

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 1874

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 20 May, 1874.

Supply.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the further consideration of Supply.

Mr. GRAHAM said, that, before going into committee, he wished to offer a few remarks to the House upon the general policy of the Government in dealing with the surplus revenue of 1873. It was quite a distinct matter from voting the general Estimates, inasmuch as it was not the voting of money to meet the current expenses of the colony, but it was a division amongst the colonists of a large sum of money which had accumulated from savings of revenue. The reason why the Government had such a large sum in their hands had been already sufficiently shown, and, although it was put down as surplus revenue, it was in reality money raised by a former loan, which had been applied to meet a revenue deficiency—if there had not been such a loan, there would not have been the present surplus. The total amount that was available appeared to be £250,000, and accumulated as it had been, he thought, on the face of it, it must appear to every honorable member that that sum of money should be divided with some show of justice among the various districts of the colony. The way in which the Government proposed to deal with it, however, showed that they were not actuated by that feeling of justice, and that they had been guided by no principle whatever. If the public works were not charged upon loan at all, the money would then be surplus; but such a sum, amounting in the present case to something more than £250,000, was more than surplus revenue, and should be expended on public works. Now, the way in which it was proposed to divide that money was not in accordance with the basis of population, with the amount received from taxation, or in accordance with any principle whatever. He had not so many details as he would have liked to have had to show the position of the central district; in fact, he had hoped that the task now performed by him would have been taken by another honorable member who would have been better prepared with information on the subject. But, taking population as one basis, he might mention that the central districts represented one-fifth

of the total population of the colony; if, therefore, that was taken as a basis, the central district should receive one-fifth of £250,000 or £50,000. If they looked at the quantity of stock in the various districts, which was one ground upon which they could form an opinion of the importance of a district, they would find from the returns of the Inspector of Sheep, that there were in the central district 2,400,000, or one-third of the total number in the colony; so that, according to that basis, the central district would be entitled to one-third of the surplus. Again, if they looked at the local revenue, they would find that about one-sixth was contributed by that district. If they looked to the land revenue, including licenses and rent exclusive of land, they would see that the central district contributed £63,741 15s. 6d., or one-fifth of the total revenue derived from that source. Those were a few items which would clearly show to the House the position of the central district as compared with the rest of the colony, and taking the average, those items showed that that district represented one-fifth of the colony, whether as regarded population or any basis that could be named that was a fair one. Before referring to the proposed division of the surplus, he might inform the House that instead of voting one-fifth for roads and bridges out of the Estimates for the central district, all they got was very nearly one-tenth, as he had calculated it. He found, on looking at the page of proposed expenditure of surplus, that the central districts, instead of receiving one-fifth, to which he had shown that they were entitled, or £50,000, were to get only £4,500. That appeared to him to be such a gross injustice that he did not believe any honorable member would deny that they had not good ground for complaint. He was aware that some of the sums set down referred to expenditure of a general character for which the whole colony should be charged; for instance, the item of £75,000 for immigration. The various sums for the improvement of harbors and rivers were, he considered, more of a local character; and on looking at them he found that whilst a new dredge, costing £25,000, was to be provided for Brisbane, the old one now in use there was to be sent to the northern ports. There was some further expenditure for telegraphic extension which he was quite willing to allow was general, more than local expenditure; but even after they deducted all the items which could come under the head of general expenditure, they would still find the same unfairness shown to different districts of the colony. Now, whatever might be said about one district getting more than its fair share of expenditure of the general Estimates, could not be applied to the present instance; and, as the honorable Colonial Treasurer could not expect, year after year, to have a similar surplus to that now in hand to dispose of,

honorable members had a right to claim that it should be fairly divided when it did come, and that it should be divided upon the principle, as nearly as possible, of every taxpayer who had contributed towards that surplus receiving his share back again. He knew that that was of course impossible; but still, the expenditure of the money upon public works should be so apportioned that every district should receive its fair share. He would now move as an amendment—

That all the words after the word "That" be omitted, with the view of inserting in their place the following words:—(That) "this motion be postponed, to afford the Government an opportunity of withdrawing their estimate for surplus expenditure, and of introducing an amended estimate fairly apportioning to the public works in each district of the colony the surplus revenue contributed by such district, as shown by a paper laid on the table of this House during the current session, entitled "Revenue and Expenditure for 1873, apportioned in accordance with the proposed Financial Separation Bill of 1872."

In moving that amendment, he did so principally, as notice had been given of it for some time, and honorable members would, no doubt, be prepared to deal with it. At the same time it was not so much from a desire to raise a discussion upon a proposed Act of Parliament as to show that the proposed division of the surplus was very unfair, and should be referred back to the Government for the purpose of re-arranging. He did not care what basis they took, whether the revenue apportioned in accordance with the Financial Separation Bill, whether the exports and imports, or anything else; he should be equally contented provided they took some basis. That item of £4,500 for improving the upper flats of the Fitzroy would be money thrown away; a less sum than £10,000 or £15,000 for that work, and a similar sum for other works in the district, was nothing more than it was entitled to. He trusted the House would accept the amendment, and insist upon the Government making a division upon some principle or basis which would have the effect of doing justice to all.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was in hopes that the honorable member for Bowen, who he knew took very great interest in the subject now before them, would have addressed the House before he rose to do so, as then he would have had an opportunity of replying to any arguments the honorable member might bring forward; but the honorable member seemed to think that the Government should state their views upon the subject before he addressed the House. He must say that he could hardly think that the honorable member, in moving the amendment, was in earnest, as the substance of the honorable member's remarks was, that the Government should withdraw their estimate and bring in an amended estimate, framed in accordance with the principles of a Bill, which was what—? Why, which was a Bill

which had been only carried to a second reading in that House—although introduced by one of the strongest Governments in any of the Australian colonies—and which, by the expressed wish of a supporter, was withdrawn when in committee.

How the honorable member could ask the House, or the Government, to withdraw an estimate and frame it in accordance with a Bill which had never received the sanction of the Legislature, he was at a loss to understand. He could hardly understand that the honorable member seriously meant that, or that he wished to have another discussion on the Financial Separation Bill of 1872; but if the latter was the honorable gentleman's wish, the best thing for him and those honorable members with whom he was acting, was to again introduce that measure. He thought that the way in which the motion had been introduced was somewhat disingenuous, but he presumed the honorable member was acting for an absent friend. The motion said:—

"An amended estimate fairly apportioning to the public works in each district of the colony the surplus revenue contributed by such district, as shown by a paper laid on the table of this House during the current session, entitled 'Revenue and Expenditure for 1873, apportioned in accordance with the proposed Financial Separation Bill of 1872.'"

He presumed that the solution sought to be derived from that was that the present Government were in some way responsible for that particular Financial Separation Bill or what had followed from it—namely, the returns which had been laid on the table of the House by them; but the fact of the matter was that he found, on entering office, that the accounts were still being kept in accordance with the instructions of the late honorable Premier, and the Bill introduced by that honorable gentleman; and, finding that to be the case, he thought it would have been rather discourteous for him to take any action which would have the effect of making all that work nugatory. It was not his wish to do so, and he thought it was only right to the country that the returns should be laid on the table, and the information be taken for what it was worth. That, however, was a very different thing to saying that the present Government agreed with the principle of the Bill, which it was well known they had strongly opposed at the time; and which, when the proper time arrived, he could show was not at all suited to the requirements of the colony. He made those remarks, in order that honorable members might not be led away by the paper laid on the table during the present session, which, as he said before, was furnished merely as an act of courtesy to the late Government. He must say that he looked upon the vote proposed on the previous evening, when the House was in committee, that the northern judge should reside at Bowen, as a very important one; as, when honorable members

affirmed that, it was equivalent to a definite settlement of what were, in future, to be considered the northern districts. There had been discussion after discussion as to what should be the boundary of those districts, but he looked upon the vote of the previous evening as having settled it. He thought that no one who had taken any interest in public events could deny that the question of Separation was only a question of time, and that at no distant day they would have a new colony commencing north of Cape Palmerston. That would not be so injurious to Queensland; but any separation commencing at Dawes' Range would leave Queensland saddled with a very heavy debt upon it, with a comparatively small territory, and with a very small sea-board. He believed that at no very distant date a new colony would be created, especially if the resources of the North should prove capable of supporting the large population which it was at present believed they would do. As regarded the vote of the previous evening, pointing out, as it did, the boundary of the future colony, he thought that that fact should make the honorable members representing the central district contented to cast in their lot with the remainder of Queensland; for he believed that if the colony agreed upon separation, the Imperial authorities would never consent to fix the boundary of the new colony so far south as Dawes' Range. He thought it would be well to say that he thought that those who had been for so long agitating for separation, had done so more for their own interests than those of others; and he thought every reasonable man would say that if ever there was separation, it must commence north of Cape Palmerston and not at Dawes' Range, for the reasons he had already stated. The honorable member for Bowen addressed the House on a former occasion, on the subject of the claims of the North in reference to expenditure; and he believed that that honorable member had not thought him guilty of discourtesy in not replying to the remarks then made, although some other honorable member might have thought so. It was then desirable that the Government should get on with the Estimates as rapidly as possible, and as, in replying, he would have had to go into figures, and an acrimonious and long debate might have followed, he considered it wiser to leave any reply for a future occasion. It had been said that anything could be proved by figures, and he proposed shortly to reply to the statements made on that former occasion by the honorable member for Bowen, leaving out of the question the central districts, for the reason he had given, that Bowen must be regarded as the boundary of the northern districts. He saw, on referring to the papers laid by himself on the table, a few days previously, and which was prepared in accordance with the Financial Separation Bill of 1872, that the expenditure north of Cape Palmerston, during 1873, was £37,756, or one-

tenth of the general government, namely, £487,799, the total expenditure being £92,592. Now, those figures were all very well, but when they came to actual facts, what would they find? They would find from a return, prepared in accordance with a motion of the honorable member for Enoggera, that the actual expenditure north of Cape Palmerston amounted to £128,297 instead of to £92,592, as set forth in the proposed Financial Separation Bill of the honorable member for Port Curtis. That depended upon the way in which figures were used. It was a well known axiom that figures could be made to prove anything, and the honorable member had given another illustration of that, as he took figures belonging to local expenditure and put them down to general government. It was well known that the expense of government in sparsely peopled districts, like those north of Cape Palmerston, was very different from that of governing a thickly populated district. It was quite true that the revenue derived from the North was large, but the expense of government was out of proportion to that of the southern districts; so that, if they took the average receipts and the actual expenditure, they could show almost any amount they chose; but, on the other hand, if they took the actual receipts and the actual expenditure, they would produce a different result. What he had taken was the actual expenditure, and that showed an increase of £38,000 over the amount set down in the Bill of the honorable member for Port Curtis. He did not intend to show how those calculations, if worked out, would affect all the districts of the colony. He had already said that it was the intention of the Government, if they remained in office next session, to lay before the House a Bill dealing with every district in the colony, whether north, central, or south. He thought, however, he had shown the House that the returns of the honorable member for Port Curtis were totally fallacious, and that the actual expenditure in the remote districts of the colony was very much larger than the average expenditure, which no House would be justified in adopting. The honorable member for Clermont stated that the sum of £240,000 was a surplus derived by a transfer from loan to revenue, and therefore it was unnecessary for him (the Colonial Treasurer) to say more on that subject. They were, therefore, simply placed in the position of having a surplus of £240,000 owing to their having at some previous time transferred £100,000 from loan to revenue to cover a deficiency. That being the case, the Government were not justified in looking upon it as an ordinary surplus which could be used for the reduction of taxation, but simply as an amount which should be devoted to purposes for which, under ordinary circumstances, they would have been justified in asking posterity to assist them in the cost of. He considered

that if there was one purpose more than another of a national character to which a portion of such surplus should be devoted, it was immigration. The Act of 1872 entailed a very heavy expenditure, and it was necessary that large provision should be made for meeting it. Then there was a sum for the improvement of harbors and rivers, and he would ask whether there could be any work more national than that, as every man was benefited by it; and it was most absurd to say that because a sum of money was spent on the improvement of a port, that port alone benefited from it. Why, all the colony participated in the benefit. Then again, there was a sum for lighthouses, and he might say, in connection with them, that the colony had reason to be proud of the manner in which its coast was lighted; in fact, it was admitted that our coast was better lighted than any other. Surely there could be no objection to lighthouses being called a national work. Again, he would ask, for what better purpose could money be voted than for the extension of telegraphic communication? That not only afforded great facilities to the Government in carrying on the business of the country, but was of great value to the public. Independently of that consideration, however, there was the prospect of the telegraph lines being reproductive. He thought, therefore, there could be no objection to that item. The next item was for the renewal of railway stock and making surveys, both of which were necessary works. In regard to the improvements of harbors and rivers, he might mention that when he took office he asked the Portmaster to furnish a list of the requirements along the coast; that officer was not fettered in any way with instructions, but was merely to say what he considered was necessary to be done. He had noticed, however, in one of the newspapers, a complaint that the port of Bowen was not to have any portion of the surplus spent upon it; but the reason for that was the best that could be given, namely, that no expenditure was required, as Providence had so favored it;—he only wished that Brisbane was in the same position. A great deal had been said about the large sum put down for the port of Brisbane; but, if honorable members would refer to returns, they would see that 80 per cent. of the whole shipping went to the port of Brisbane. In reference to the new dredge, for which £25,000 was put down, he might explain that it was intended to dredge the channel to a greater depth than the dredge now in use could go, and thus a new dredge was required; the present dredge had been put into a thorough state of repair, and would be sent to the Fitzroy. He might also mention that the sum of £4,500, for constructing groins on the upper flats of that river, was merely an experiment; and if it was found that those groins were successful, a larger sum would be asked for in the next Estimates. It was the opinion of the Portmaster and others

competent to give an opinion, that the mere dredging of the Fitzroy was only throwing away money, as the channel would silt up immediately afterwards, and that groins must be constructed. If the experiment was successful, the Government would ask for a further sum, and endeavor to make the navigation of that river as good as it could be made. As regarded the Pioneer River, he could tell honorable members that unless there was a jetty a mile and a-half long, it would be impossible to make a good port; and the Government had been informed that the improvements already made had had a good effect in scouring the river, and that, when more was done, vessels would be enabled to go up to the town. He thought, after that explanation, that the honorable member would withdraw his amendment, as he had merely asked the Government to withdraw their Estimates on the strength of a slip of paper which had not passed that House, and which never would have passed it in the shape that it was in. He believed that, if honorable members would take into consideration the origin of the surplus, and if they looked at the mode in which it was proposed to be expended, they would agree with him that the Government should not assent to local demands, but should devote it to works of a generally improving character, which would indirectly benefit every portion of the community. The same remarks he had made in reference to the improvement of ports and harbors were applicable to immigration. It was true that the late honorable Treasurer proposed to expend £200,000 out of loan on public works; but the present Government had made as ample provision in their Estimates-in-Chief, guided, as they must necessarily always be, by the recommendations of their own officers. He hoped that the honorable member for Clermont, having attained the object of his amendment, would now withdraw it, and allow the House to go into committee.

Mr. PALMER said, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had endeavored to make a great deal of capital out of the fact that the Financial Separation Bill, introduced by him two years ago, was simply a piece of waste paper. It was not, he would admit, an Act of Parliament certainly; but he denied that the returns based upon it could be justly termed pieces of waste paper. Those returns had been based upon accounts kept in the Treasury, and the insinuation of the honorable member that they had been kept for purposes of his (Mr. Palmer's) own, was entirely uncalled for. He had no doubt that the accounts had been well kept, and his object—the only object he had in view—in having them kept was, that they should be of use for further legislation on the subject, and enable the Government, or private members of that House, to know what should be the future expenditure for different districts of the colony. The honorable Treasurer had furnished the

House with figures, and also with the information that a person could do anything with figures; but he would ask, whether more reliance was to be placed upon figures furnished by the honorable gentleman to suit his own purpose, than on accounts kept by clerks in the Treasury, who could have no possible object in view? He would not give sixpence for all the figures when they were got up for a special purpose; but he contended that the accounts kept by the Treasury, in accordance with an Executive minute based upon the Financial Separation Bill, were very much to be relied on—very much more than any figures furnished for a purpose. He had been a little astonished—that was to say, if he could be astonished at anything done by the present Government—at an honorable member of a liberal Government—at a Minister of the Crown—getting up in his place and preparing the country for separation. He maintained that separation was a mistake.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER: He would repeat it was a mistake, as small colonies would never command the respect and influence that large colonies would; separation was, in fact, a mistake in every way. He had considered the subject well and for a long time, and, as honorable members were aware, had formerly been an advocate for separation; but he now said that the idea of separating this colony was a mistake, as regarded the future of the colony. He maintained that if the country was only fairly governed, and attention paid to every portion of it—which he did not suppose for a single moment the present Government had any intention of doing, judging from the manner in which they proposed to dispose of the surplus revenue—he would say that if each part of the colony was treated properly, the idea of separating any portion of the territory was a mistake. But he did not go so far as to say that separation might not be a necessity. They had been told by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer that the central districts were bound to regard themselves as integral portions of the colony. But when they found that their interests were entirely ignored; when they found that out of this surplus of £240,000 the paltriest sum possible was put down for them; that for the main port, he might say the only export port of that large and important district, the sum put down was only £4,500, he did not believe the inhabitants of that district would consider they were at all well or fairly treated or liberally governed. Then it might become a necessity to agitate for separation, as had been done before when the northern districts were treated in the same way as they were now, by the same Minister who was at the head, of the present Government; and he was sorry indeed to see that honorable member's colleagues following in his tracks. That honorable member was like a Bourbon; he had forgotten noth-

ing, and he had learned nothing during his absence from office, and he (Mr. Palmer) was exceedingly sorry to see his colleagues following in his steps and endeavoring to inflict injustice on the northern portion of the colony. The proposition of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, with regard to separation, was merely a sop to the northern members, and he would be very much astonished if they could not see it in that way themselves. That honorable member knew as well as he did why the northern members wished for separation at Cape Palmerston, but he had no hesitation in saying that the question would never be considered by the Home Government until the opinion of the Government and of that House was clearly expressed respecting it; and although it might suit the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to draw the line of separation at Cape Palmerston, he was strongly inclined to believe that the residents of the northern and central districts would have a considerable voice in the question as to where separation should take place. He was as certain as he was standing there, that if they were to have a separation at all, Cape Palmerston would not be the only point at which there would be separation, unless a very different course of procedure was adopted with regard to the central districts. They had been told by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer that the proceedings on the question last night had decided the question where separation should take place, but he never heard the question of separation introduced into the matter as to where the fourth judge should reside. He understood the question last night related entirely to where the services of the judge would be most available, and he certainly heard no argument that he should reside at Bowen because separation was to take place at Cape Palmerston. He heard nothing whatever on that point last night, but it was introduced now; and however the honorable the Colonial Treasurer might hug himself with the belief that separation must be at Cape Palmerston, he believed that if there was to be separation at all, the opinions of the residents of the central districts of the colony would go a long way with the Imperial Government in dealing with the question. And after the manner in which those districts had been treated, he would be very much astonished if the question of separation—which had been dead, or rather sleeping, for years—did not again arise, and arise like a giant from sleep. He was perfectly certain that the residents of the central districts would not submit to the injustice which was tried to be inflicted upon them by the present Government and their supporters. They had a proposed expenditure of surplus revenue to the extent of £75,000 for immigration; and he did not object to that, but he hoped it would be appropriated so as to extend equal benefits to every district in the colony,

although, judging from other portions of the proposed expenditure, he was inclined to think that Rockhampton would not be favored with many of the immigrants. Then there was £25,000 for the improvement of harbors and rivers—for a dredge for the use of Brisbane. That a new dredge was wanted he was quite aware, because the present dredge was useless for the purpose of cutting the channel deeper than it was already cut except at Francis' channel, and there it could not be worked at more than half tide. He did not so much object to that, but when he found the agony piled up by an additional £32,000, he thought there was great reason to complain. He thought £25,000 for a dock could be very well done without, and that at all events a large proportion of that sum ought to go to swell the miserable pittance of £4,500 put down for Rockhampton. Including the £2,000 for telegraph extension from Springsure to Tambo, the proportion allowed to Rockhampton was about one-thirteenth of what was set down for Brisbane; and he would ask honorable members, no matter on which side of the House they sat, whether that was a fair proportion out of £240,000 to be proposed for the enormous and important district of which Rockhampton was the port? If they said it was, he could only say he very much regretted that the ties of attachment to the present Government were so strong that even a sense of justice could not tear them asunder. The injustice of the treatment of the various portions of that district by the other side of the House was so very glaring that it was hardly necessary to call the attention of the House to it. For Maryborough—which, although it was an important town, was certainly not so important as Rockhampton, and did not require so much to be done for it—they found the expenditure proposed was more than double that put down for Rockhampton. Then, at the Pioneer River, where a sum of about £7,000 had recently been expended, or was in the course of being expended, they had an additional £5,000 for the extension of the embankment, and £1,800 for a groin; and both of these places had money voted for bridges in the general Estimates. He thought, if honorable members would take the trouble to look into these matters, they would agree with him in thinking that the sum put down for Rockhampton was miserable—miserable in the extreme. To the sum put down for lighthouses in Torres Straits, and along the coast, he had no objection; he believed they were absolutely necessary; but with regard to the other items, he must repeat that the central districts were being badly and most unfairly treated by the Government. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had stated it was notorious that the expense of governing the northern portion of the colony was greater, owing to the sparse population, than the expense of governing the southern portion,

which was thickly populated; and he had no doubt the expense was greater per head, but he denied that it was greater in proportion to the extent of country, and to the amount of duty derived from it. He would like to know whether, in making his calculations, the honorable member took into account the expenses of forming new gold fields, of expeditions that had been out exploring the country, and the necessary expenses attendant upon the rush to the Palmer; because, if he did, he denied that that was a fair mode of calculating the expenditure.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The rush to the Palmer was in this year.

Mr. PALMER: Well, there were rushes before that in other parts of the colony. He thought this sum of £4,500 for Rockhampton might just as well be struck out of the Estimates as left at that amount, because it would only be sufficient to put a groin in the river, which the first fresh would wash away. It would, in fact, be money absolutely lost. The lowest estimate he had ever heard of for a groin in that river was £8,000, and the effect of putting down only £4,500 for that work would be simply throwing money away, because it would be washed away by the first fresh, and it would be no guide as to whether there was any improvement with regard to the depth of the river or not. He hoped the honorable member for Clermont, who, in the absence of the honorable member for Rockhampton, had adopted the motion, would press it to a division, and that honorable members would assist them in endeavoring to obtain a fair proportion of this expenditure for the central districts of the colony.

Mr. FITZGERALD said he could not see why the Government should object to make a correction in this proposal of theirs, any more than making a correction in the tariff which they introduced at the commencement of the session. If they made a mistake from want of experience or from some other cause, he did not see why they should not acknowledge it; and when it was fairly and clearly shown that great injustice would be done by the proposal the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had made, he thought they would be only acting gracefully by acknowledging the error and making some other proposition. That honorable gentleman, when he rose to address the House that evening, made some sort of an apology for any seeming discourtesy on his part, in not replying to his (Mr. Fitzgerald's) speech on a former occasion upon this subject. On that occasion the honorable member said, when he was leaving the House, that it was a great pity he (Mr. Fitzgerald) had brought forward such a statement, as he was having some returns prepared which would completely smash it up, and show that things were quite the reverse of what he had stated them to be. He was glad they had these returns, as they were something they could depend upon, coming from the Govern-

ment. But, what did he find on looking over these returns? That although they reduced the amounts of the balances rather considerably, in consequence of heavy local expenditure for police protection, telegraphic extension, and the management of the gold fields, which was heavier than he anticipated, still he found, in the main, the calculations he had brought forward were correct. As things now stood, it appeared that during the last three years—1871, 1872, and 1873—there was an amount of nearly £100,000 taken from the northern portion of the colony in excess of what ought to have been taken. He did not wish to cloud the northern view of the case too much by taking into consideration, just now, the claims of the central division of the colony; but it appeared, from the returns which had been taken from accounts which the late Government caused to be kept in a certain way, that during the last three years a certain surplus had arisen in the various divisions of the colony. This surplus appeared to be as follows:—Southern division, £84,000; Wide Bay and Burnett, £82,000; central division, £38,000; and northern division, £53,000. Now, if it was intended by the present Administration to do justice, which it was hoped it was their intention to do, they ought, certainly, to have adopted that basis, because they could show no good reason for not doing so. It was of no use to say that this Financial Separation Bill was so much waste paper—that it never passed beyond the second reading; because, if the principles of it, by which the public accounts were kept, were just and right, there was no reason why those principles should not be fully carried out at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not just.

Mr. FITZGERALD: The honorable member said they were not just, but he contended that not only were they just, as far as they went, to the colony in general, but that they ought to be a great deal more liberal to the particular portion of the colony which he, and some other honorable members, represented. He did not wish at this time to become the advocate of the interests of the central districts, which had much more able advocates in the House than he was, and he would confine himself to the part of the colony he had the honor to represent, and try and explain the reasons why he thought the proposal of the honorable member for Clermont was reasonable; and that it was time they should know how the expenditure of the colony was to be regulated in future. The surplus which had arisen during the last three years, was stated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to have arisen from loan account; but he thought it was not worthy of that honorable gentleman to try to blind the question by introducing such a subject as that, because the money was raised under a certain Loan Act for £400,000, which was transferred to the consolidated revenue in

order to make good the deficiencies of several previous years. That being so, they must all know that that matter was settled, because the interest on that loan had been charged ever since in the general expenditure of the colony, and they were paying for it at the present time; so that to found any argument on that was not at all just, and it was clear this surplus had arisen from excess of revenue over expenditure during the last three years. Then he found, on reference to the returns, that these large sums, which ought to be placed to the credit of the different districts, made together something like £257,000; and he believed the difference between that sum and the £240,000 was mainly to be attributed to the manipulation of land orders, which, although they were reckoned in one way, were not reckoned as cash, and did not increase the balances at the Treasury. The principal reason why they felt so much aggrieved by the appropriation of these large sums was this: that whilst the southern division had credit to the extent of £84,000 the honorable the Colonial Treasurer proposed to spend upon local works something like £70,000, or nearly the whole amount that that division could claim, leaving only a small balance of about £14,000 to be thrown into the general fund for general purposes. Then, when they looked at the Wide Bay and Burnett division, they found £18,000 proposed to be expended in local works, against a credit shown by the returns of £82,000, leaving a credit balance of £64,000 to be expended in local improvements; and he contended that they had as much right to get that amount as the member of a partnership had a right to draw a similar sum if it stood to his credit. There was no reason why that sum should be thrown into any fund for general purposes; but, on the contrary, the sums required for those purposes ought to be obtained by loan, the interest on which should be borne by all the divisions of the colony. Then, in the central division, of which Rockhampton was the capital, he found there was a balance of some £38,000, and it was proposed to expend a sum of £9,800, and in reality only £4,500 was put down. He thought something like £5,000 would be taken out of the total sum for railway expenditure; that would be about the amount which would probably be spent in railway surveys and plant, and deducting that, it left about £28,000, which ought to be made available for such local works and improvements as they thought necessary for their accommodation. Then he came to the northern division of the colony, and against a balance of £53,000, the Government proposed to expend £13,000, leaving nearly £40,000 to the credit of that division. Now, these different balances made up a sum of £146,000, and he now complained, as he did before, that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, with large-minded liberality, wished to impound and to appropriate the whole of that amount for the general

purposes of the colony. He maintained that such a system was most unjust, and, if it was to be carried on and enforced by the votes of the majority of that House, it was time the people of the North sought another remedy, and the only remedy they could seek—entire separation. He saw by later returns, that the balance due to the North was very much greater than £53,000; that, in reality, from their point of view, it amounted to, at least, £98,000 or £100,000. And even making liberal allowances, on account of some items which were objected to by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, they had still some £17,000 in excess of the returns shown by the financial separation accounts of 1872. This £146,000 ought, he maintained, to be placed to be credit of the different portions of the colony in which the balance had arisen, and any other way of dealing with it was most unfair. To say that it must be spent in lighthouses, telegraphic extension, and immigration, was simply to give to the southern division all it was entitled to, and then to appropriate the £146,000 of balances for general wants, and the same division would be the largest participator in that distribution. He denied, altogether, that immigration could be looked upon as a national work, because people generally remained in that portion of the colony which they first came to, and the northern portion of the colony got very few additions to its population from the south, except when diggings attracted them from there and from the other colonies. If the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would ask the House to assent to a loan for these purposes, he admitted it would be very proper; it was very necessary to have lighthouses, telegraphic extension, and immigration, and if he had proposed to take a certain *pro rata* contribution out of the balances due to the different divisions of the colony and use it for these general public purposes, he would have no objection, because the contribution from the northern division would be something like £13,000, and they would have about £40,000 left. He contended that as long as this system of putting down sums according as works were required, without having any reference to where the money was raised, would not content the large divisions of the colony, the people of which felt that they could have a separate existence, and that they were in no way connected with the southern portion of the colony, except by very temporary bonds. When the honorable the Colonial Treasurer spoke of national works, and ranked amongst them improvements to harbors and rivers, it was really going too far. They must be less intelligent than that honorable member supposed them to be, if they could, for one moment, think that any expenditure of this sort in the Brisbane river, no matter in what way it was spent, could benefit the people of the North. It was well known

that they derived no benefit whatever either from the railways at present in existence or from the improvement of harbors and rivers; in fact, Sydney was more the capital than Brisbane, so far as they were concerned, because they had more trade and communication with that port. He had now to advert to the returns which had been lately furnished by the Government; and it would be seen from them that the average expenditure per head of the population, in 1871, was put down at £2 18s. 11d. in the southern division; whereas, in the North, it was £5 11s. But he took exception to that calculation altogether, and he did think it was very unfair of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer to put it in that shape, because he must have known that, in addition to the £324,000 stated to have been the expenditure south of Cape Palmerston in 1871, there ought to be added £180,000 for interest on local loans in that year, and these loans really represented public works which, in place of being made from year to year, were ordered in advance. There could be no doubt that that £180,000 was a contribution from general revenue for public works in the southern division, and that, added to the admitted average of £2 18s. 11d., brought the real average up to about £4 10s. per head for the southern division; whereas in the North, by adding the interest on local loans, the expenditure was something like £5 13s. per head; so that the difference was really not so very great, and it was clear that the expense of governing the southern division was much greater than the honorable the Colonial Treasurer stated. That honorable member had mentioned the question of Separation, and he had led the House to believe that he, for one, would not be unwilling to support such a measure, if Cape Palmerston was to be taken as the southern boundary of the new colony; but he hoped he did not think the representatives of northern constituencies would be content with a promise of that kind without it being accompanied, at the same time, by something in the way of substantial justice during the time that portion of the colony was obliged to remain in connection with the southern division. He believed the question of Separation was one which must come on very shortly, and one which would force itself on the consideration of that Assembly. There were many questions of great importance to people living in the tropics which appeared to be strongly opposed by the Government and southern members, and which, if not reasonably dealt with by that House, would certainly inflict so heavy a blow on the residents north of Cape Palmerston, who were engaged in agricultural and other pursuits, that it would drive them to the ultimate resource of obtaining separation as the only means of redress. But, so long as they remained a portion of the colony, they should expect to get justice, and they had asked, over and over again, that some intelli-

gent principle should be adopted for the apportioning of surplus revenue as well as the taxation of the colony—that these things should be on some clearly defined and fair basis. The plan of putting down thousands of pounds for this work and that work without attempting in any way to deal with the question of balances which had arisen from the progress and prosperity of the colony, was one he must most decidedly dissent from, and one which he must oppose at every stage, because the people he represented were well up to the question; they knew that exactly the same thing was going on with respect to them that the present colony of Queensland had to complain of with regard to New South Wales, when there was a total absence of any desire on the part of the Legislature of that colony to do justice. Of course, under these circumstances, the desire for separation must increase from day to day until the people would not be able to stand it any longer, and in the end, the agitation would operate in the same way as it did in the case of New South Wales. On referring to the returns, and making the necessary additions, the total expenditure in the northern districts for 1871, including a fair proportion, 12 per cent., for the expenses of the general government, was £75,000 against a revenue of £98,000, leaving a balance in favor of those districts of £23,000. In 1872, the balance in favor of the North was nearly £50,000; and, in 1873, it was a little over £27,000. These figures showed the actual expenditure in the northern division of the colony, and were not from any calculation which the honorable the Colonial Treasurer said could be so readily made; and the only question between that honorable member and the members representing northern constituencies was in relation to the revenue for 1871, which he said was excessively estimated at £98,000. The item objected to by that honorable member appeared to be the addition of twenty per cent. for Customs duties, and they were willing to make it ten per cent., although he was sure it was more than that, because, in the year 1868, the then member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, and himself, obtained from the Collector of Customs an estimate which made the duties collected at Brisbane as 20 per cent. of the entire amount collected at the separate custom houses in the North. Another item objected to was, that they should not claim credit on excise and duty and postage stamps; that in place of that revenue being in proportion to one-twelfth of the population it was very much less. They were willing to concede this, although they maintained it was not fair to ask them to do so, because the adult males, who formed the principal part of the population of the North, did not write fewer letters, or have less business transactions than people in the other parts of the colony. There was one good explanation as to why not many duty stamps were

sold; and that was, that most goods sent up from the southern division of the colony were drawn against, and the duty stamps were procured in the south. There were very few bills stamped by the persons who consumed the goods; they were generally stamped before they were sent up, and charged to the consumers. That was one good reason why stamp receipts did not show as much as they ought to do; but, nevertheless, he contended that any person acquainted with the operations of business and trade would admit that there was not a less proportion of business done in those districts than in the other portions of the colony. There might be something more paid for transfers of real property, and, making these reductions, it would take about £25,000 off the £98,000 or £99,000, and leave a clear balance in their favor of about £74,000. There was no way in which the matter could be looked at without the great injustice that was being done to the North being apparent; and he thought the representatives of the central district had an equally good right to complain of the unjust manner in which they were treated. He maintained that in place of the figures he had before quoted being completely smashed up by the statement of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, they were, to a great extent, verified, and at least the northern division was entitled to a clear balance of £74,000; and he had no doubt that if the whole matter was gone into by some impartial persons, they would make the sum very nearly £100,000. He should feel it necessary to oppose a great many items in this proposed distribution of surplus revenue, because, as he said before, the injustice was manifest. He was sorry to hear from the late Premier that his opinion was so much adverse to separation, because he thought everything that had occurred lately must show that their demands could not fairly be refused. That honorable gentleman must also be well aware that it would be quite impossible to get representatives who would really represent the North to come down here and spend month after month, to the total neglect and, perhaps, ruin of their own business, when they ought not to spend anything like that time. It was not in human nature to stand it, and it was a thing which could not be borne much longer. There were many other good reasons which he could advance, but which he scarcely thought he would be right in bringing forward on the present occasion. He hoped that many honorable members of that House would be good enough to say what they wished to see done with regard to the question of Separation, and what side they were likely to take; because, by so doing, they would simplify matters very much;—because then some arrangement might be made by which business could be carried on, so far as the southern portion of the colony was concerned, in whatever way was thought

fit; and the representatives of the northern constituencies, if they had in view the acquisition of the management of their own affairs, would not take so much interest in general matters, or make themselves so obnoxious as they should feel bound to do under the present state of things.

Mr. DE SARGE said he took a very different view with regard to the surplus revenue to that expressed by many previous speakers. They should, he thought, look to the origin of this surplus, and when they did so he could not see why the Government should be in such a hurry to spend it. He could not imagine why, when they had a surplus of £240,000, derived from prosperous times and good administration of the affairs of the country, they should be at once desirous of squandering it away. No sooner had they met together than they were called upon to dispose of this surplus, derived, in a great measure, from heavy taxation; but he maintained the very first thing that should be done under such circumstances was to reduce taxation, and not to squander this money away in sops to districts represented by certain members, or to centralize the whole expenditure of the colony in one spot—Brisbane. No one, so far as he was aware, asked for this expenditure; they had hardly labor enough in the colony to complete the public works at present in progress, and yet they were asked to vote enormous sums for additional works. He thought they ought to rest and be thankful for a time, and endeavor by wise legislation and good administration to advance the interests of the colony. It appeared to him that the whole of this surplus was looked upon in something the same spirit that a schoolboy regarded a sum of money which he had in his pocket—that it was burning until he spent it. He thought they ought to take time to consider carefully the wants of the whole colony, which the Government had not had time to find out during the short recess which took place after their accession to office. He also took exception to the manner in which it was proposed to distribute this surplus. He believed there was a strong majority in the House in favor of immigration; but he took an opposite view, and was thoroughly opposed to the principle of forced immigration. He was satisfied that if the working men of this colony were appealed to, they would also be found to be opposed to that system;—that they were opposed to being taxed for the introduction of immigrants who would compete with them. He believed that most practical men, such as mechanics and others, if asked if they were willing to be heavily taxed for the forced introduction of immigrants, such as he had seen arriving since he had been in Brisbane, they would say, "We are better without them, and we are not going to be taxed to bring these roughs into the colony; and they can get land orders which we cannot get ourselves." He maintained

that this was another injustice to the good honest old colonist, and that they would be doing him the greatest injustice if they asked him to pay further taxation, and squandered this £75,000 in paying for a stream of forced immigration which, probably, sooner or later, found its way to the other colonies. He objected to that item, but he knew he should be in a minority. He knew very well that having amended the electoral laws of the colony, they must submit to the result; but they should always remember the fact, that they had one-third of the members of the House sitting on the Government benches who represented only one interest, namely, that of Brisbane; and therein was the gist of the distribution of this surplus. The next item was for a new dredge, and they had been told by the leader of that side of the House that this was necessary; and of course, if they were going to keep up everything initiated in Brisbane—there were two bridges for instance—there would be no end to the expense. As far as he could see, they never considered for one moment the way in which the public expenditure was directed, in any shape or form. It only needed any practical man, of ordinary intelligence, to travel from here to Ipswich, to see the extraordinary waste of public money that was going on. Why should not the line have been brought to the other side of the river, and the terminus placed almost at their doors, and thereby effect a saving of £50,000 for the bridge at Oxley?

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government Benches: Hear, hear.

MR. DE SATGE: He did not care for one side of the river more than the other, and as an independent member of that House he would not for one moment, had he been in the House at the time, have consented to make two bridges when one would have been sufficient. He maintained that any man of common sense could see that the line could have been brought to South Brisbane, and that they could have done quite well without the unnecessary expenditure of £50,000 for another bridge. There could be no doubt that this money was wasted, and they were now asked to waste more. He had inquired from persons acquainted with such matters what would be the probable cost of a dock, and they told him that a dock, once commenced, there was no end to the expense; it might cost £100,000, and they began by spending £25,000, and if £50,000 or £75,000 more was necessary, having begun it they must finish it. He believed that, at the rate they were going on, the expenditure of the colony would be doubled in a very short time. He maintained that in the whole of this proposed expenditure the greatest injustice was attempted to be done to every portion of the colony; and he would, therefore, support the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont. He thought that not only should

this proposed distribution be taken back by the Government, but there was no reason why it should not be postponed for twelve months; and, in the meantime, they could consider and determine what was most required for the general benefit and advancement of the country. As far as he was concerned, he thought the extension of telegraphic communication, the lighting of the coast, and works of that nature, were matters they should deal with in a generous spirit; but, as for spending the enormous sum of £75,000 for immigration, he would oppose it to the utmost of his power. He was certain that most honorable members looked upon the question from a Brisbane point of view, and he knew the way in which residents here expected to influence honorable members. It was, no doubt, delightful to go about with nothing but luxury and pleasure staring them in the face, and he was sure that country members, sooner or later, must devote themselves to the aggrandizement of this town, forgetting that it was detrimental to the whole of the colony, and that it was opposed to the promises they made to their constituents. He thought the whole subject ought to be withdrawn for the present, and, while he would not attribute motives in any way, he would say that whatever motive the Government might have in introducing it at this time, they could well afford to wait until the end of the year, or until another session, to determine how the surplus was to be spent. There was no immediate hurry for it; they had hardly enough men to carry on the public works at present in progress, and there was no necessity to commence these additional works at once. They should, therefore, leave the disposal of this money until they found out what were the real requirements of the colony. With regard to separation, it appeared to him a question of such magnitude that it did not come within the scope of the subject before the House. But honorable members had been asked to express their opinions respecting it; and he was sure that every true-minded man must see that the day was not far distant when they would have separation in this colony; and he saw no way of hastening that separation more than by spending these enormous sums, which must give rise to jealousy throughout the whole colony. He thought there could be no doubt on the mind of any one that the central districts, as was so ably pointed out by the honorable members for Clermont and Port Curtis, had been most unjustly treated, if it was only in the road votes and other votes. But, honorable members on that side of the House had no power to make any opposition with the slightest hope of success; and he believed that any attempt to increase the sum of £4,500, set down for Rockhampton, would only be a waste of time; because, no doubt, the Government had made up their minds to pass the whole schedule as it stood. He wished, however, to place on

record his opinion—that the spending of this sum was uncalled for, and that, if the whole colony was polled, the people would say this was the time to try and retrench instead of squandering money.

Mr. BELL said he regretted very much to have had to listen to so many mistakes, in so short a time, as had been made by the honorable member for Normanby. He could not even agree with him as to the luxury of living in Brisbane. Now, that honorable member spoke chiefly on three points; the first was, that this £240,000 should not be spent; the second, as to the expenditure for immigration, which he disapproved of; and the third, as to the unnecessary expenditure upon the railway and the bridge. Now, as to the money proposed to be expended, he thought the Government were perfectly right in their proposition. This surplus arose in a principal degree from a sum of money which was borrowed ostensibly with the intention of being recouped from revenue; and that, upon the face of it, clearly pointed to the honesty, if it were nothing else, of this expenditure out of loan which was promised to the House when the Treasury bills were voted and passed. That in itself, he thought, completely set aside the argument of the honorable member for Normanby; and he would also point out that if this money was not spent out of surplus, it must be spent out of loan, and the money would have to be borrowed, because, although that honorable member did not admit that these were necessary works, he believed the majority of the House would admit they were necessary, and they were, therefore, only anticipating loan expenditure by the expenditure of this surplus money. On the question of immigration he also entirely disagreed with that honorable member, because it was not merely a question whether the working men of this colony were disinclined to pay a fair quota of taxation towards the importation of immigrants who might compete with them in their work. That was not the question; the question was whether they were going to use their best endeavors to make this a large and important colony, and, eventually, a nation. He knew the honorable member for Darling Downs did not approve of these views of his, which he believed were also the views of many other honorable members in that House; but, nevertheless, the question was, whether they should legislate only for themselves, in a dog-in-the-manger manner, or try to make this a large and important colony; so that it was altogether taken out of the question as to how much the working portion of the community felt it a hardship to be taxed for immigration. With regard to the railway bridge, he also thoroughly disagreed with that honorable member. He was not prepared to say how far the engineers were right or wrong in the course they had adopted with regard to the line, or to give any opinion so far as profes-

sional matters were concerned with regard to the expenditure, but his own opinion was that the original site at South Brisbane was the spot to take it to. The engineers employed were not trammelled in the slightest degree; they were told to take the best line they could find, and to take it entirely on their own responsibility. He admitted that a non-professional man would reasonably come to the same conclusion as the honorable member for Normanby; but he found himself, as most laymen generally did, compelled to accept the professional opinion of those who were qualified to decide the point. There was no help for it; and it had not yet been shown by honorable members opposite, and the honorable the Minister for Works in particular, where the increased expenditure existed. It had not yet been shown, and until it was shown, the opinion of any lay member of the House was worth nothing as against the opinion of a professional man. The honorable member for Bowen had appealed to honorable members to express their opinion to-night with regard to the question of Separation; he thought it was a very important matter indeed, and he was quite prepared to give his opinion respecting it. He regretted very much to hear the slightest taint of an opinion from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in favor of separation. He looked upon that as one of the greatest mistakes any man in the position of a politician or a legislator could possibly be guilty of. He considered everything else was small and insignificant compared with the importance of keeping this great colony intact. There was nothing in the argument that it was too wide spread to be properly governed, because there was nothing in the world that could not be managed now-a-days. It only required competent Ministers, who would do their duty without prejudice or anything like a feeling of jealousy. He submitted that with good and careful management the whole affairs of the colony could be regulated; but, at the same time, he thought that if such Estimates as those now before the House were characteristic of the justice intended to be dealt out to the northern and central districts, no such good management could be expected from the present Government. The amount set down for the central district was only £4,500, although that district was as much entitled to its due proportion of expenditure as any other part of the colony, and this was an injustice which the Government had not been able to account for. He admitted, with the honorable member for Normanby, the great difficulty which existed in carrying any motion which emanated from that side of the House. Of course, he knew what the position of a minority was in comparison with a strong majority, and perhaps, in consequence of the existence of that majority, the motion now before the House might not be carried; but although he could hazard that opinion, he could not account for the possibility of the

northern members voting against it. He would ask those honorable members, how could any one of them vote against it? He knew, so strong were their ties to party, that they might feel that, notwithstanding the interests and claims of the North, they might vote against it; but he hoped they would not, and if the motion were lost, he should consider it his duty to put it in another shape, which, he believed, he would be found quite competent to do. He would frame a resolution with the object of adding £20,000 to the sum proposed for the central district, to be taken out of the other items in the schedule, at the discretion of the Government. He hoped, however, that with the assistance of the northern members, this amendment would be carried; and if it should be, he agreed with the honorable member for Bowen, that it would not place the Government in a worse position than they were placed in with regard to the tariff. He thought there were sufficient grounds for them to take back the schedule and reconsider it.

Mr. STEWART said his principal object in rising was to correct a mistake which had been made by the honorable member for Port Curtis and some other honorable members opposite, when they said that £4,500 was the only portion of the £240,000 proposed to be expended in the central district. Now, he took it, that out of this £240,000 they had first to deduct £75,000 for immigration, which he understood was to be spent over the whole colony. Then there was £8,000 for a lighthouse at Cape Capricorn; a further sum of £6,300 for telegraphic extension, and also £850 for a pilot station at Keppel Bay; which, with the £3,000 for water supply, made a total of £22,650. In addition to that, there was a share of the £23,000 for the rolling stock of the railway and railway surveys, and he thought that made up a very fair sum for the central district—£22,650 out of £165,000, without calculating the rolling stock or railway surveys. It appeared to him that there was quite as much difficulty in dealing with a surplus as there was in the Treasurer coming before the House with a deficit; and he thought there was something due to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer for having prepared this estimate in the way he had done. He had devoted the money to matters which were of national importance; and, in carrying out this, he was doing that which would benefit the whole colony. He did not agree with the honorable member for Bowen, that Sydney was the capital rather than Brisbane; and he thought unless they were united and all pulled together, they would do very little good. He believed the success of America had in a great measure been due to every citizen feeling that he was an American, and not belonging to any other country; they hung together and pulled together, and no doubt if the same were done

here the colony would progress and become great.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and carried on division:—

Ayes, 20.	Noes, 13.
Mr Macalister	Mr. Palmer
" Stephens	" Thompson
" Hemmatt	" Graham
" W. Scott	" Bell
" McIlwraith	" Royds
" Miles	" Wienholt
" Ivory	" Macrossan
" Griffith	" MacDonald
" Nind	" Hodgkinson
" Morgan	" De Satgé
" Fryar	" Fitzgerald
" Lord	" Morehead
" Beattie	" J. Scott.
" Dickson	
" J. Thorn	
" Fraser	
" Groom	
" Foote	
" Stewart	
" Pechey.	

Mr. BEATTIE said that, although he had not been able to support the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont, believing as he did that a very large amount of the proposed expenditure was for works really necessary; still there were some points on which he did not altogether agree with the proposition of the honorable the Treasurer. The first item on the estimate was for immigration purposes; and, in regard to that, he must say that he differed altogether from the conclusion arrived at by the honorable member for Normanby, because he believed that no money could be so well spent as that £75,000 for immigration. The next item was for harbors and rivers; and he noticed that £25,000 was put down for the purchase of a new dredge, to be used, he presumed, in the southern portion of the colony. He would like to know from the honorable Treasurer whether it was the intention of the Government to carry out the widening of Francis' Channel, and to make it more available for vessels of large size, such as might be expected to arrive—steamships 300 feet long, for instance; because, if it was their intention to do so, such a dredge as the one proposed would be necessary; but if, on the other hand, it was not their intention, the present dredge would answer all purposes for the next two years at least. He considered the sum of £25,000 for a dock at Brisbane most necessary, as he believed that the port of Brisbane should have some convenience for docking vessels, instead of allowing them to go to the southern colonies to be docked; but he very much doubted whether the amount set down would be adequate for the purposes intended. The next item was for dredging the river Mary, and for a steamtug for the port of Maryborough; and following that was a sum of £4,500 for improving the river Fitzroy. Now, he had no hesitation in saying that he thoroughly agreed with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that that amount was far too little

to expend upon that river, although that opinion had been modified somewhat by the explanation of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, that it was simply intended as an experiment. He thought it would be found a very expensive experiment. He considered it was a perfect waste of money to dredge the Fitzroy, as it was a mass of quicksand. In regard to coast lights, he must differ from the honorable member for Brisbane, who charged those lights to the local expenditure of the central division, for he was sure that no one would think of setting down the light at Cape Capricorn and at Keppel Bay as such a charge.

Mr. STEWART rose to explain. He had pointed out that over £22,000 had been spent on the port of Rockhampton alone, and—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is interfering with the order of debate, and it is inconvenient of the honorable member to do so.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had understood the honorable member to say that instead of Rockhampton having only £4,500 it had received £22,000, and the honorable member had made up that amount by including in it the lighthouse at Cape Capricorn and Keppel Bay; he submitted it would be unfair to charge them to local expenditure, as they were works for the general benefit of the colony. He, therefore, agreed with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that Rockhampton had some cause for complaint. After the statement which had been made by the honorable the Treasurer, in reference to the sum of £4,500, that it was only for making an experiment, although he had promised to assist northern members in getting justice done to their districts, he should, after the pledge of the honorable Treasurer, withdraw his opposition to the estimate.

Mr. THOMPSON said he did not rise for the purpose of offering any opposition, but he wished to know why Rockhampton should be placed alone in regard to its water supply. It was well known that they were about to have a water supply at Ipswich, and he would like to know whether they were to be placed on a different footing from the people at Rockhampton.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the vote was to complete the work at Rockhampton, the first portion of which was voted by the previous Parliament.

Mr. THOMPSON would like to know if Ipswich would be put on the same footing as Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The money was voted for Ipswich last session.

Mr. MILES said he was glad to see that there was a prospect of getting rid of the surplus revenue, and he would pledge his word that it would be a long time before the House would again be troubled with the disposal of another surplus. He could hardly

help being surprised with the arguments of the honorable member for Fortitude Valley; that honorable member first voted against the amendment and then came forward to find fault because too small a sum had been put down for Rockhampton. On the whole he had not much fault to find with the manner in which the disposition of the surplus money was made; and he could have warned honorable members on the Opposition side of the House, that they need not have expected to get much, as he recollected that when he sat with the Opposition he could not get any at all. He was glad to see that the honorable member who had succeeded him, was going in a contrary direction. In regard to water supply, he thought some rule should be laid down, as he noticed that interest was charged by the Government on some loans and no interest on others; he did not see why Rockhampton should pay five per cent. whilst Brisbane and other places were not charged anything. It was not worth while to longer take up the time of the House, as he thought, on the whole, the division was a fair one. It was true that Rockhampton might come off second best, but it had had its lion's share, and was after all a most hungry constituency. The late honorable member who represented it, always used to tell his constituents that he had got them so much money, and with that they always appeared to be satisfied.

Mr. J. SCOTT: The honorable member who had just sat down had given it as his opinion, that the division of the surplus was a very fair one, and he could easily understand the honorable member doing so, as he was, at present, a southern member. It was, however, of no use going into the matter, as taking away the £75,000 for immigration, there was still £165,000 to be divided through the districts, of which £70,000 was set down for the South; £4,500 for the Central, and £31,800 for the North. But leaving Rockhampton out of the question altogether, for it was not the town they had to consider, but the central district, he must certainly say, that that district appeared to be jumped upon by the Government, in every way, and by their supporters. If to that £4,500 anything had been specially given to the central districts, it would be different; but all that could be put down for them was in the way of general expenditure, such as lighthouses and telegraph extension. How the honorable member for Brisbane could make out that that district was to be given £22,000, he was at a loss to conceive.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: £24,000.

Mr. J. SCOTT: That made the matter so much worse, as he found that it was all for works of a general character. Even granting the sum to be £24,000, the difference between the sums allotted to the North and South, and that allotted to the central district, was something monstrous.

Mr. PETTIGREW said that he could not see that the central division had anything to complain of; on the contrary, Rockhampton had as much as Brisbane. Immigration was required for the whole colony; there certainly was a new dredge proposed for Brisbane, but the one there at present was to be sent to Rockhampton. Then again, the proposed dock was for the general benefit, as there were now mail steamers coming to the colony, and the only reason given for their not remaining at Brisbane was, because there was no place where they could go to be cleaned. Why, the colony suffered a great loss by those vessels not stopping, in the supply of coal to them, &c. He believed that the £25,000 for a dock would be recouped in a few years, and that it was as much a general work as lighthouses were. He would just see what Brisbane was to have—it was to have a dredge against one to be sent to Rockhampton, which was also to have £4,500 for the improvement of its river. Now, that was a very nice sum to be spent on an experiment, and which would be thrown into the sacred waters of the Fitzroy; but, independent of that sum, if the experiment was successful, more money was to be given. He had been sorry to hear the speech of the honorable member for Port Curtis, who appeared to have spoken merely for the purpose of getting up opposition. That honorable member accused the Government of giving too much money to Brisbane; but if the honorable member would refer to his own estimates, he would find that he proposed to spend a large sum of money in making wharves at the narrowest part of the river, which would interfere considerably with the traffic. With regard to the other items, he might say that he did not object to the central district having its fair share of telegraphs, railways, and everything; but he thought there was one place which had a right to complain, and that was the unfortunate town of Ipswich. The people of that town had had a railway forced upon them, which would spoil their coal trade—a thing that was done on purpose—and on the whole, they were the worst treated of any. He must also complain of the treatment of his own electorate (Stanley). £24,000 was given away to the central district; bridges were to be made everywhere—even on the Logan, where there was no traffic—and yet nothing was proposed for his district. He, however, would not follow the example of other honorable members and complain; he would not follow the example of the honorable member for Bowen and enter into a long dissertation upon Ipswich grievances. That honorable member had talked about northern grievances and separation, but he (Mr. Pettigrew) believed that the greatest grievance the House had to complain of—and the reason why he would vote for separation—was the everlasting cry of grievance raised by the honorable member for Bowen. That honorable member expressed a wish that the Gov-

ernment should bring forward a Bill based upon intelligent principles, but it was of no use for the honorable member to come to that House, night after night, with his grievances, especially after the North had obtained so many thousands of pounds for their districts. It was very evident that all districts could not get the money, and he must say that he thought the Government had acted very fairly. He did not wish to say anything about the remarks of the honorable member for Normanby, who talked about the Government throwing out sops; nor would he refer to the honorable member's remarks about immigration; but he certainly agreed with what the honorable gentleman said about railways, as he thought that if ever a colony was cursed with anything, this colony had been with its railways and the enormous sums they had cost. He trusted that if ever another line was made, it would be upon some different principle, and that they would not be taken round towns as they had been, and ruin them as Brisbane would be ruined. He thought they should now vote the money as proposed.

Mr. FRYAR thought that after the very generous manner in which honorable members had voted a million and a-quarter of money, some of which was for very useless purposes; it was a great pity that there should be any difficulty in voting the money now in question, more especially as there were circumstances which precluded the probability of its being devoted to the relief of the taxpayers at the present time. He had no hesitation, whatever, in saying that he should assist the honorable the Colonial Treasurer in getting rid of the £240,000 in making useful works. He did not mean to say that he thought it was fairly distributed, especially as far as the southern districts were concerned, but he would sooner see the other districts get it all than that it should be wasted. He would sooner see it all spent on the North than the honorable member for Normanby come down, next session, and ask to have increases to salaries voted, which, when once voted, were taken out of the hands of Ministers altogether. The honorable member for Fortitude Valley expressed an opinion that £25,000 would not be sufficient to construct a dock; but he (Mr. Fryar) had gone into figures, and was satisfied it could be made for that amount. It might be that that work was intended as a sop to the honorable Minister for Lands for having lost the railway through South Brisbane; but whether that was the case or not, it would be a work of great benefit to the colony. He would promise the honorable Treasurer that, so far as he was concerned, there would be no trouble in getting the estimate through the committee.

Mr. IVORY said there was an old adage that—"When rogues fall out, honest men get their own."

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is out of order in alluding to honorable members as rogues.

Mr. IVORY was not aware that he had done so, nor had he meant to apply the adage to honorable members. As far as the representatives of the central district were concerned, they should remember that only a short time ago, they constituted the northern district, or part of it, and he had a very vivid recollection of other districts being jumped upon by them. They were now in the position of sitting between two stools, as the colony had now increased so largely northwards, and they would find that they could never get another farthing of expenditure. They had been told by an honorable member that West Moreton and Ipswich were the worst treated districts of the colony; but, he thought, if there was one place which, so to speak, had been "cottoned" to more than any others, it was West Moreton. He must say that he was sorry the honorable member for Maryborough was not present to take his part in the present discussion, as he did not think that place had received one single farthing more than it deserved; more especially after looking at the return of the expenditure on harbors and rivers, since the date of separation, which had been laid on the table. By that, he found that only £8000 had been expended on Maryborough, whilst £14,000 had been expended on Rockhampton. Now, although Rockhampton had outstripped Maryborough as regarded trade, yet Maryborough was a place of longer standing; therefore, he did not think it was now proposed to give it more than it deserved. He must say, as regarded the statement of proposed expenditure for the southern ports, that he considered they got rather more than their share; he was rather against the item of a dock, as he could not believe that £25,000 would be sufficient to build it; in fact, he thought £125,000 would be nearer the mark. He had merely made those remarks to vindicate Maryborough from the charge of getting more than its share, and to inform honorable members for the central district that, having eaten their pudding, they could not expect more.

Mr. MOREHEAD had certainly listened with a great deal of surprise to the honorable member for the Burnett. It was the old adage of asking for bread and being given a stone. He had expected that the honorable member who had suffered from what the central district was now suffering—that the honorable member would have sympathised with them; but, instead of that, they were only reviled. The honorable member for Brisbane had tried to make out that a very large proportion of the money—something like 20 per cent.—was to be spent on the central districts; but he (Mr. Morehead) failed to see how that would be. He quite agreed with the remarks which had been made about Rockhampton, as he had always looked upon that place as the daughter of the horse-leech who was constantly crying out for more blood; but why, he would ask, should the central districts suffer because

they had such a step-daughter as Rockhampton? He thought that only a very small portion of the amount mentioned by the honorable member for Brisbane could be fairly charged to the central district; in fact, all that could be charged was the expenditure upon the river Fitzroy. Telegraphic extension could hardly be charged to it, as a large portion of the money for that purpose would be spent in what was now called the northern district; but even supposing it was a large amount, telegraphs were public works, for the public benefit generally, and could not be looked upon as improvements to any one particular district. He thought the House was too just to pass the Estimates as they stood; it was a sharing of plunder, of a sum of money which, in his opinion, should have been very differently dealt with; namely, instead of spending it as it was proposed, it should have been devoted to reducing taxation. With regard to the present dredge, they had been told that when the new one was made, the one now in use was to be sent to the North; but nothing had been said as to the exact place it was to go to; he supposed the Government were waiting for that to be decided by the House, in the same way as they had on the previous evening waited for the committee to say where the residence of the fourth judge should be. They allowed the matter to remain in a state of suspense, like Mahomet's coffin. Why had they not said, instead of allowing honorable members to do so, that it was to be sent to Rockhampton? He certainly could not see the justice of the proposed division; and, when he saw the honorable member for the Burnett chuckling over it, and the gloom upon the brow of the honorable member for Burke, he felt that the central district would have the support of the northern members. He believed that the Government would be wise to withdraw their estimate for the purpose of reconsidering it.

Mr. GROOM thought that if any one district had reason to complain of the proposed division, it was that of the Darling Downs; as there was not a single shilling put down for them, although he believed it was owing principally to the resources of that district that the Government were now in possession of a surplus—owing to the rich tin discoveries which had been made there. It was somewhat remarkable that, from a return laid on the table, it appeared that the total Government expenditure at Stanthorpe amounted only to £780, whilst the revenue from that district could not be much short of £250,000. A great deal had been said about the £25,000 proposed to be spent on a dock at Brisbane; but, although he might be accused of holding central views, he contended that they were not spending that money so much for Brisbane as for the whole colony. He would go further, and say that he did not believe that there was a capital town anywhere which had been treated so badly as Brisbane had been treated, and he certainly had expected

from what he had heard from honorable members and others, that the Government would at least have gone to that House and asked for a loan of £200,000 for the purpose of draining the city. With regard to the sum of £25,000 for a dock, he believed it could only be regarded as a preliminary vote, as he noticed in a Victorian newspaper lately that the dry dock at Williamstown had cost £240,000, and yet they did not find that honorable members in that colony got up and raised any objection about such a large sum being spent in the capital for the benefit of it only. His principal objection in rising was to reply to the remarks of the honorable member for Bremer in regard to the water supply for Ipswich, and also to those of the honorable member for Carnarvon. He thought that when small municipalities could not afford to pay for the services of a first-class engineer, the Government should have some voice in the matter. A sum of money for water supply had been voted for Rockhampton, and also for Ipswich, and he intended to ask for a sum for Toowoomba for a similar purpose; but he would, at the same time, like to know upon what principle the Government intended to advance those moneys, as at present some municipalities had to pay interest whilst others had not. So far as the present vote was concerned, he considered it was equitably laid out, and he could promise the central districts that if their representatives would come down with a distinct motion for a sum of money, and could make out a good case, he would give them his support.

Mr. MACROSSAN said he did not intend to detain the House at any length with the observations he wished to make; but he considered that, as a northern member, it was only right he should make some remarks as to the manner in which it was proposed to deal with the surplus; and it was to the principle of that distribution to which he objected. Honorable members had taken some strange ideas into their heads as to what were national works and what were not. One honorable member said that a dock at Brisbane was a national work, but he would ask what benefit the Townsville people would derive from that work, or whether, if it was made, it would enable the people of Ravenswood to get their bread any cheaper? The honorable member for Toowoomba had instanced Melbourne as an example of spending a large sum of money in building a dock; but he should have remembered that, with one exception, Melbourne was the port for the whole colony of Victoria, and that, consequently, there could be no objection to have a dock at Williamstown. In Queensland the case was different, as along the coast there were important ports, each of which was independent of the other. Another honorable member had expressed the opinion that telegraphs should be regarded as local works, but he considered that they were national works. The honorable the Colonial

Treasurer had taken great exception to the financial separation scheme introduced by the honorable member for Port Curtis two years ago, but yet the honorable member had not told the House upon what principle those objections were based. The honorable member said the surplus was the result of a loan, but he could not deny, nor could any other honorable member deny that this surplus was the result of a large excess of income over expenditure during the last three years. Year by year since 1871 the income had exceeded the expenditure by many thousand pounds, and in the North alone the excess had been nearly £100,000. That was the balance they claimed, and any distribution which gave a large share of that to general revenue must be unjust and inequitable, and would leave the northern members no option but to demand that which he believed the majority of the House would deprecate, namely separation. He certainly did not blame the present Ministry very much; they were only following the same course as all their predecessors in office, and although the honorable member for Port Curtis seemed to have taken a juster view of the matter that evening than some honorable members, it would have been well if he had carried out the principles he now enunciated when he was in office. If he had done so, there would not now be the same animus in the North; there would not be the cry which now existed, and which would be intensified by the vote which had just been recorded. He came down to the House not as an advocate of separation, but in the hope and the expectation of being able to obtain justice for the portion of the colony which he represented. He had not the slightest intention of advocating separation; but, after the declaration of a member of the Government, and after the vote that had been taken, he endorsed the sentiments once expressed by the honorable member for Port Curtis that he would be an ardent separationist. The course that had been pursued was, he contended, the very worst that could have been taken; while, on the other hand, the principle they asked the House to adopt was the most conservative in the way of keeping the colony one great whole. The honorable member for Carnarvon was very jocular over this surplus; he said it would be a good thing to get rid of it; but he thought it would be far better to get rid of it honestly and justly, by giving each district its proper share, because there could be no denying that the northern and central districts were most unfairly treated. Several honorable members strongly deprecated separation, more especially the honorable members for Dalby and Port Curtis, and it had been deprecated by every Government in Australia; it was deprecated by the Government of New South Wales on the separation of Victoria, and also on the separation of Queensland, and they could not expect that that House would do anything else. But, at the same time,

they were compelling the representatives of the northern constituencies into a demand for separation. He had no doubt that Prince Bismarck would object to separate the provinces lately acquired from France; and by this they could understand the tribute, the spoliation which had been exercised upon the people of the North by the people of the South. It was nothing else but spoliation; and the tribute was much greater in proportion than the Germans had imposed upon France—a tribute which amounted to nearly £7 per head on the people north of Cape Palmerston. He therefore maintained that this system must be altered. He, for one, had no desire to break up the colony; he knew it would be much stronger, and would hold a much more important position, not only in the colonies, but also at home, if it remained as it was; but, as sure as the people of Queensland were obliged to separate from New South Wales, so would the people north of Cape Palmerston be compelled to separate from the colony if the vote which had been taken was carried out.

Mr. Dickson said it appeared from the debate that each member of the House seemed to think his own electorate had a special claim to a share of this surplus revenue; and no doubt even the honorable the Speaker would also advocate in committee the claims of that important portion of the colony, the Warrego district, for a share of it. It was well remarked by the honorable member for Port Curtis that he hoped when the claims of the central and northern districts were placed before the House, honorable members would consider them entirely independent of party feelings; and he, for one, would be quite prepared to do so when those claims were placed before the House in such a manner that he could understand them. But, notwithstanding all the eloquent speeches that had been made in reference to the neglect of the central district, not a single member had pointed out any work, with the exception of the groins in the Fitzroy River, which was absolutely required to be carried out at the present time in that portion of the colony. If the wants of that district had been put forward in an intelligent shape he would be very much inclined to support them; but he would recall to the recollection of honorable members on the other side of the House that the honorable member for Rockhampton, the other evening, in advocating the claim for a bridge over the Fitzroy, did so in such a way that it could not be recognized in the shape in which it was brought before the House. He should feel disposed to recognise and to provide for the wants of the central, or any other district of the colony if they were placed before the House in a practical shape, and it was seen on investigation that they were required. With regard to the remarks on the first item of £75,000 for immigration, the honorable member for Normanby said he deprecated very much this

amount being voted; and he instanced that the working men of this colony were opposed to being taxed for the support of immigration on a large scale. That was replied to by an honorable member on the other side of the House; and he merely took notice of it in order to say he was convinced that the intelligent working men of the colony did not regard immigration in the light which had been attempted to be shown—as inimical to their interests. They were sure that the immigrants who arrived in this colony would bring with them an adequate amount of capital to absorb any surplus labor that might exist in it, and that immigration was the very best means that could be adopted for opening up and developing its resources. With regard to the dock for Moreton Bay, honorable members on the other side of the House must admit that the dock was a necessity, unless they were to allow Sydney to derive all the benefits and advantages of the Torres Straits mail service for the long period of seven years, over which the contract extended; and on that ground alone, apart from other considerations, he should feel disposed to agree with the proposal for the construction of a graving-dock. The honorable member for the Kennedy contended that this was not a national work, and one of his chief arguments was that it would not decrease the cost of any commodity consumed by the people in the northern portions of the colony; but that, he thought, was a great mistake. The facilities which would be afforded by the dock would have the effect of reducing shipping expenses and freights, and of course the advantages of it would be equally felt throughout the length and breadth of the colony. The honorable members for Normanby and the Mitchell contended that this surplus revenue should be employed in reducing taxation; but he was entirely opposed to that view, because it was the unexpended balance of a loan, and it would be extremely suicidal to cut off their revenue because that surplus existed, and it would necessitate their going into the market again at an early date, and issuing debentures for the purpose of carrying out these works. Indeed, in the present stage of the colony's existence, he was opposed to any reduction of taxation except the reduction of the *ad valorem* duty. The colony was much better able to bear taxation now than it was a few years ago, and as it was growing and progressing, he thought it would be much better to carry out such works of public utility as might be required than to think of reducing taxation, especially when it was not called for. He heartily agreed with the honorable member for Port Curtis in his speech that evening, deprecating the idea of separation; and before he had the honor of a seat in that House he was struck by a remark made by that honorable member to the effect that the greatness of the colony would be maintained by its territorial integrity. That remark was worthy of a statesman; and he

was of opinion that if at any time separation occurred it would only arise from mal-administration. As an independent member of the House, he fully saw the propriety and the importance of maintaining the colony intact, and its interests being consolidated and combined without any conflicting diversity. He could see no difficulty in the way, if they applied themselves heartily and truly to legislating for the whole colony fairly and equitably, and if they did this he could not see that at any future time the question of separation need be even mooted. He agreed with the proposed expenditure being proceeded with at once.

Mr. HODGKINSON quite agreed with the sentiments expressed by his honorable colleagues. It appeared that this money had to be spent in some way upon the colony, and it was of very little importance whether the surplus had arisen from loan or from revenue; it belonged to the colony in its entirety, and he held it was the first duty of the Government to provide for the protection of the inhabitants, and to afford, as far as possible, facilities for communication throughout the colony, before embarking in works which, however useful they might be, were not absolutely necessary. With regard to the proposed expenditure of £75,000 for immigration, he would say, that if one title of that amount had been expended for the protection of the northern districts, in order to enable enterprising miners to develop its resources, there would now be a very large and thriving population there; but, simply for want of protection to life and property, upwards of 7,000 people had been driven from the northern districts to go elsewhere, and give the colony a bad name throughout the whole of the group. He did not call that statesmanship. They had been told that the cry was articular and indefinite; but he had told that House, that in districts such as the Palmer River, the first thing that should be done was to open the roads and afford police protection—that even the importance of telegraphic communication was remote, when compared with the necessity for police protection. He had asked for all these things; their demands were simple—they did not involve any great expense; but in no case had they been granted, and yet, without a moment's hesitation, the Government, and, he believed, the majority of that House, were prepared to spend £240,000, and out of that, the central district fared even worse than the North. He was glad to see that the central members had taken up the point; but he was afraid they would not be successful. It appeared an absolute necessity, in the state of politics in the colony at this present time, that one or the other great party in that House should be the cat's-paw of the Ministry in power. Either the North served themselves at the expense of the central or some other district, or the central district served themselves

in the same way. It appeared that in this session the North had first innings, and a very unsatisfactory one it had proved to be; and he contended that it was a disgrace to any Ministry who called themselves statesmen, that they should be compelled to retain office by such a system. Here they had been discussing a matter for seven hours which should never have been discussed at all. If any person would come down with a simple plan, by which, after defraying the necessary expenses of general government, the remaining portion of the revenue could be devoted to local expenditure in proportion to the claims of each district, instead of the House sitting for eight or nine months, the real legislative business of the country would be disposed of in three or four months. In addition to this, if local districts had the control and management of their own expenditure, they would get a great deal more for it than under the present system. Upon these grounds, he must really express his strong disapproval of the measure. It had been held out to them that they made a demand on the Ministry in the memorandum which they presented which was met with half a smile and half a jeer; but he could assure honorable members that they were returned to that House to legislate, not merely for their own districts, but for the benefit of the whole colony; and when they returned to their constituents, and told them that, after great personal sacrifice and after making every possible effort to obtain justice, they had not been able to succeed, what would be done by these men who were now waiting so patiently and calmly? He knew well what they would do, and that, if once they became determined, they would never rest until they effected their determination. He could tell the honorable member for Stanley, who had talked about grumbling, to remember that they were sent down there for that purpose, and they would continue to do so until they obtained redress. But that honorable member's personal appearance showed that he could not have a grievance; he did not know how it was unsafe to go abroad without a revolver, or how it was that when he started upon a journey of a few miles he might never return alive, or perhaps have to be brought home with three or four blackfellows' spears through him. Even townships in the North, where there was considerable population, where there was a large extent of auriferous country, and where as much as £100,000 had been invested in labor and capital, had had to be deserted; and why? Because the Government had so little foresight, that, when the Palmer rush broke out, they had to withdraw all the police force from the place he referred to; and he knew that a policeman had to go into his own lock-up, and bar himself up, for protection—he had quite enough to do to protect himself, without protecting the population. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, when the

honorable member for Clermont moved the amendment, said the Government could not possibly think of withdrawing the measure and introducing a new one; which appeared to him to mean that, even if they were conscious of having committed an error, they had not sufficient independence to withdraw the measure and rectify it. That seemed a very strange kind of argument. He contended that, in whatever way they looked at the matter, it was the first duty of the Government to protect the lives and property of the people, before spending money in unnecessary works. Both the central and the northern districts had strong claims on the present Government; and however long the present system might continue it would result in both sections becoming disgusted, and end in separation. He had long seen the meaning of this affected liberality to the North this session: it was not pure liberality; it was simply, in a political point of view, the price paid for a certain amount of support. He did not believe the present Colonial Treasurer had any greater affection for the North than his predecessors, but it was worth his while to display an unusual amount of interest in the North just now, and the northern members began to recognise that fact; and when they had got over some little personal differences which existed between them, they might have a party of their own, and perhaps the South would be left out in the cold. The idea of Brisbane not continuing the capital for a length of time had been ridiculed, but he had no doubt it would come to the removal of the capital or separation. That was a matter of indifference to him, but if every vote was to be a kind of a squabble as to who should get the money, and if the ability of every man as a member, or as a senator, was to be gauged by his capabilities at log-rolling, not only would it take all the days of the year but all the nights of it too, to get through the session, and they would consequently not be able to attend the House. He knew it was perfectly useless to affect a state of things which did not exist, and he would not throw away his opportunity; he might do better by voting in a certain direction, and in that direction he would vote.

Mr. FRASER said he agreed with some of the remarks of the honorable member who had just sat down, and he was sure it would be recognised by all sides that it would be a happy thing if some honorable member came down with a simple plan that would settle all these matters which caused so much discussion and wasted so much of the time of the House. But he maintained that those who felt where the shoe pinched ought to be able to provide the remedy. He presumed the honorable member would admit that it was not for the representatives of the southern portion of the colony, who were not complaining just now, to prescribe the remedy

for them; and he could only say that if that honorable member, or any honorable member, came down to the House with a feasible plan, calculated in any way to do away with these unseemly scramblings in the House, he, for one, would give it his cordial support. They heard from that honorable member, the other evening, a most earnest denial of having made anything like a compact with the Ministry, and yet he now told the House they were paid a certain price.

Mr. HODGKINSON: No, no.

Mr. FRASER: He would not say more on that subject, except that if such were the case, he could not congratulate the Government on their bargain. Honorable members had heard that evening another illustration of the desirability of settling the question upon such a basis as would take all matters of this character entirely away from the consideration of the House. It was simply a question of local expenditure, and although they had wasted a large amount of time, he was sure the result would not be satisfactory to many honorable members. It was again a scramble for the loaves and fishes; and he hoped that instead of holding over the House a threat of separation, honorable members who took an interest in the matter, would direct their earnest attention to the more practical, the more statesmanlike question of providing a scheme which would free the House from all such discussions, and leave them to deal with general legislation. He could not help remarking that the honorable member for Normanby was not inconsistent in the views he had propounded on the matter of immigration. It was not the first time he adduced similar views in that House, and he (Mr. Fraser) heartily agreed with the views advanced in reply by the honorable member for Dalby; but he was rather surprised that the honorable member for Normanby, a gentleman who, when he was disposed to do so, was able to take a comprehensive and intelligent view of the questions of the day, should entertain these opinions. When they looked at the state of the colony now, and remembered what it was ten or twelve years ago; when they considered that the revenue had increased from about £160,000 at the time of separation to something like a million and a quarter, he would like to know whence this great increase. It had undoubtedly been from the increase of population, and the consequent development of the resources of the colony; and what this had accomplished already was only a very small matter indeed, compared with what might be accomplished, if this large and wealthy colony were occupied by an industrious population, commensurate with its capacity. He was surprised to hear the argument advanced that the introduction of population was opposed to the interests of the working men who were now in the colony; because it was well known, as had already

been pointed out—it was not a matter of conjecture or of theory, for results had proved it—that every ship-load of immigrants of the right sort who arrived in the colony, were only preparing the way for two additional ship-loads. That honorable member objected to the House agreeing to go on with further public works, because there was a difficulty in finding men to carry on the ordinary current work of the colony; and if such were the case, he should imagine that that honorable member, to be consistent with his own views, must approve of the introduction of more immigrants into the colony. Then they were told that the Government were rushing into extravagance in spending this surplus revenue; but he maintained that it was not squandering money when the works proposed to be carried out were not only useful in themselves, but essentially necessary, and in fact demanded. With regard to the graving dock, they could see already the result of not having such a convenience in the colony. They had entered into an expensive contract for the Torres Straits mail service, and he asserted it was a disgrace to the House and the colony, that when they were subsidising that service at a very heavy cost, a neighboring colony, through its own enterprise and foresight, should obtain almost the whole of the benefit derived from that contract. He believed that no Government would enter into such a contract, with the terminus at Sydney, if there was in the colony what they were now endeavoring to obtain, a graving dock in Brisbane or some other port. He was free to admit, however, that he did not believe that £25,000 would be sufficient for the work; but this was only intended as the initiative step, and he was sure that if the work demanded it, the House would not grudge the amount necessary to complete it. He was also satisfied that if the Government carried out the suggestion of forming a River trust in connection with the Brisbane River, in a short time it would be found to cover all its own expenses. He was glad to see the Government were taking steps to procure a dredge for the purpose of deepening the river and improving the navigation, and when that was done there would be no reason why the largest vessel which came into the Bay should not come up to the dock in Brisbane. It was a fact that the port of Brisbane was one of the most expensive shipping ports in the world, and he thought it would be to the interest of the whole colony that this and every other port in Queensland should be made as easy of access, and as cheap as they possibly could be. With regard to the question of Separation, he thought there was not the slightest occasion for contemplating anything of the kind. It was true the colony was very large, and might be, under present circumstances, very unwieldy; but it was in the nature of things that these matters should correct

themselves, almost every day, with the general progress of the country. They had now more complete telegraphic communication, which would be further extended; they had more ready steam communication, and there was not the slightest doubt that by-and-bye railway communication would also be extended; and he would be exceedingly sorry if anything led to what had been threatened in the way of separation. But if their friends in the North would have separation, and although they would wish them every success, still he maintained that if the northern people took a calmer view of the matter, the question was quite capable of solution in a satisfactory manner. He hoped all unpleasant reflections, which they had heard during the course of the debate, would be buried and forgotten; and if the honorable member for Kennedy came forward with something like a practical scheme of local self-government, he was quite sure every member of the House would give it fair consideration, and he believed the majority would give it their cordial support.

Mr. FITZGERALD saw he could not allow the question to go to a division without again expressing his entire disapproval of the course the Government had taken in the matter. He believed that after the vote that had been taken, there was no other course open to the North but separation. It was all very well for the honorable members for Enoggera and Bundamba to say they deprecated separation, and that they did not think any necessity would arise for it; but when the representatives of the northern constituencies saw by the vote that had been taken that a plan for plundering those districts of over £50,000 or £60,000 was coolly assented to by the Government and their supporters, it was quite time they took some active steps with a view to obtaining redress in another way—by being prepared, if they came down another session, with a petition from the northern districts, fairly made out and temperately worded, asking for separation. It appeared the government of the colony was still to be carried on without any system that they could understand, which was, as he had previously pointed out, most unsatisfactory; and it would be far more satisfactory if the North had the management of its own affairs and the expenditure of its own money. It was true, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer said he made application to the Portmaster for a list of all works required, and no doubt the honorable the Secretary for Public Works had done the same so far as his department was concerned; but they could not take that as satisfactory—to leave it in the hands of the paid servants of the Government to say where money, which properly belonged to the people, should be expended. They had shown that a very large sum had been taken from the North in the way of tribute which was now proposed to be spent in public

works in the southern portion of the colony, and in direct opposition to their wishes and without their consent. They would have no objection whatever to the necessary sums for immigration, telegraphic extension, and light-houses and beacons, being provided out of a loan vote, if the balance of the surplus of £240,000 was shared amongst the districts of the colony in which it was produced, in proportion to their claims. That could be ascertained by the books kept at the Treasury, and if the present Government intended to give satisfaction and to inspire confidence, they ought to do that, and not attempt to spend in the southern division money which properly belonged to other districts. Works of a national character, he maintained, ought to be provided out of loan, the interest on which should be borne by the colony at large; but the idea of a dock in Brisbane being of any use to the people in the North, was simply absurd, and it was lamentable to hear such statements made. They all knew that Sydney was only a couple of days' sail, and that place was quite as good for the people of the North, so far as the dock was concerned, as any place about Brisbane. The greater part of their trade was done in Sydney and Melbourne, and to say the dock was a national work, was simply nonsense. Then the honorable member for Stanley said he was quite sure that the members of that House would agree to some measure to remove these grievances if some of the northern members would introduce a Bill for that purpose: but when they were met on every occasion with a denial of anything like assistance to obtain common justice; when they found the demands they made were one after another set aside by the Government and by the vote of the majority, it was perfectly clear that it would be utterly useless to bring forward such a Bill. They did so in 1868; they then introduced a Bill for local self-government, but it was smothered, and never came to anything. Unless the Government undertook such a measure as that, or promised it their support, it would be utterly useless and mere waste of time for a private member to attempt to carry it out. The honorable member for Enoggera deprecated separation, and said it could only arise from mal-administration; but now they had before them a most palpable and glaring case of mal-administration, because, in spite of the most earnest remonstrances the representatives of the North could make, and although they showed by figures and returns that they had grave cause of complaint—that they were, in fact, being robbed in the way of tribute for the benefit of their fellow-colonists—they found it was quite ineffectual; and what, therefore, was the use of saying there was any disposition to do justice? The Government would not even reply to their repeated demands for fair and honest treatment; and under these circumstances, as far as he could see, it would not

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be long before they would have to go to the other side of the House, and see what they could get there. That there was no necessity for separation, as was stated by some honorable members, he denied. The colony was really too large, and, seeing that there was no desire on the part of the governing body to give the northern districts—which were far removed from the seat of Government—local government or fair treatment, the present state of things could not last long. There was, in fact, an attempt to keep them in leading strings, and to keep them uneasy and dissatisfied until they would be driven to resort to the only means of redress they had, and that was separation.

Mr. MACDONALD said the honorable members for Mitchell and Carnarvon and Stanley had asserted that Rockhampton and the central districts had already received a great deal more than their share of public expenditure, and that they were never satisfied, and he felt anxious to free their minds from such an erroneous impression. But, if the arguments and figures which had already been adduced in the course of the debate were not sufficient to convince those honorable members that the central district had been very unjustly treated, he came to the conclusion that they would not be convinced. The figures which had been quoted showed that that district was entitled to something like £28,000 more than it was proposed to give it. Now, about three years ago, when there was a very dry season, the people of North Rockhampton applied to the late Government for a sum of money for water supply, and £200 was voted in the first instance; but that was soon found to be quite inadequate, and when the Estimates for 1874 were introduced, there was a sum of £350 additional put down for that purpose. That item had, however, since been struck out, although water supply ought to be one of the first things provided for, and, in this case, it was very badly wanted. The fact of there being over 100 children attending daily at one school—and it was with difficulty they could be supplied—was sufficient evidence of this. Hitherto, when the population was small, they were able to obtain sufficient water from the lagoons and creeks; but such was not the case now, and he would like to ask the honorable the Minister for Works, what he proposed to do in this matter? He would be very sorry to join in the cry of North against South; but, in this case, there was no doubt there was ample reason for it, and he thought some promise should be made that this amount would be placed on the Supplementary Estimates.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: What for? What do you want?

Mr. MACDONALD said he wished to ask the honorable the Secretary for Works, why the item of £350 for water supply for North Rockhampton had been struck off the Estimates?

The original motion was then put and carried, on division :—

Ayes, 22.	Ayes, 12.
Mr. Macalister	Mr. Bell
" Stephens	" Thompson
" Hemmant	" Fitzgerald
" Mellwraith	" Hodgkinson
" Miles	" Graham
" Pettigrew	" Macrossan
" Nind	" Macdonald
" Griffith	" Royds
" Ivory	" J. Scott
" W. Scott	" Morehead
" Fryar	" De Satgé
" Beattie	" Wienholt.
" Dickson	
" Bailey	
" Groom	
" J. Thorn	
" Morgan	
" Pechey	
" Fraser	
" Stewart	
" Foote	
" Edmondstone.	

The House accordingly resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to further consider Supply, and, after discussion, the items were agreed to without amendment.