an illustration in the introduction of a large number of people into the interior at one end of the colony;—a financial crisis might arise, or other difficulties to which they could not look forward, which would render it exceedingly desirable that the Governor should be able to call Parliament together at any time; and he (the Colonial Secretary) thought that, if the House would agree with him, he could introduce as an amendment on clause five, a provision fixing the constituencies for which the present members should sit until the dissolution. In that way, he thought, they might very easily agree to fix by the Bill the electorates for which honorable members would retain their seats and act during the existence of the House.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In drawing an amendment of that sort, he would leave a

great deal to the common sense of honorable members as to which portion of their districts they would sit for. He was sure that no honorable member would wish to sit for any part of his district which might be made a new electorate and in which he did not suppose he would be welcome, but for a part where he had the confidence of the electors and felt that they would return him again. He therefore proposed to provide that elections should take place in a certain number of new districts, such as Logan, Dalby, Balonne, Wide Bay, Blackall, Normanby, Bowen, Ravenswood, and Burke; in which way he thought that a great many of the difficulties apprehended by honorable members would be met. He did not think now, nor had he ever thought, that the reform proposed by the Bill would be complete until its passing was followed by a general election; but, as he said before, it would not have done for him to have brought in a Bill in which a dissolution was sketched out. He left it to the good sense of honorable members to say that the proposition he now made would meet their views, looking at the objections to the Parliament being prorogued and the House dissolved by Act of Parliament. He would have the amendment printed by to-morrow. Of course he relied greatly on the discretion of honorable members. To those who were sitting now for East and West Moreton, and for constituencies returning more than one representative, he must say that he would yield a good deal to their choice, as to how they would be distributed in their districts. He thought no harm would be done in that way. Those electorates which he proposed should stand as represented by the present members of the House, he would fix by the Bill. While on the subject of amendment he wished to observe to the House, that it would very much expedite the passage of the Bill through committee, if honorable members would have all the amendments they meant to propose on the schedules printed at once. The House would go into committee to-morrow, and it would be a very great convenience if that were done. He could not see how they could comprehend what they were doing, if honorable members did not see all at once the amendments proposed. If he had not the opportunity of seeing them to make them out and compare them on the map, it would be impossible for him to say what he could concede or what accede to. In fact, without that, honorable members would be tying themselves up in a Gordian knot. He asked honorable members, before they brought forward any amendments, to consider them carefully, to see how they would fit in with the proposed amendments, and not to move them if they did not see that there was a probability of their being embodied in the Bill. As to the principle of the Bill, he could not accede to any change in the basis of adult male population, and it would be best to keep back a

lot of amendments directed to that end. With all its disadvantages, and believing as he did that no measure could be perfect, if the House passed the Bill as it stood, he was firmly convinced that the country would have a much better chance of fair representation under it than after it came out of committee. He should, however, act up to the same programme that he announced at the first, that where he could possibly agree to amendments—where they did not affect the Bill injuriously—he would meet them in a fair spirit; but he would not, and he hoped honorable members would quite understand that he could not, on the part of the Government and the country, agree to wiping out of the Bill completely any electorate proposed. As to boundaries, as he said before, he was willing to take any proposal into serious consideration, and to see what could be done. One proposal, at least, which had been made, he had not much objection to accede to; that was, an additional member for East Moreton. He had been trying, this morning, with the Surveyor-General, to get another distribution of that electorate. He felt that the claims of honorable members on the other side of the House in respect to East Moreton were deserving of attention, but he did not know of another electorate where additional representation should be granted. If he took the speech of the honorable member for South Brisbane, in which was sketched out the ideas formed by him of the requisite representation on the population basis, he should have to get seven or eight more members. A Bill so based was, on a former occasion, found distasteful to both sides of the House, and it provided for a larger number of members than the measure now under consideration. Everyone felt, as he now and always felt, that beyond forty-one or forty-two members in a sparsely-populated country like this, where people had limited time to spare for the business of the public, having to attend to their own affairs, there could hardly be got a sufficient number of men to make a good House. He said that in drawing the Bill, he did not do it with any political purpose; but he drew it to make it as good a measure as he could for the colony; and he had succeeded in keeping down the number of members pretty much to what he had said he would, when he first announced his intention to bring in such a measure. He believed that any large increase to the number of members proposed would be a mistake. As he said before, one member additional the Government would not object to. Although, on the basis that he had taken—that of the adult-male population—he thought it could hardly be demanded, yet they were willing to concede it. He wished honorable members would, when thinking over the question, regard the Bill in its relations, not to one district, but to all districts; and that they would look attentively at the table shewing the groups for which representatives

were allotted. He thought that if they regarded the Bill in that way, dispassionately, they would find that it was a much better Bill than some admitted. He thought it was best to group the members as he had done, and in that way they ought to be considered. Objection had been taken to the central district, including Wide Bay, Gympie, Mulgrave, and other electorates named in that group. He confessed that there was a larger proportion of adult males in that district than in other districts; but there were insuperable difficulties in dividing that district in any other way than had been done, especially for the preservation of the community of interests in the proposed electorates. Maryborough had in its population 1,002 adult males; Wide Bay, 1,233; and Gympie, 1,422; but he knew of no possible way of dividing those three electorates into four. That was the difficulty which beset him. It was very easy for honorable members to say, "I think Maryborough and Wide Bay ought to have another member between them." He (the Colonial Secretary) hoped that, if any honorable member was going to propose anything of the sort, he would make boundaries for the electorates, and let the House see the result of his efforts. He could not get two members for Gympie, nor would it require them; nor two for Wide Bay; nor two for Maryborough. He could not divide three members between the two first electorates in any practical way that he could see. There were more difficulties in drafting a Bill such as the present one than in finding fault with it. He hoped that it would come out a good Bill, and that it would be of practical use to the country. He should be able, he hoped, to get it into committee, to-morrow. It would be impossible to hurry a measure of this sort through committee. Time would have to be spent over it; and it would have to be re-committed, two or three times, he was sure. He had no wish to hurry it through the House; it must have ample discussion and consideration. Honorable members would see that in order to give full consideration to the amendments they proposed, it was quite necessary that he should have them to-morrow, as early as possible, or the Bill must be delayed; the postponement of clauses must take place, to enable the Government to see the effect of any amendments—unless they could recognise it at once, which they might be able to do. But he trusted that they would let the printer have their amendments as early as possible; and he would, if he could, to-morrow, or at the next sitting, get them sketched in on a map, in order that the House might see how they would fit. Without that, it would be impossible for them to get on with the Bill. There would have to be postponements, and adjournments, and re-committals. He had not the slightest objection to them, but the fewer there were, the better the House would get on with the business.

The question was put and affirmed *nem. con.*; and the Bill was now read the second time accordingly. The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow, to take precedence of all other business.

WAYS AND MEANS—APPROPRIATION BILL.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House resolved into Committee of the Whole, for the consideration of Ways and Means; and, being resumed, the Chairman reported that certain resolutions had been agreed to, which were, by consent, received at once, and read by the Clerk, as follows:—

“1. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1872, the sum of £527,918 be granted out of the consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

“2. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1872, the further sum of £17,525 6s. 11d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.

“3. *Resolved*, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1871, the further sum of £859 4s. 4d. be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland.”

The Resolutions were adopted by the House, and leave was given to the Colonial Treasurer to bring in a Bill based upon them.

Bill presented, intituled “A Bill to authorise the Appropriation out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of certain sums to make good the Supply granted for the years 1872 and 1871”—read the first time, ordered to be printed, and to be read the second time on Tuesday next.

CLERKS OF PETTY SESSIONS BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that “A Bill to amend the Law relating to Clerks of Petty Sessions” be read the second time. He said that the purport of it was to enable the Governor to appoint clerks of petty sessions to act for more than one court, which was prohibited by the existing law; and to repeal so much of the seventeenth section of the Act 3 William IV., No. 3, as provided for the nomination of one clerk to every court of petty sessions. Considerable inconvenience had been experienced by the Government from their being unable to employ the same officer at more than one place. For instance, as he had before mentioned to the House, one clerk of petty sessions could not discharge the duties at both Copperfield and Clermont, two towns within a short distance of each other. The Bill, if passed, would enable the Government to make their own arrangements in such cases.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was considered in committee forthwith, and reported without amendment.