

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 JULY 1872

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 16 July, 1872.

Adjournment. — Immigration Bill. — Mineral Lands Bill. —
Sugar Refining and Distillation Bill. — Financial Separation Bill. — Customs Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he rose to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to what he considered was a

matter of great importance, as it affected the administration of justice in a portion of the colony. He alluded to an answer which had been given by the honorable the Colonial Secretary, in the absence of the honorable the Attorney-General, to the following question, put by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty, a few days ago:—

"If it be true that the Government have it in contemplation to appoint Mr. Baird, the present Crown Prosecutor of the North, to the post of District Court judge?"

To that the answer was—

"The appointment has been temporarily made, in consequence of the judge of the court having met with an accident which prevents him from presiding at the next sitting of the court. No other member of the Bar was available."

Now, from that answer, it would be inferred by honorable members, or anybody else, on reading it, that the appointment had been offered to every other member of the Bar, except members of that House, before it was offered to Mr. Baird, and that that gentleman was the only member of the Bar who was willing to take it. He, however, was justified in stating, that one gentleman, a very eminent member of the profession, a Queen's Counsel, and formerly a District Court judge, had never been offered the appointment, or had ever heard of it, before he saw it announced in the daily papers. He (Mr. Griffith) could not, therefore, understand how it was that Mr. Baird was the only gentleman available. There was also another thing that he wished to mention in connection with that appointment, in which some difficulty occurred to him, and which was of sufficient importance for him to refer to, and to justify him in doing it in the present somewhat irregular way. He wished to know before whom Mr. Baird would take the necessary oath. The Act said very plainly:—

"Where by any law in force in this colony the said several oaths may be taken before the Supreme Court or a judge or are required to be taken in open court the oath prescribed by this Act may be taken and subscribed at any hour before the said court or any judge thereof or before any circuit court or district court or court of quarter sessions or before any justice of the peace authorised by writ of *dedimus potestatem* for that purpose."

It was well known, however, that there was not a judge of the Supreme Court, or even a District Court judge, at Townsville. He had called attention to those matters, not from any wish to interfere with a matter that was peculiarly within the functions of the Government, but because he thought the subject was of considerable importance, as it might seriously affect the administration of justice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL thought the honorable member could have very well left the matter in the hands of the Government; but he trusted he would be able to set the honorable member's mind at rest on both

points mentioned by him, although he was not aware that the honorable member intended to move on the subject. The first objection was, that the appointment had not been offered to Mr. Blake, Queen's counsel. It was quite true that it had not been offered to that gentleman; but the reason for that was, that owing to Mr. Blake being retained in a very heavy railway action, involving a sum of £30,000, matters connected with which extended over several years, which would come on for trial next month, he could not have left town to perform the duties of acting District Court judge in the North. Mr. Blake was the only member of the Bar who was not engaged, with the exception of Mr. Cansdell, and that gentleman, he believed, was retained in the case of *Merry v. the Mutual Provident Society*. So that it would have been only waste of time to have offered the appointment to either of those gentlemen. He had, therefore, no alternative but to offer it to the Crown Prosecutor, Mr. Baird. In regard to the oath of office in the case, he might explain that it was not necessary, as Mr. Baird would not hold the office of judge, but only of deputy judge; and the honorable member had evidently not recollected distinctly the difference which had been laid down by Lord Coke, on that point. He admitted that in all cases, where possible, it was desirable that the oaths should be taken but in the present case, he was advised that it was not required by law. It would also have been a very great inconvenience and expense to the Crown and to parties, if the court had been adjourned, in order to enable either Mr. Baird to come to Brisbane, to be sworn in, or to send a gentleman to Townsville to administer the oath.

Mr. MILES thought the House and the country were indebted to the honorable member for East Moreton for bringing the matter forward. He was not at all surprised at the course which had been pursued by the honorable the Attorney-General, for, as he had repeatedly remarked, whatever that honorable gentleman did, he made a mess of it. He had nothing to say against Mr. Baird, but this he had to say, that whether there would be any inconvenience and delay caused or not, no gentleman should be placed in the position of acting judge, unless he was first sworn in to that office. Honorable members had just heard from the honorable the Attorney-General, that it was not thought necessary that Mr. Baird should be sworn in; but it was a notorious fact, that not only had that gentleman been appointed to act as judge, but some other gentleman had been appointed as acting Crown Prosecutor,—a Mr. Bowker, he believed; and the fact was, that if it had been offered to every lawyer in Brisbane, a worse selection could not have been made. It was no light matter, as, in the first place, the gentleman appointed as judge never held a brief.

Mr. THORN: Yes.

MR. MILES: Well, if the honorable member for West Moreton said yes, he would give in, at once. If however, Mr. Baird had never held a brief, and had the misfortune not to be employed by the public, it was no reason that he should not be appointed as a judge; but he (Mr. Miles) maintained that if he was appointed he should have been sworn in. He thought the argument of the honorable the Attorney-General was an extremely bad one, as no matter the expense and inconvenience, justice should be done; and the question was, whether the public were satisfied with the way in which the appointment had been made. In reference to the Crown Prosecutor there could not be two opinions, as he was perfectly sure that such an appointment would never have occurred to anybody but the honorable the Attorney-General, as Mr. Bowker was, he believed, a most incompetent man.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL wished to say one word in explanation of Mr. Bowker's appointment. There were only three legal gentlemen at Townsville. One, to whom he offered the appointment, was so sick that he could not accept it; another was so deaf that he could not undertake the work; and the third was Mr. Bowker, from whom, he might mention, he had just received a telegram that day, saying that he had convicted every prisoner.

MR. GRIFFITH said he would not detain the House for one moment, but he wished to remind the honorable Attorney-General that the authority quoted by the honorable gentleman applied to old offices that descended from father to son who had an estate in the office. He had yet to learn that a District Court judge had any estate in that office. He was still of opinion that the oath should have been administered to Mr. Baird by a person of equal dignity with himself. The matter was certainly one of serious importance.

The motion of adjournment was negatived.

IMMIGRATION BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, that in moving for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Immigration Acts now in force, he should pursue the course he had adopted on other occasions during the present session, and give his reasons for asking leave to introduce the Bill. He had said himself more than once in that House, and he thought that it was also the opinion of a great many other honorable members, that the present Immigration Act had not provided for immigration to the colony in the way it should have done; and he thought that the reason why that Act had not been successful in fulfilling the purposes for which it was passed, arose out of the fact that the mode of obtaining immigrants and granting land orders was surrounded by so many obstructions, that the Act had not been able to be carried out as it was intended it should have been. In fact, as he had frequently said before, he looked upon the whole

system of land orders under the present Act as being neither more nor less than a swindle. It was hardly necessary for him to go through the present Act, but in explaining the Bill he was now introducing, he would compare the two, and honorable members would then see the difference there was between them. He hoped the House would be able to agree with him that it would be a very great improvement upon the present Act. He would like first of all to point out to honorable members how very imperfectly the system of giving land orders had worked in connection with undertakings to pay the balance of passage money, as well also as the issuing of land warrants to select land, to persons who paid their own passage. He had had a return prepared, which he would now furnish to honorable members, shewing the quantity of land, in acres, selected with land orders issued under the Immigration Act of 1869, to the 15th July, 1872. The amount of land, in acres, that land orders had been issued for to full-paying passengers was 44,680; and to remittance and assisted passengers the area was 5,600 acres, making a total of 50,280 acres. That was the actual amount of land for which land orders to select had been issued from the Immigration Office in Brisbane, while the estimated amount to be issued on payment of the undertakings now in the hands of the Government was 148,766 acres, and of that amount undertakings representing land orders to the extent of 53,475 acres, were now overdue. They had, therefore, a grand total of 199,046 acres which passengers and immigrants who came out under the Act of 1869 would be entitled to select. Now, how that had operated would be seen from another portion of the return. The total area of land taken up under land orders and alienated by virtue of them was 9,214 acres. The proportion was, therefore, out of all reason, even to the orders to select which had been issued. Orders to select 50,280 acres had been actually issued, and not one-fifth of the area had been actually taken up. The reason of that was patent to all. It was notorious to everyone in the community, and especially to those who had anything to do with the administration of the Immigration Act, that those land orders were worth nothing to the people to whom they were issued. Those people came to the colony under the impression that they would get forty acres of land immediately upon their arrival; instead of which, however, they found on arrival that they only got an order to select forty acres upon conditions of residence and improvement, and one thing and another, which rendered such land utterly useless to them; as in the majority of cases they could not leave the towns where they were employed. There were, in fact, very few men indeed, who, on arrival, could go and select forty acres of land, reside upon it, and perform all the conditions required. Again, in regard to the parties who were most useful in the

colony—persons who nominated relatives or friends to come out—in nine cases out of ten, the land orders were of no use to them; as in the generality of cases they were already settled, either in the towns or on their own land, and could not possibly perform the condition which required they should reside on the land they selected. Those land orders were in fact waste paper. In fact, he had heard from very good authority, that they had been hawked about Brisbane at one-and-sixpence each, and were refused at that; and the returns he had read, would, he thought, shew that they were almost worse than useless, owing to the very small quantity of land which had been taken up under them. Then, again, the undertakings to repay their passage money which had been given by immigrants under the Act, were nearly as bad as the results of the land-order system. On reference to the return furnished to honorable members, if they would look at the bottom of the page they would see, that by the 4,810 assisted free and remittance passengers who had arrived under the Act of 1869, undertakings had been given for £48,846. That was the amount which should have been received; whereas the amount paid was only £1,249. The balance, therefore, was a dead loss, and the result of the operation of the system had fully carried out the prognostications of himself and other honorable members, who ventured to say when the Act was being passed, that only a very small proportion of the undertakings would ever be paid. There was a sum of £15,103 now overdue, and he thought that that would be sufficient to convince anyone that the Act had not been successful in answering the purpose for which it was intended. In the Bill which he now proposed to introduce, the system would be altered very materially. He had retained in it the first five clauses of the present Act, which were merely directory, and he proposed that instead of issuing orders to take up forty acres of land, which were of no use, and only a delusion and a snare to the immigrant, any person coming to Queensland from Europe, by certain ships, and under certain regulations, and paying his own passage money, or the passage money of any member of his family or servants, should, on giving satisfactory proof to the Immigration Agent that he had resided in the colony for twelve months, receive a £20 land order for each adult passenger. That would be a return to the old system of transferable land orders, as such land order would be as transferable to any person as a bank note was, and would only be subject to a very small discount on its nominal value. Then it would not follow that because a mechanic could afford to pay his passage to the colony, he should receive a land order which would be perfectly useless to him, as was now the case, as by that he would have to reside on his land; but he would have a land order which he could dispose of as he pleased, and the Government

would have nothing more to do with it. He dared say that there would be some objection raised against going back to the old system of transferable land orders in any way; but he believed that the grand mistake made in dealing with immigration to the colony was, in the departure from the system of those transferable land orders; and that the restrictions which had been placed upon them, instead of doing good, had done a great deal of harm. He thought parties at home would be able, if the Bill was passed, as he trusted it would be, to know exactly what they would get when they arrived in the colony—that they would not get land orders until they had resided in the colony for twelve months, which would be a guarantee to the colony that they had become *bond fide* settlers in it before they obtained their land orders. With regard to assisted passengers, he proposed to make an alteration in the present Act, and to give additional inducements to that class of persons to come to the colony. He proposed that part of the passage money should be paid at home, and that an undertaking should be signed by the passenger according to Schedule D, to pay the balance of such passage money within twelve months of arrival; and that upon such payment, and satisfactory proof being shewn to the Immigration Agent, that the party had resided in the colony for a continuous period of twelve months, he should be entitled to a £20 transferable land order. Clauses 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 would be found to offer very liberal inducements to persons resident in the colony to get out their friends or relatives, and he might mention that that class of persons had invariably been found to be the most valuable immigrants. As he said, he proposed to give additional inducements to them; in fact, any person in the colony could, on payment of a small sum, provide a passage for any relatives or friends at home, such friend or relative signing an undertaking to pay the balance of the passage money within twelve months after arrival, on payment of which, he would receive a £20 land order. In the event of such person not paying it, the nominator, who would also have to sign an undertaking, that if the person nominated did not pay, he would be responsible, would be called upon to pay; and upon his so doing, he would be entitled to a £20 transferable land order. On looking at the return he had furnished, it might strike honorable members that a great many of the remittance undertakings under the present Act had not been paid, but that could be easily accounted for; it arose from the fact that the land orders which were now issued were not worth anything. The parties who sent for their relatives were chiefly farmers, and, having land of their own, they were not likely to pay up in order to get land orders which were useless to them; but, the probability was, that if land orders were issued under the proposed Bill, they would pay up; and, he believed, by that means they would be

able to get nearly every undertaking paid. He also thought that by that system of remittance immigrants, they would get out a large number of very suitable persons. With those exceptions, he proposed that the rest should be free passengers. Clause 19 gave power to the Government to grant free passages to female domestic servants, and to such other immigrants of the farming class as might be considered by the Agent-General desirable. Those persons would not give any undertakings to pay their passages and would not receive any land orders; whilst under the Act of 1869, other parties other than domestic servants had signed undertakings to pay the Government the balance of their passage money, which, however, had never been carried out, as he had already shewn. In fact, they had paid nothing, and it was impossible to get at them to make them pay, as they were spread all over the country; and, as he had been told by the Immigration Agent, it was impossible to get hold of them. There was, then, a great difficulty in getting the undertakings paid; and he might mention that there was a case before the Police Court at the present time, in order to try and get a party to pay up two of those undertakings he had signed, and it was very doubtful whether he would pay. In fact, it was perfectly clear to him that, unless they made it to the interest of the parties to pay up, none of the undertakings would be paid. The only other new clause, was one which provided that a penalty could be imposed in cases of persons impersonating for the purpose of getting land orders. In the schedules would be found the form of land order—and the scale of payments for assisted passengers, and he would inform honorable members that the scale was made considerably lower than at present. The old forms were retained, but in order to induce parties resident in the colony to send home for their friends and relatives as much as possible, he proposed a scale of only one-half of what it now was—in fact, to make the charge for assisted passages as low as possible. Of course it would be for the House to accept that schedule or not, as they thought fit, but he had adopted it at the suggestion of the Immigration Agent. The scale proposed was:—Between one year and twelve, £2; between twelve and forty, £4; and above forty £6; the balance to be payable twelve months after arrival in the colony. He believed that it would prove a useful measure, and he hoped that the House would see its way clear to pass it. The number of free passages to be granted would be guided entirely by the sum which Parliament voted annually for the purpose of immigration. The Government proposed in the loan vote, which they would bring forward before the end of the session, to include a considerable sum for the purposes of immigration. Now it was not intended that all that should be spent in one year; but, it would rest with the House to say how much they would be

prepared to vote for free passages each year. He believed that it would be necessary, in order to fill up ships at regular intervals, that when the Agent-General had obtained a certain number of paying and assisted passengers, he should be allowed to give free passages. He thought the Bill would be a useful measure, and he intended to push it through the House as quickly as possible. He would now move for leave to introduce the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

MINERAL LANDS BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that on the previous Thursday, he had obtained leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the Alienation and Management of Mineral Lands, but in consequence of the Bill not being then ready, he could not move the first reading. He now begged, with the permission of the House, to do so. He might mention that the Bill had cost a great deal of trouble, although it was not a very long one; its provisions, however, were very simple, and he thought they would be readily understood by honorable members. In order that that might be the case, he had cut the clauses into short paragraphs as much as possible for the convenience of non-legal members, who sometimes got rather confused with long clauses. The first part of the Bill regulated the sale of mineral lands, transfers, &c. The second part related to mining under licenses. The third related to licenses to cut, construct, and use races. The fourth related to trespassers and unauthorised mining. The fifth to miscellaneous matters; and the sixth contained the repeal clause and short title. Now, the first clause relating to the sale of mineral lands provided that they should be sold in the following manner. The land would be applied for in the same way as at present, but the minimum area would be reduced to twenty acres, whereas the present minimum was forty acres. On that point he was not at all prejudiced, however; and if the House considered it was advisable to make the area less than twenty acres, he would consent to an amendment to that effect. There were also other provisions in reference to the mode of application, but, he thought, it was unnecessary for him to refer to them then, as they were merely official arrangements for the proper carrying out of the Act. There was one provision he had introduced, which was new, and which had been introduced as a regulation under the present Act, but which he now proposed to make law. That was, that applications should be marked on the ground. He found that that regulation had worked well in two ways. In the first place it enabled prospectors, on the ground, to see what land had been applied for, and thus

prevented them from uselessly sending in applications; and, in the second place, it prevented mere speculators in Brisbane from applying for land on the mere chance of getting it. Then it gave the Government power to withdraw land wherever it might be considered advisable, and that, he thought, was a very requisite provision, as it was sometimes necessary to make townships, and to reserve land for other public purposes. The next provision he had introduced was in reference to surveys. At present the Government employed licensed surveyors, but it was found that they were not able to do the work fast enough, and, therefore, he proposed that applicants should have power to get their land surveyed when it was not convenient for the Government to do so; but in such cases the survey must be completed within six months. He had also introduced a new feature, by which a protection would be granted for twelve months in cases where, owing to the distance of any proposed selection from known or surveyed country, a satisfactory description could not be given, and a survey could not be made for a long period. That provision was very necessary, for he knew of a case which had occurred in connection with a copper selection on the Cloncurry, in which two years had elapsed before a surveyor could go out; it was only reasonable, therefore, that power should be given to grant protection in such cases for twelve months. The other provisions in regard to the sale of land were very similar to those in the present Act, except that he provided in regard to clashing applications, that all applications coming in on the same day should be considered as coming in at the same time. In the first place, those which were most correctly described under the Act would take precedence of acceptance, whilst those which were equal in that respect would be decided by ballot, in the same way as was provided for by the Land Act of 1868, and which might be said to work very well. Then again, the Bill proposed to provide for the transfer of mineral applications. Part two of the Bill was entirely new. There was no provision in the present Act, except for the absolute sale of land; but in that part of the Bill he proposed to establish a system of licenses very similar to that now in force on the gold fields. He might mention that it had been represented to him, over and over again, in regard to the tin fields, that if there was some system by which a man could be allowed to settle on a small piece of land, say twenty feet or so, on paying a license for the time he worked it, it would have induced a larger population to settle on those fields than was now the case, and would have had the effect of keeping them there until they chose to get other employment. He believed, also, that such a system would be found very useful, and would tend to increase the revenue. He therefore proposed that the Government should have power to declare areas where mining could be carried on under

licenses of that sort. Of course that could be done only where there was alluvial ground: where there was stream tin, or where it was likely that diamonds and other precious stones would be found. He thought, for his part, that a great many more discoveries of minerals would be made in addition to those already known, as it was well known, that in the opinion of geologists, the colony was very rich in mineral wealth. So far as regarded the tin discoveries, it might be said that such a provision would be like locking the stable door after the steed was stolen, as the mischief had been already done; but he thought that considering they had had only one section of an Act to work under, things had gone on very satisfactorily, and that that section had worked tolerably well. In part three he proposed to give to the Government power to allow persons to construct dams, races, drains, and reservoirs, for the purpose of working mineral lands; and also, power would be given to the Government to revoke such permission on giving compensation to the person making such dams, &c. Part four provided means for preventing the unauthorised working of mineral lands. He might inform honorable members, that it had been found on the tin mines, that what were termed "fossickers," took the tin off lands which had been applied for by other persons, and that there was no way of checking that practice under the Crown Lands Act of 1868, except of proceeding against such persons for stealing. So he had introduced two or three clauses to stop that practice, and also to make stealing minerals from the selections of other persons a larceny, and the receivers of such tin, receivers of stolen goods. That had been pressed upon him from the very first; and one of the great difficulties the Government had had to contend against since the tin fields were discovered, was, keeping in check those fossickers without exercising any undue oppression. The thirty-first clause provided that—

"Any person found working for mineral ores or removing minerals or mineral ores from the land claim or selection of any other person whether such land claim or selection be held in fee or on lease or under license or on or from any land applied for to be purchased or licensed under this Act or under 'The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868' shall be deemed to be in unlawful occupation thereof and may be forcibly ejected by any police officer ranger of Crown lands or other person appointed by the Secretary for Lands and on conviction thereof shall forfeit and pay for any such offence any sum not exceeding fifty pounds to be recovered in a summary way before two justices."

Part five contained miscellaneous provisions; for instance, in regard to the rights of adjoining proprietors to boundary creek. Now, by clause 33 it was proposed that they should be allowed by the commissioner to work up to the centre of the main channel of any creek under such regulations as were pre-

scribed. That had raised a very important question, as it had been the custom in the colony, from the first, that in the case of creeks, whether navigable or not, the boundary should be up to the bed of the creek, and thus the Government had generally owned the bed of the creek, whilst parties came up to each side. In New South Wales a regulation had been passed that both parties had a right to the creek equally until the water was dried. A difficulty had already arisen in reference to that matter, and therefore it was necessary that some provision should be made. He proposed that in the event of any dispute arising as to what was the centre of the creek, power should be given to the commissioner to decide. Probably, in the regulations that would be issued, he would be directed, when the water was standing, to draw a line through the centre; and where the water was not standing, it would be the last running water before it ceased to run. Then followed the power of the Governor to make regulations, and to define the duties of the commissioner; and next, that it should not be obligatory on the Government to grant applications. At present, the Government had a discretionary power under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868, which no person had questioned, and he had repeated that power in the Bill. The repealing clause and the preamble would require no explanation; and with those few remarks he would move—

That the Bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

SUGAR REFINING AND DISTILLATION BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved, pursuant to notice—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the advisability of introducing a Bill to authorise the Refining and Distillation from Imported Sugar in Bond.

He would prefer to state his reasons for introducing the Bill at the present time, rather than on the occasion of the second reading, not because there was any necessity for any lengthened statement from him, but more because, if, as he believed, there would be some objections made to it, he would have an opportunity of replying to them at the second reading. The object of the Bill was to give encouragement to the refining of raw sugar in the colony, and to prevent the hardship and injustice which refiners would labor under, should the law continue as it at present stood in reference to the duties on all sugars. He might say that the Bill was similar to a Bill which was introduced in New South Wales for a similar purpose, at the instance of the proprietors of the principal sugar refining establishment in that colony; and that the same necessity which then existed in New South Wales for the measure which was then introduced, now

existed in Queensland. That measure had been introduced at the instance of the Sydney Sugar Refining Company, and he held in his hand a statement from that company in reply to objections then made to the Bill which was introduced; and one illustration which they had given for the necessity of such a measure—an illustration based upon figures—would suffice to shew that necessity, and the injustice which sugar refining companies would labor under, should such a Bill as that now proposed by him be refused by Parliament. Now, the pamphlet to which he would refer stated that:—

“On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, I have the honor to submit for your information the accompanying statement of the operations of that Company for a period of five years, from 1st January, 1855, to 1st January, 1860.

THIS STATEMENT IS INTENDED TO SHEW,

1st. That the quantity of Raw Sugar subjected to the process of refinement during the aforesaid period of five years, has amounted to *tons* 34,421, upon which, at the existing rate of £5 per ton, the duty would amount to £172,105.

2nd. That the total product from the 34,421 tons of Raw Sugar, so refined, has been

4,743	tons fine White Sugar
20,206	„ Bastards Sugar
6,727	„ Molasses or Treacle
2,745	„ Refuse and Waste

34,421 Tons.

3rd. That had a similar quantity of Sugar and Treacle been imported into the colony, the amount of duty paid thereon would have amounted to £155,073, as follows:—viz.,

Upon tons	£	s.	d.	£
4,743 fine White, refined, at 6	13	4		31,623
20,206 Bastards, „ 5	0	0		101,030
6,727 Treacle, „ 3	6	8		22,423
2,745 Waste, nil.				

34,421 Tons £155,073

4th. That were a foreign Sugar Refiner in Manila, Mauritius, or elsewhere, to ship to this port the same quantity of White Sugar, Bastards, and Treacle, the entire product of 34,421 tons of Raw Material, he would have to pay by way of duty, the aforesaid sum of £155,073, whilst this Company being obliged to pay duty upon the 34,421 tons of Raw Material (*including dirt and refuse*), is charged the sum of £172,105 or £17,023 more than the Foreign Importer or Refiner!

5th. It follows, therefore, that (had the present duties been in force during the whole of the five years) the Government would have received in consequence of a Colonial Refinery being in existence, the sum of £17,032 in excess of the duties which could have been levied upon the same amount of imported Sugar and Treacle, manufactured abroad.

6th. The deduction from this fact is that the Colonial Refiner pays annually, by way of duty, some £3,400 more than could be levied from the Foreign Refiner or Importer: in other words, *that the Foreign Refiner is protected as against the local Refiner to the extent of Ten Shillings per ton!*

7th. The statement, furnishing the basis for these deductions, has been compiled from the Half-yearly Statements, from time to time, laid before the Proprietors of this Company, and its correctness is capable of verification in any manner the Government may deem fit to require."

That would shew the absolute loss to that company for five years, which was never contemplated when the original Act was passed, and shewed the injustice that would be inflicted upon a large refining establishment such as that of Messrs. Tooth and Cran, in this colony, which represented at the present time the condition in which the Sugar Refining Company was in when the Bill passed in that colony. Clause 7 of the Bill might be said to contain the pith and marrow of the whole measure, and was to the following effect:—

"At the end of every three months and not later than the fourth day of the month thereafter ensuing the proprietor or occupier of any sugar refinery licensed under this Act shall deliver to the Collector of Customs or other duly appointed officer an account in writing of the true quantity of raw sugar used by him during the aforesaid period for the manufacture of refined sugar and also the true quantities of refined sugar bastards and treacle produced or in process of refining therefrom during the same period and if at any time upon striking a balance of sugar admitted into the said refinery and sugar permitted therefrom and after an allowance of ten per centum for waste upon the material used in the aforesaid manufacture the quantity of sugar refined or unrefined and treacle shall be less than the quantity which by the stock account kept by the proper officer ought to be within or upon the premises of such refinery the proprietor or occupier thereof shall be deemed to have removed sugar therefrom unlawfully and shall over and above all other penalties be liable for every offence to a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds Provided that the last-named penalty shall not be incurred upon such deficiency being proved to the satisfaction of the Collector of Customs or other duly appointed officer to have arisen from accident or loss and not from any fraud practised or intended."

The object of the Bill was to give a reduction or drawback of ten per cent. on refined sugars made in the colony, and that was asked for, because there was an amount of waste which took place in refining, which it would not be just to ask a refining company to pay for. It was extremely necessary that such should be done, as their sugar-growers would have, in the large refining establishments, a market for their sugars, which did not at present exist. But setting aside that, there was another reason—that it was never the inten-

tion of the Government to obtain a second payment of duty upon an article which changed in its character, as sugar did from its raw state, when it was refined. That was, he thought, sufficient explanation of the principles of the Bill, and he would now move the motion in his name.

The motion was carried.

Mr. MILES said he must again protest, as he had done on a former occasion, against the making of long speeches on a motion for leave to introduce a Bill, or for its being read a first time. It was a very inconvenient practice, and, as he considered, an objectionable one; because, from copies of the Bill not being previously furnished to honorable members, they could not say whether the Bill was one which they should consent to being introduced or not. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had, that afternoon, asked for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Immigration Acts now in force; and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer also had asked for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise Refining and Distillation from Imported Sugar. Both honorable gentlemen delivered a speech in explanation of the Bills; but, beyond the explanation they gave of them, honorable members had no knowledge of their provisions. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, for instance, in the course of his speech, directed the attention of honorable members to the seventh clause of the Bill he proposed to introduce; though, as he must have known, honorable members had not been supplied with copies of the Bill, and that it was not possible they could have been, as the Bill had not yet been printed; at any rate, he had not yet seen a copy of the Bill. Now it was, he maintained, the duty of the Government to furnish members with copies of their measures previous to their moving for leave to introduce them, in order that honorable members should be acquainted with the nature of them before consenting or refusing their consent to their introduction. He must say, also, that he was surprised to find the honorable member for Fortitude Valley and the honorable member for South Brisbane allowing such Bills to be introduced without their saying a single word about them, though they proposed to interfere with measures which, in former sessions, those honorable members had been chiefly instrumental in passing. He thought that, especially the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, as being the leader of the Opposition, should not have allowed those Bills to be introduced, which they knew nothing at all about, without addressing the House upon them. The honorable member stated, some time ago, that it was his intention, at the close of the present session, to retire from the position of leader of the Opposition; and he must say that, when he allowed measures such as these to be brought in, without saying a word upon them, the sooner he retired from the position of leader of the Opposition the better. He

did not know what reasons the honorable member had for doing so, though he must say that he was not surprised at his relinquishing the post, for he must say that the members who occupied the Opposition benches were not easy to be ruled. There was no bond of union amongst them arising from personal interest, such as existed amongst honorable members on the Government side of the House, from their possession of the lands of the colony. On the Opposition side the members were all free lances; and he must say the honorable member for Fortitude Valley deserved great credit for the way he had managed to keep them together so long. Honorable members, however, who supported the Government, were bound, from personal interests, to do so; because, if they were to oppose the Government, the lands which they now held possession of might be thrown open to alienation. His reason, as he had said, for rising on this occasion, was to protest against the introduction of measures which honorable members were not afforded the opportunity of previously knowing anything about, so as to be able to say whether the Bills should be allowed to be brought in or not. The existing Acts which it was now proposed to amend were, he understood, concocted by the honorable member for South Brisbane and others, and why that honorable member should now sit quietly by and hear them torn to shreds, in the way they had been, certainly astonished him.

Mr. LILLEY said: In regard to the Immigration Act, which has been referred to by the honorable member for the Maranoa, it passed through very experienced hands, and if it has failed in the purposes for which it was intended, it is greatly to be regretted that such has been the case; and the sooner its ascertained defects are remedied the better. The honorable member in the course of his speech has referred to a matter personal to myself. He has alluded to the subject of my resignation of the leadership of the Opposition; and I will, therefore, trouble the House with a short statement regarding the matter. It is quite true that rumors have been afloat, and have gained circulation through the press, that I was about to resign this position. It is also quite true, that at the outset of the session, I told the honorable members composing the party, that I would resign the leadership at the close of the session, and I think I am entitled to do so now, for the labor which I undertook has been pretty well completed. In making this statement, I am performing what I deem to be an act of courtesy to the House. The position of leader of the Opposition is recognised by the usage of Parliament, and no matter of etiquette ought to be neglected on his part. The duty which I undertook as leader has resulted in a large measure of success, and the time has come when I am entitled to be relieved from the burden of my position. The post of leader is an honorable

one, but demanding considerable personal sacrifices, which I have hitherto cheerfully borne. But I foresee it has new responsibilities arising round it, which I may be unable to bear, and upon which I may not be supported by an adequate attendance of members. I have, moreover, some further public labors, in which I do not hope to receive the cordial adherence of many influential members of the existing Opposition. The questions of public policy which I have so long urged upon the country and upon Parliament are all in a way of settlement, approaching, as nearly as I can hope, to bring them to my ideas. At any rate, they are all in certain prospect of settlement.

Mr. MILES: No, no.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear.

Mr. LILLEY: I repeat that they are all in certain prospect of settlement. Increased Parliamentary representation, which was the main object of my leadership, has been obtained; and renewed immigration, the opening of public lands, and the resumption of our public works and railway construction, are all in certain prospect. Hence I feel, even if discharged in a great degree from party ties, I can effectually aid, as a representative of the people, in carrying those public purposes safely through. During the late struggle I have had no personal object in view. I was sustained throughout, as I am at the close, by a clear sense of duty. The members of the Opposition knew, at the opening of the session, that I should take this course.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition side: Hear, hear.

Mr. LILLEY: And I now, with hearty goodwill to all—friends and opponents alike—take leave of them as leader of the present Parliamentary Opposition of the colony, and resume that of the member for Fortitude Valley alone, and with his responsibility only.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said: I think it is only fair for me to say, as the head of the Government, that I regret exceedingly to lose the services of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, as leader of the Opposition. We have had many differences of opinion in the House upon political matters, but never anything verging on a difference of a personal nature. I think the duties of the honorable member, as leader of the Opposition, have been performed by him, throughout what has been a very severe and protracted struggle, in as courteous and gentlemanly a manner as either I or any other honorable member on this side of the House could expect; and I have to return him my thanks and the thanks of the other members of the Government, for the courteous manner in which he has performed the onerous duties of leader of the Opposition. I regret exceedingly that the honorable member has resigned that position, for it greatly tends to shorten the debates that necessarily take place, and expedite the

business of the House, that the members of the Opposition should have as their recognised leader to conduct that share of the business of the House, which it devolves upon them to perform, a gentleman who will do so in a courteous manner, and with acknowledged ability; and as those qualities are possessed by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, in a marked degree, I cannot but regret that he has seen fit to resign the leadership of the Opposition.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The motion was then agreed to.

FINANCIAL SEPARATION BILL.

The House then went into committee of the whole, for the consideration of the Financial Separation Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the adoption of the first clause, which provided that—

“For the purposes of this Act the Colony of Queensland shall be taken to be divided into the four divisions described and defined in schedule C of this Act.”

MR. STEPHENS said that before this clause was put, he would wish to point out that they had not yet heard any reason given, during any of the discussions that had taken place on this Bill, why the colony, for the purposes of the Bill, should be divided into four portions; or why, if it was considered advisable to divide the colony at all, the division should not be into two portions instead of four, as proposed in this clause of the Bill. He would certainly like to hear some reasons given in support of the clause.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that as he had already stated the reasons why the Government thought the colony should be divided into four portions for the purposes of the Bill, he had not thought it necessary to repeat them in now moving the adoption of this clause. One of the reasons for the division of the colony in this way was, because it was considered in some portions of the colony that a greater amount of expenditure from the general revenue had taken place in the southern portion of the colony than it was fairly entitled to; and a great deal of the agitation that had taken place in the other districts of the colony arose on that account, and from the want of any statement shewing the amount of revenue which had been derived from those districts, and the amount that had been expended upon them. The want of any such statement of accounts, had occasioned much annoyance to the inhabitants of those portions of the colony; and he thought it would be a great advantage that they should be enabled, by a statistical statement such as the one which accompanied this Bill, to see what amount of the general revenue had been raised from them, and what proportion of it had been expended upon them. He thought also, that such a statement would tend, to a considerable extent, to prevent the territorial separation of the colony for a very long time to come; and though

he did not wish to see separation take place yet, if he found it to be necessary he would support a measure for that purpose. He would deeply regret that any necessity for it should arise, because he believed it would be much better for the good government of the colony that it should continue to be united. Now, why the colony should be divided into four portions for the purposes of this Bill, instead of any other number, must be clear to those who would carefully look into the Bill. The Bill proposed that those districts of the colony which had similar interests, and which sent their produce to the same port, should be kept together in respect to matters of revenue and expenditure. For instance, in the southern division, the whole of their imports and exports passed through Brisbane. Now the Wide Bay and Burnett was a district *per se*, and it had not derived any benefit whatever from the Southern and Western Railway or from the Northern Railway. Why then should it be charged with a portion of the railway expenditure? It was, and always had been, a sort of an isolated district. As he had already said, he thought it would tend greatly to allay much of the agitation for expenditure out of the general revenue that existed throughout the different districts of the colony if they were each debited with their share of the debt of the colony, and credited with the amount they contributed to the revenue. He believed that if this Bill was passed, it would lead up to a system of local self-government. The inhabitants of every district would see that if they desired more than a certain amount to be expended on their district, they would have to go into local taxation to meet it. He thought it would do a great deal of good to pass a Bill like this. At any rate it could not do any harm, and he saw no reason whatever why it should not be passed. If the South did not like so large an amount of the debt being put down to it, honorable members knew that the whole of the amount had been expended for the benefit of the South.

MR. MILES maintained that portions of the Leichhardt district and of the Wide Bay and Burnett district derived considerable advantage from the Western Railway; and yet those districts were not charged with any portion of the cost of construction. In that respect, if there were none other, he objected to the Bill. He believed that there was every desire on the part of honorable members to act justly towards the North; but this Bill, while it would be unjust to the South, would not satisfy the people of the North, and therefore he did not see what was the use of proceeding any farther with it. He would now move, by way of amendment upon the motion before the committee—

That the Chairman leave the chair, and report no progress.

The amendment was put and negatived, on a division, by a majority of 15 to 11.

Mr. THORN said he was astonished at the division which had just taken place; and he was afraid that his honorable colleague, Mr. Ferrett, the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt, and the honorable member for the Warrego, Mr. Buchanan, could not possibly have been aware of what they were doing when they voted the way they had done on the present occasion. They could not, he thought, have been aware that they were voting against the proposition of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. Now, he would ask that honorable gentleman, if he supposed that he (Mr. Thorn) would stand by and see the people of East and West Moreton saddled with a portion of the debt for railway construction, when they did not participate in any of the benefits arising from it? In fact there were very few settlers in those districts at the time the railway was finished; and he could also tell the honorable the Premier that so far as he could help it, he would not allow the people of the southern portion of the colony, to be saddled with £200,000 depreciation in the sale of debentures for the construction of railways. Did the honorable gentleman think it was right that the people of the South should be made to pay for the construction of station houses and bridges procured from England when there was plenty of suitable timber for them in the colony, and plenty of workmen in the colony capable of constructing them? The thing was altogether absurd. Now, it was very well known that he had always been in favor of every justice being done to the North; and if resolutions were tabled to-morrow in favor of separation, he would support them—but not separation at Dawes' Range. Some half-dozen Rockhampton agitators were now agitating for separation at Dawes' Range for personal reasons, and because they were afraid of the growing importance of the far North. They were afraid that the far North would, before long, out-rival them, and he was certain it would, in respect of population and wealth; and hence the cry with them was now or never, before the far North became too strong for them. Now this Bill proposed to do more than justice to the North, and he (Mr. Thorn) was surprised to think that the honorable the Premier should have framed such a measure as this. The honorable gentleman had not allowed any thing for the sale of lands in the southern parts of the colony. Now, the amount received from the sale of lands in the southern parts of the colony, from auction sales alone, was nearly £1,000,000, to say nothing of what had been derived from lands sold under the Acts of 1866 and 1868. He warned honorable members for the Darling Downs, and those who were landed proprietors there, that if this Bill passed, on them would rest the burden of taxation, for they were mainly benefited by railway construction; and he warned the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Ferrett, that he would have to

pay, and pay handsomely, for this railway expenditure. The honorable member must not suppose that the farmers of East and West Moreton were not to have money for roads, for money they were sure to get, having a preponderance of population and representation over the outside districts. In fact, the East and West Moreton districts could arrange the taxation that the Darling Downs, so and the outside districts, would have to bear the whole of it; for they, and only they, were mainly benefited by this enormous southern debt that had been incurred. He hoped the honorable gentleman who had charge of this measure would not go on with it. He (Mr. Thorn) could not support this Bill, or anything like this Bill, so long as he held a seat in that House; and he was certain that any southern members who might support it would, when they again went before their constituents, catch pepper.

Mr. HEMMANT said he considered this was the worst clause of the worst Bill the Government had ever introduced. He was astonished to hear the honorable the Premier say that the Bill would lead up to a system of municipal government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never said so.

Mr. HEMMANT: Well, the honorable member said that it would lead up to a system of local self-government, and he did not see there was any difference between that and a system of municipal government. He thought that it was quite absurd to divide the colony in the arbitrary way proposed, into four different portions for financial purposes. Why not divide it into two, or into forty-two. If the principle was good, let them extend it; and if it was bad, let them limit it as much as possible. He must say that he thought they were likely to get a better Bill if the colony was divided into two instead of into four districts; and he thought it would be well, if the Bill was to be gone on with, that the first clause should be amended in that way.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had no doubt honorable members had listened carefully to the speech of the honorable member for West Moreton, and that his honorable colleagues would give every consideration to the warnings it contained. The honorable member was very kind in his observations as to the separation of the North; but he did not say where he thought the boundary should be. Mr. Archer, with his resolutions in London for the separation of the North, would be thrown into a state of the greatest excitement, if the telegraph line was to break down, and he was prevented from ascertaining the boundary the honorable member would consent to—and, in fact, the whole of Downing street might be thrown into great excitement from want of that knowledge. If they were all to cry out for justice, or what seemed by some honorable members to be considered justice, for their own districts, both he and the honorable member for the Warrego might cry out for it far more than the honorable

members for either West Moreton or East Moreton, for he would like to know what benefit the Warrego or the Mitchell had derived from the expenditure on railways. Now, he had no doubt there might be some injustice in the Bill as to the distribution of the indebtedness of the several districts; but it ought to be remembered that the harm to the few must give way to the benefit of the many. So far as the Wide Bay and Burnett District was concerned, that was a division that stood by itself; and there had been no money expended upon it, either for railways, rivers, or harbors. He did not agree with the honorable member for West Moreton in the opinion that this Bill would do more than justice to the North, and that it would operate unjustly towards the South; for he looked upon the Bill as being more a measure of simple justice to the North, and not of injustice to the South. The South had hitherto had the fat things, and had had the benefit of good times; and he hoped it would be admitted that the time had now come that they should pay for them. It had been urged that because the members for the North voted for the construction of the railways in the South, they ought, therefore, to bear a portion of the debt. Now, he denied that the North should do so for any such reason, because he believed that only one or two northern members voted for the southern railways.

Mr. FERRETT said he thought that after the speech which had been delivered by the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, he was quite justified in voting as he had done. He could tell his honorable colleague that he did not vote on the amendment in the way he had done for the purpose of burking discussion. He did not see why the honorable member should presume to instruct him as to how he should vote on a question of this kind, for he had had far more experience in connection with the political affairs of the colony than the honorable member had had. But, no doubt, the honorable member had been very well worked up, by some people to whose advantage it might be that a measure of this kind should be defeated, with information and arguments against it. Now, he knew that the honorable member was well worked up by a certain little newspaper that was published in the town in which he resided; but he (Mr. Ferrett) was not to be dictated to by the editor of any newspaper, in respect to the course he should take in the discharge of his public duties as a member of that House. He would not submit to be influenced in the course he should pursue by the editor of any newspaper, or by any shareholder in any newspaper. No; if he were to take the advice of anyone beyond the knowledge his own experience gave him, it would be that of gentlemen who had minds sufficiently comprehensive to grapple with questions like this. The honorable member had delivered a strong speech against the Bill, but he had not given any reasons for his opposition. He had only

made a number of assertions against the Bill, without reasoning upon them. He (Mr. Ferrett) would say now what he said when he voted for the second reading of the Bill, that if it could be shewn to him that it would operate unjustly towards the South, and more than justly towards the North, he would oppose it.

Mr. WIENHOLT said he thought it was a matter of much regret that a feeling of dissatisfaction had been found to exist in the North, such as to give occasion for the introduction of a measure of this kind. For his own part, he did not think there was any fear that the North would be neglected. On the other hand, he thought there seemed to be a desire to do more than justice to the North. The measure appeared to him to be one that would not work well if it should be passed, and he was quite sure that the feeling of the country was not in favor of it; and, though he was fully convinced that the honorable the Colonial Secretary was actuated by the best feelings for the advancement of the general prosperity of the colony, in bringing in this measure, he thought it would be wise for him to withdraw it, now that he had ascertained the feeling of the House respecting it. He thought it would be quite time enough to bring in a measure of this kind when the country was more fully represented in the House than it was at present; and it was admitted that at the present time the country was not represented as it ought to be. The measure was not a pressing one, and the honorable the Colonial Secretary having shewn the earnestness of his intention to pass such a measure by introducing it, and bringing it forward for a second reading, might now very fairly withdraw it, finding that the opinion of the House was so much against it. He did not think it was a wise thing to attempt to govern the country in parts, instead of governing it as a whole; because one part of it might be more favorably situated than another for the development of its material or industrial products. The Wide Bay and Burnett district, for instance, which had been so much referred to, was a district that was very highly favored by nature for commercial purposes. It was near the sea-board, and did not require the same amount of expenditure upon it for commercial purposes as other districts of the colony did. He certainly did not see that he would be able to support the motion for the second reading of this Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that a large portion of the Wide Bay and Burnett district had always opposed the expenditure on the southern railways. There was not a single station, or a single person almost, in the western portion of the district he represented that derived any benefit from those railways. It was only those who resided in the extreme southern portion of the district that derived any benefit from them. He could not help being struck by the remarks of the

honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Thorn, when he said that if this Bill were passed it would inflict great injury on some parts of the southern districts that, as he alleged, received no benefit from the railways, while they would be saddled with a large portion of the taxation for the reduction of the expenditure for their construction; and at the same time, he said he would go in for a measure for the separation of the North from the South, which would still leave the South with the burden of the cost of the railways. Now he could not understand an argument of that kind. If territorial separation should ever take place, this Bill would shew what was the amount of the debt that would be owing by the North to the general revenue of the colony as it at present existed. The honorable member for East Moreton had spoken of one of the divisions of the colony as having been made by way of a sop to him (the Secretary for Public Works), as a member of the present Ministry. Now he could tell the honorable member that, so far from that being the case, the division that had been made did nothing like justice to that part of the colony he represented. It did only very partial justice to a portion of it.

Mr. THORN maintained that in the southern and western portions of the Wide Bay and Burnett district there were several large stations that derived more benefit from the southern railways than East or West Moreton derived; and it was not fair, therefore, that the district should be excluded from having to bear a portion of the expense of the railway, while East and West Moreton would have to do so. He therefore approved of the suggestion that had been made, that the Wide Bay and Burnett district, so far as the purposes of this Bill were concerned, should be included in the southern district.

Mr. GRIFFITH argued that, for the purposes of the Bill, it was immaterial whether the divisions of the colony should be two or four. The committee, he believed, had a very vague idea of what were the divisions into which it was proposed to divide Queensland. Why should the divisions proposed be adopted rather than any others? The Colonial Secretary, when he introduced the Bill, gave some reasons for it; but, when challenged, to-day, to give his reasons why there should be four divisions, he had none to offer in addition of any force whatever. The southern division consisted of a narrow strip of country, running east and west. He (Mr. Griffith) could not see why one division should not run north and south—why the three great districts of Burke, Mitchell, and Warrego, where interests were much more in unison than the interests of the various districts comprised in the southern division, should not form one division. Instead of the boundary line being taken evenly from east to west to make the southern and central divisions, it was found that the favored districts of Wide Bay and Burnett were to be cut off and made a separate division by them-

selves. There was no more reason for this than there would be for cutting off East and West Moreton, and making a separate division of the country on one side of the Main Range to the sea. According to the statistics furnished to honorable members, Burnett contained a population of 11,000 persons; while the district which he (Mr. Griffith) had the honor to represent contained 17,000—and East Moreton derived as little benefit from the railway as Burnett! The natural boundaries of the favored Burnett were no justification for its being made a separate district. He agreed with the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Wienholt, that the country should not be governed by halves or pieces; that the colony should be divided into proper districts, with local councils; and that there should not be arbitrary divisions of the kind proposed. There were, he believed, only a few honorable members open to conviction on this question, the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Ferrett, was one; but he considered it the duty of everyone who took an interest in the country, to speak upon it, and to continue speaking; and, if necessary, to do what some called, "wasting the time of the House," rather than allow such a measure as that under consideration to pass—a measure which would saddle one portion of the colony for ever with a debt not fairly incurred by it. He should not regret, if, not one evening, but many evenings, should be occupied on the Bill, so long as it was prevented from passing. Assuming that the figures were correct, Wide Bay and Burnett would have devoted to it £18,000 for roads and bridges. That division contributed to the land revenue of the colony, about £22,000, out of which the first-named sum was to be distributed for local improvements. The southern division, which contributed £175,000 to the revenue, was to have nothing for local improvements. Wide Bay and Burnett division was to get more than it wanted; and the southern division was to get absolutely nothing! It had been said that the southern division should borrow. It seemed to him to be absolutely absurd that, when there was a surplus of funds, it should not be applied to the good of the country. If there was no other reason for the postponement of the Bill, there was one in the refusal of the Government to allow the motion put on the paper by his honorable colleague, Mr. Hemmant, to pass as a formal motion, when it only called for information which would be very material to enable the House to learn what would be a fair amount of debt to charge to each district of the colony. Why was the line to be drawn at the railway? Why not take into account all the moneys that had been expended for local works all over the colony? Were railways the only charge on the country for the past? In future, all local expenditure was to be charged to the district—nothing in the past. In future, the land revenue was to go to the

credit of the division—not in the past. It had been said that the Bill had been brought in, because of gross injustice in the past. He would venture to say, that, calculating from the beginning, instead of two and a-half millions, charged to the southern division of the colony, it would be found to be chargeable with not more than one million.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: "Oh, oh," and "Hear, hear."

MR. GRIFFITH: Taking into consideration the population, from time to time, the revenue contributed by the districts, and the expenditure on local works, his statement, though only a guess, was near the truth. How much of the debt incurred for railways had been spent for the general good of the country at large? How much had been spent for the benefit of any particular district? How much for importing expensive engineers from England and paying them? How much was paid for mileage in making the railway—long, for the interest of the engineer, instead of as short as possible for the interest of the country? How much of that expenditure was for the benefit of the district he (Mr. Griffith) represented, which was sought to be saddled with the debt? He should be glad enough to see a Bill making the cost of an exclusively local work an exclusively local charge. The House were not informed of the details upon which the figures which were before them had been made up. The best way to deal with the Bill would be to adopt the suggestion to refer it to a committee of members skilled in finance to consider the whole subject, and to see how much was fairly chargeable to particular districts. Why take the dictum of any honorable member, even though he was the head of the Government?—or, even the Colonial Treasurer? Those figures, if accepted by the House, were for all time. Let them have something to go upon. No reason on earth could be given in favor of four divisions that could not be given in favor of forty. Let the House take some magic number, nine; or some prime number, nineteen. He objected to works that had been constructed for the good of the country, and not for the good of a district, being charged to a district. He thought it was the duty of honorable members to consider the matter seriously, and to demand further information before the Bill should pass another stage. He contrasted the positions, under the Bill, of the Wide Bay, Central, and Northern Divisions, with the Southern Division, and pointed out that while the latter, with a revenue of £175,000, and a population of 81,000 persons, would have no expenditure upon local improvements, the former would, in some cases, have an expenditure of £1 a-head of the population, which was not wholly European. The means for communication to be kept up in the most settled parts of the colony, were absolutely nothing; yet, the people required roads to be made, and similar works, in the southern dis-

tricts, more than in districts where there were not more than half-a-dozen lines of road altogether. Why were the people in the southern part of the colony to have no means of communication to their purchased lands, while the people of Wide Bay got £1 a-head for local works? There was no reason given for that, except that injustice had been done in the past.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: His story proved it.

MR. GRIFFITH: If history was founded in the violent leading articles about southern rapacity in northern newspapers, it did; but he did not think that the history of Queensland, when it should be compiled, would be drawn from flaming leaders in northern newspapers. Let figures be produced to shew that the charges against the southern part of the colony were fairly made. He was sure that they never could be proved, and he should never vote for the Bill. The local expenditure of the southern part of the colony was £245,000, and the balance against it was £16,000, shewing that unless the prosperity of the districts included continued to increase, their local expenditure must be diminished by the amount of that balance in the year. If the items of local expenditure were considered, it would be seen how the diminution must take place:—Interest on loan, £153,573. That could not be diminished. Railways, £57,000. That could not be diminished. Improvement of harbors and rivers, only £568. He apprehended that that could not be reduced, as it would be unappreciable. Public works and buildings, £8,677. Considering that the southern part of the colony was increasing as much as ever it increased, that could scarcely be diminished: the amount would hardly keep the public buildings in repair. Hospitals, £5,700; and Botanic Gardens, £1,400. He did not know whether those institutions could be abolished! Expenses of elections, £726. The only items that could be reduced to provide anything for roads and bridges, were hospitals, grants to municipalities, and about half-a-dozen or so others on the list of local expenditure in the Southern Division—in all about £20,000. But from that, if the Bill should be carried, must be deducted the deficiency of £16,000, before mentioned—leaving about £4,000 available for hospitals, schools of arts, roads and bridges, and other local requirements for a population of 81,000, with a land revenue alone of £125,000 a-year! If the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Ferrett, did not think that was unfairness, he (Mr. Griffith) would not give him the credit for penetration that he had hitherto given him credit for. The people would have to make their own roads and bridges, and support their hospitals, and schools of arts, and do all kinds of things for themselves. It might be right that they should do so; but why should not the people of other parts of the colony do so, as well as those of the southern districts? The only

plea that could be put forward seriously for the Bill was, that it was a measure of retaliation.

Mr. LILLEY : He ventured to suggest that there was no absolute hurry for the passing of the Bill. If it justly deserved the character given to it by the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Ramsay, it was a measure that would do no harm, if it should do very little good ; but it was objectionable on the ground that it made permanently, by statute, an admission that a very large proportion of the public debt was fairly chargeable upon a portion of the country described as the Southern Division. As it would not affect, in any degree, the Estimates, or the mode of apportioning the expenditure for the future, which ought to be adjusted as nearly as possible to the amounts contributed by the separate districts of the colony, there was no real actual urgency for the Bill ; and it would bear the appearance of justice, if the Colonial Secretary would accept the suggestion that he (Mr. Lilley) should move, that the Chairman report progress. He did not do this from any factious objection to the Bill, but in order that it might be referred to a commission or a select committee to inquire into and report upon the fair amount of debt chargeable to the various districts.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

Mr. LILLEY : He thought that was a fair proposal, and one that, to his mind, ought to be acceptable to the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. Do anything they might in the shape of financial separation or provincial councils, or anything else, the House must look this fact in the face—that there would be territorial separation eventually.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : No, no.

Mr. LILLEY : Honorable members would find it so, so soon as the northern districts grew strong, as they were growing every day ; and so soon as their population became sufficiently numerous, they would have territorial separation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Cape Palmerston.

Mr. LILLEY : He did not speak of the boundary. The northern districts would have territorial separation, and at no very distant day, he believed. What would be the effect of the Bill ? In the meantime, perhaps up to the time of separation, those districts might, out of their own revenue, contribute to the interest of their debt. Suppose that would be five or ten years. When separation came, whatever divisions might be made under the Bill, the whole debt would fall upon the southern portion of the colony ; and the South would have to pay, in perpetuity, the interest on the whole debt, which it was now proposed to apportion nominally to the respective divisions. Therefore, he thought, that the Bill, instead of being a just one, was a measure of considerable injustice. This was the real state of the matter. He ventured to

hope, therefore, that his suggestion would be accepted ; and that the subject would be referred to the new Parliament to be dealt with. He did not suppose that there was any hurry, or that any harm could be done, even to the northern districts, meantime. There was one thing certain, that if the whole revenue of the southern districts was to be absorbed in paying the interest on the two millions and a-half of debt, they must be immediately prepared to raise a sum by local taxation to provide for roads, hospitals, and so forth ; and there would be most probably a land tax. The next question would be, that the districts which had enjoyed the benefit of the railways should pay for them ; and all the land on the Darling Downs would be taxed—that there might be fairness between East Moreton and Darling Downs in the southern division. Because, East Moreton had done, for years, without railways ; from the first, it had no share in the work—it was urged forward against the votes and voices of the local representatives. As the debt had been incurred almost wholly for the benefit of the Downs and West Moreton, their lands must be taxed for the adjustment of the interest. It would be well that the House should have time before they were called upon to pass a measure such as the one before them. Let them have it well investigated ; let them see what was the actual cost to each district of the works for which the public debt was incurred ; and, let them adjust the debt fairly before putting what might not be a fair charge upon the southern districts.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair and report progress.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said the arguments brought forward against the Bill by honorable members on both sides of the House differed so materially, that it was almost impossible to answer them ; because, in answering one, he really defended the Bill from the attacks made by others. The honorable and learned member for East Moreton had argued from the beginning on wrong data. There was a homely old adage, but none the less true, that “ You can't eat your loaf and have it.” The southern districts had eaten their loaf, and could not have it. The honorable and learned member for Fortitude Valley, who had only repeated what he (the Colonial Secretary) said previously, had stated that as soon as separation should have taken place, the southern part of the colony would have the whole of the debt upon it. If the Bill was passed, the South could not have the whole of the debt upon it. The Bill was to do justice to the southern part of the colony. Make it the law of the land that the debt should be so much on each division of the colony, and then, if separation should take place, the northern portion could not go away and leave the whole debt to the South. Pass the Bill, or some measure like it, and that would be the good effect of it. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley had said

what he had stated over again, that territorial separation would take place. History repeated itself; and what had happened in the other colonies would happen here. The separated colonies would take no part of the debt, and it would all fall upon the elder colony. When Victoria left New South Wales, she took no part of the debt; and when Queensland was separated from New South Wales, this colony left the whole debt. Unless something like the Bill passed, the same thing would occur again, when northern Queensland should separate from the southern part of the colony. Instead of the debt being fixed, as proposed by the Bill, the South would be charged with the whole debt. He asked, why then did not the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and those who thought with him, support him in carrying through the Bill? It would do justice to the southern and the northern portions of the colony alike. If the honorable member for East Moreton knew anything about the business of the Ministry, he would not have supposed that either the Colonial Secretary or the Colonial Treasurer had had anything to do with the figures which had been laid on the table. The returns had been prepared in the colonial Treasury, by the paid officers of the Government, and by no member of the Government; and they had been checked in the Audit Office. No Minister ever interfered with them, and any honorable member who had been in office knew that a Minister would be an ass for his pains, if he did so. Nor had the returns been prepared as a sop for the honorable member for Maryborough, as had been insinuated. He (the Colonial Secretary) had no doubt that the returns had been prepared as fairly as they possibly could be; and, as shewing how correct they must be, he mentioned that though the Treasury and the Audit Office were not working together, in preparing them, they had made out the total to within £400 or £500—an inconsiderable difference, and utterly immaterial as compared with the amount at issue, £3,786,786. The accounts had since been revised and checked by both offices, and they were now correct. The honorable member for East Moreton had made a long statement to shew from the returns placed on the table—which the House had been told were merely by way of example, as for the year 1871, to shew how the accounts would be made out if the Bill passed—that the southern districts would be unjustly treated in having nothing for local improvements. If he had looked into the accounts, he would have seen that the account against the Southern Division was never likely to shew such an unfavorable balance as appeared against it in the return. The revenue from the sale of land was so much greater than in other divisions, that the accounts for 1872 would shew a very great difference in favor of the Southern Division. That was a consideration which had been lost sight of. In a year or two, even this year, the Southern Division

would shew a much more favorable balance than any of the other divisions. He (the Colonial Secretary) maintained that having had so large an amount of the public debt expended in the Southern Division, it was only fair that the districts which had the advantage of it should be taxed for the debt, and that the districts which had not been benefited by it—which had had none of the money for railways—should not be taxed for it. Of course, he was aware, as he said when introducing the Bill, that it would lead to local taxation. He believed that it was a fair measure, and its passing would do a great deal of good to delay the accomplishment of separation. Although he believed that territorial separation would come about, in this enormous territory, yet the longer it was postponed and that even-handed justice was done to all portions of the colony, so as to keep Queensland as an undivided whole, so much the better for the colony. The Bill would stave off the chance of separation for a long time. If honorable members would not support him in passing the Bill, he could only say that he should not go in for another dead-lock on account of it. As to referring it to a select committee, which would be only shelving it; he would, rather than that, have it thrown out at once. He remembered the Land Bill of 1868, which the House had been foolish enough to refer to a select committee. He never regretted that but once, and that was ever since. A more abortive attempt to make a land law he never knew. The Bill had come out of committee in such a shape, that no individual member would have dared to have introduced it to the House: such a Bill could only be introduced by a body, without a soul to be damned or a personality to be kicked! If the Financial Separation Bill was referred to a select committee, it would come forth an abortion that he certainly would not own, or have anything to do with. If the House did not choose to go on with the Bill, he would rather withdraw it than refer it to a committee. He felt perfectly certain that a Bill of this sort would pass before many years elapsed. It might be an improvement on his measure. He always admitted that it was quite possible to improve the Bill. Something of the sort must be passed, or the separation of the colony would take place, and that much sooner than seemed to be thought. As some honorable members talked about separation, they did not seem to have any idea of what it meant. Perhaps, they meant, as he before observed—everything for the South, even with an approach to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the line of telegraph! But that was not what the North meant by separation: if the North had separation, it would be thorough separation. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Griffith, had referred to the action of the Government in refusing to pass the motion for returns tabled by his honorable

colleague, Mr. Hemmant. He (the Colonial Secretary) had done so advisedly: if he had allowed the motion to pass, the preparation of the returns would occupy some weeks, and that would have furnished another argument for the postponement of the Bill until those returns were brought forward. He objected to have the Bill shelved in that way. He would much rather that it was met with the direct negative; and he should divide the House on the question. If he was beaten, he would not have a dead-lock.

Mr. LILLEY observed that he agreed with the principle of the Bill, but he did not approve of the division of the debt without inquiry by the House, or otherwise. His motion was not for shelving the Bill; but, as there was no object to be gained in pressing it forward, he thought that some good matter for the consideration of the new Parliament might be procured in reference to the subject, and that no harm could happen to either the southern or the northern districts by leaving it open for some time. Say, the division of the debt proposed was absolutely just, it might be pleaded that the demand made on the South was at an inconvenient time. It might be perfectly true that the southern districts could not eat their cake and have it; and it might be equally just that the creditor who had helped the debtor to spend the money should not turn round too sharply and press for payment. There should be time to pay—the payment should be eased down a little—the debtor should not be rushed suddenly without an opportunity to consider what arrangements were best for a parties. The southern districts should not be too suddenly asked to pay the interest on two millions and a-half of debt for which the credit of the whole colony was pledged! Although it might be a very fair thing, let it be done so as not to inflict any hardship on portions of the colony that were not parties to the injustice alleged to have been done.

Mr. GRIFFITH, in explanation, stated that all he said in his speech was, that the House were not bound to take the figures before them upon the statement of even the honorable member at the head of the Government, or the Treasurer; he did not say that the honorable gentleman had prepared the figures himself. Further, in answer to the Colonial Secretary, he denied that either himself or his honorable colleague for East Moreton had, by moving for returns, desired to postpone the Bill.

Dr. O'DOHERTY alluded to the proceedings of the two Railway Commissions in support of the advantages that would result from the reference of the Bill to a Commission or a select committee, as suggested by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. There would be no shelving of the Bill by referring it to a Commission. Indeed, that would be the fairest way of disposing of the question at present. To dispose of it in the summary

way proposed, by passing a Bill without inquiry, was not suited to the magnitude and importance of the subject. It would be very rational, recognising the fact that the Assembly were in an imperfect condition to enter into such a subject, to decide that the fullest information should be produced to the new Parliament, who would be called upon to consider it; and honorable members could not adopt a wiser course than that suggested by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley, and he trusted that the feeling of the House would be expressed in favor of that view. He was, for one, in the most extraordinary position in regard to the Bill, as he represented a constituency that would be most grossly treated by a measure of that kind, inasmuch as it was to be charged two millions sterling for a trunk railway, from which his constituents had never derived the slightest benefit. Anything more monstrous he had never heard of than such an attempt to burden them with such a debt. The only argument the honorable the Colonial Secretary had adduced was, that because they had had the loaf, they must pay for it; but they had not had a bit of the loaf, and yet were asked to pay for it. Now, what was the original idea when the railway was first constructed? Why, to form a great trunk line to Roma, and the south-westward of the colony. The most expensive portion of that work had been completed, and, after the remaining portion was completed, it would then be a fair thing, if the northern part of the colony separated from the South, to charge the latter with its share of it. He could not, however, understand anything more monstrous than that, before the people of the South had enjoyed any benefit from the railway in any way, they should be burdened with the entire debt. He believed that if the whole thing was examined by a Royal Commission, no such proposition as that would be put forward.

Mr. GRAHAM thought that if the Bill of the honorable the Premier had not done anything else, it had, at least, tested the genuineness of the desire so often expressed by honorable gentlemen opposite to do justice to the North. Those honorable gentlemen got up and talked about being burdened with the cost of the construction of the railway; but surely they could not expect the North to consent to be charged with that. He would suggest to the honorable the Premier that he should let the Bill go, in order that the northern members could consult together, and go in at once for territorial separation.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. STEPHENS said that the honorable gentlemen who had just spoken seemed to think that because the southern division had the railway, they should pay for it; but what did they find in regard to the telegraph line? The North had a long line of telegraph, and yet that was to be charged to the general expenditure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Its share.

Mr. STEPHENS : That would mean that the South would have to pay three-fourths of it. If anything were required to shew the injustice of the Bill, it was, that whilst the South was expected to pay for the construction of the railway, the North was to pay only one-quarter of the cost of the telegraph. In reference to the remark, that if there was territorial separation, the whole cost of the railway would be charged to the South; it might be presumed that as there was not separation, the South would not have the burden of the whole debt; but the fact was, that the Bill would not make the slightest difference in any respect, nor did it indeed profess to do so; all it proposed was to apportion the debt for the purposes of that Act. He might remind honorable members that, in discussing that measure, one very important consideration had been left out, and that was, how it would affect the colony in the eyes of the public creditor. He ventured to say that there was nothing in the measure that would take the name of the Governor, or of the honorable the Treasurer of Queensland, off a single one of their debentures if separation took place; neither was there in the Bill anything to provide that, in the event of separation, the new colony would give Queensland any of its debentures, for the portion of debt with which they would be debited by the Bill. It would not be practicable either for the Bill to effect such a thing, as the power rested with a higher authority than that House. The great fault of the Bill was its ineffectiveness in every respect. The honorable the Premier said that it was a measure that would require legislation; but that was a very extraordinary thing to say, as a Bill, he thought, should legislate itself, and not lead to legislation at some future period. He considered, therefore, that it would be better to defer the consideration of the whole question, until the honorable member could introduce a Bill that would legislate for itself. Then, again, the twelfth clause provided for the appointment of four committees of advice; and next, clause fourteen said that a minority of those committees could protest against the recommendations of the majority, and that such protests would be considered by the Assembly—so that the result of all that would be, that the House would have to vote in the same manner as at present, and thus the provision made for settling that question of expenditure, would be quite ineffective. He would like to point out, that if they admitted the principle that the whole of the debt should not be borne by the whole of the colony, then it could be urged, with great justice, that only the districts immediately benefited by the expenditure should bear the burden, and that those districts whose representatives had opposed the expenditure, and which had derived no advantage from it, should be exempt. There was one other thing that occurred to him. He held that the debt had been created by the whole colony, through

the action of that House; and, therefore, the whole colony was responsible for it. Taking, for instance, the district of East Moreton, that district had had forced upon it the cost of railway construction, by the votes of other districts, and against the wishes of the district itself. Therefore, it was the legislation of the whole colony which had incurred the debt. Again, they had been told that some portion of the colony was not represented at the time that debt was incurred, but the same argument might apply to every person who had come to the colony since the debt was contracted, and who might with equal justice deny his liability to pay any share in it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS was not at all surprised when a young member of that House got up and made statements which were not altogether in accordance with actual facts, but he certainly was surprised that the honorable member for South Brisbane, who had more than once filled the office of Treasurer, should get up and make such a wild statement as that just made by the honorable member. To say that the members representing the South were not responsible for a great portion of the railway debt, was to say that which was contrary to fact. He knew no one who made that statement more frequently than the honorable member for Brisbane, Dr. O'Doherty. It was true that the members for East Moreton and Brisbane had voted against the construction of the railway; but why was it that they had so voted? Why, it was simply because the line was not to start from Brisbane.

Mr. HEMMANT: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was an old colonist, and he remembered that that was the sole burden of the cry of the Opposition. The Opposition to Mr. Macalister was, because he would never consent to running a railway alongside a navigable river; and why was that argument raised? Was it against the northern members? No; but against the jealousy of the members for Brisbane. But, to go further, would any one suppose that those honorable members would not be responsible for the extensions of that railway—for the extension to Warwick, for instance? Was not the honorable member, Dr. O'Doherty, responsible for that? Why, the honorable member was the most strenuous demander that it should be made.

Dr. O'DOHERTY: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He had no doubt also that the honorable member was equally vociferous in the cry for the extension to be made to Dalby. He objected to the statement that honorable members opposite were opposed to the railway construction; the only people who really set themselves against it were the people of Wide Bay, who foresaw all the evil consequences that would result from it. The honorable member for South Brisbane had also made another mistake in regard to the telegraphs, but saw he was wrong, and then endeavored to pick himself up in the honor.

able member's usual adroit way ; therefore the committee was justified in receiving with caution, any statements made by that honorable member. He denied that the people of Brisbane were not responsible for the great outlay on railways. Why, three-fourths of the expenditure caused by those works had been lavished among them. It was a fact, known to everybody, that at that time Brisbane was overcrowded with business, and hundreds and thousands of immigrants were brought to the colony for the purpose of making those railways. What, he might ask, led to so many houses being closed in the environs of Brisbane, but simply the fact of the railway expenditure being stopped ? He was really astonished that the honorable member should attempt to deny such patent facts. Then, the honorable member had very ingeniously tried to draw a comparison between the telegraph and railway lines, and asked, why one should be charged to general, whilst the other was charged to local, expenditure ? But there was no comparison between the two ; between the telegraph, which was for the benefit of the whole country, and a little bit of railway which only intersected a small portion of the colony. He thought the statements of the honorable the Premier were unanswerable, and that the committee should come to a decision. It was unanswerable, and, as was foretold, honorable members opposite, when separation really did come, would find that their present course would prevent the North from having to pay any portion of the general debt. But, as had been said before, the Bill was not a Separation Bill ; it was merely to take into consideration an equitable arrangement of the past and future expenditure of the colony, and to place on record what should be allotted to each division of it.

Mr. LILLEY thought the honorable Minister for Works was mistaken in the remarks he had made about the railway ; the honorable member was not in the House at the time, but the state of the case was as follows :— That at the time it was proposed to make a railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba, the members representing Brisbane were strongly opposed to any expenditure for that purpose, not because it was to start from Ipswich, but because they thought that a cheaper mode of travelling and conveying goods would serve the purpose of the colony at the time ; and were in favor of a tramway, and some of the East Moreton and Brisbane members were even members of the Tramway Company, which, it was proposed, should commence their line from Ipswich, and not from Brisbane : however, the thing was not worth discussion.

Mr. MACDEVITT said, with regard to the statements which had been made as to the arguments used by the southern members, when the railway policy was first enunciated, he must certainly support the statement just made by the honorable member for Fortitude Valley. It was true that the members for Brisbane opposed the construction of the

railway, and there was a dissolution brought about by that opposition ; the real supporters of the railway were the squatters on the Downs. Apart from that matter, however, he thought it was a very great pity that any opposition had been offered to the proposed Bill of the honorable the Premier. They had heard from those honorable gentlemen who were now opposing it, the strongest protestations that justice should be done to the North. When resolutions were introduced two years ago, with a similar object, desires were expressed that some justice should be done to the northern districts ; and now, when the honorable the Premier had placed before the House a measure that would be the means by which justice could be done, honorable gentlemen were vehement in their opposition to it. It had been said by the honorable member, Dr. O'Doherty, that the measure was not an adequate one ; well, it might be deficient in some of the machinery, but still he had not heard anything to shew that such would be the case. The honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Hemmant, had discussed the measure at great length on the occasion of the second reading, but that honorable member had not succeeded in pointing out any glaring defects in the Bill ; and as to its not going far enough in doing justice, he had not heard any good objections from any honorable member. He thought it was only fair that the principle should get that legislative force which the Bill proposed, and thus make it the beginning of a system to remedy the complaints which had so long been made by a large portion of the colony. He believed that the proposition of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was a very good one, or rather, that it would have been a very good one if it had been made when the Bill was first introduced ; but, he hoped, it would not now be entertained. That honorable gentleman said that it was a fair proposition, where there were accounts extending over a number of years, to submit them to a select committee before legislating upon them ; and he (Mr. MacDevitt) thought that there could not have been any objection to that, if the proposal had been made earlier, so that the honorable the Premier would afterwards have had an opportunity of dealing with the question. But no such suggestion had been made then ; although, he believed, the honorable member for Fortitude Valley was perfectly sincere when he made the proposition ; now, however, it appeared very much like an attempt to shelve the Bill. He hoped the measure would pass, with such modifications in it as could be suggested by those honorable members who desired that perfect justice should be done to the North.

Mr. ROYDS said that the present was an occasion on which he labored under a peculiar disadvantage which no other honorable member labored under, as, unfortunately, the district which he represented was split into two by the new Electoral Districts Bill, and the interests of his constituents would be divided,

a certain portion of the district being thrown into the southern division—and those were his own immediate neighbors, in whom he was personally interested—where there had been such a heavy expenditure; whilst the other portion of the district was thrown into the central division. If he came forward at the next general election, he believed that the part thrown into the southern division would have the largest population; and if he took the other district, it had comparatively a small population, so that he thought it was his duty to do all he could to further the passing of the Bill. He thought the honorable member for South Brisbane, in alluding to the expenditure for telegraphs, had forgotten one thing—that if the expenditure in the southern districts for telegraphic purposes was put down, it would be very largely in excess of that in the North, as there were so many branch lines; and another thing should be considered, that the line in the North would always be of far more national and commercial importance. As to the railways being made a general charge, he really could not see how it could be expected that people in the Mitchell, Kennedy, and northern districts should pay a portion of that debt, as they could not possibly receive any benefit from it whatever. He should support the Bill.

The question was put, That the Chairman report progress, and the committee divided with the following result:—

Ayes, 13.	Noes, 12.
Mr. Lilley	Mr. Bell
Dr. O'Doherty	" Palmer
Mr. Ferrett	" Ramsay
" Buchanan	" Thompson
" Johnston	" Fyfe
" Hemmant	" Bramston
" Handy	" Royds
" Stephens	" Morehead
" Thorn	" W. Scott
" Clark	" MacDevitt
" Edmondstone	" Graham
" Wienholt	" Walsh.
" Griffith.	

CUSTOMS BILL.

Mr. RAMSAY moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the further consideration of this Bill.

The motion was carried and the House went into committee.

A number of verbal amendments having been agreed to, the House resumed, and the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave for the committee to sit again.