

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 14 MAY 1878

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 14 May, 1878.

Questions.—Formal Motions.—Enclosed Lands Bill.—
Motion for Adjournment.—Electoral Districts Bill—
adjourned debate.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past
three o'clock p.m.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. MACROSSAN asked the Secretary for
Public Works—

When do the Government intend to com-
mence the construction of the railway from
Townsville to Charters Towers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Miles) replied—

Working plans will be sufficiently forward to enable the Government to invite tenders for construction of the first section of the Townsville and Charters Towers line to twenty-three miles in three months from present date.

Mr. IVORY said, in connection with this matter, he should like to ask the Minister for Works, without notice, when it was the intention of the Government to commence the line between Bundaberg and Mount Perry.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may inform the honourable member that draughtsmen are now employed in preparing the working plans, and as soon as they are completed tenders will be called.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Secretary for Public Works—

When will the trial survey of the Burrum Railway probably be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

Trial survey, at present being carried out to the Burrum River, will probably be completed by the end of June next.

Mr. PALMER asked the Colonial Secretary—

Do the Government intend to introduce a Volunteer Bill this Session?—if so, when?

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) replied—

A Volunteer Bill has been prepared and is now in type, but the Government are not sanguine as to the chances of their being able to carry so important a measure through the House until the Electoral Districts Bill and the Local Government Bill are disposed of. I shall be glad to place the draft Bill and any other papers I have in connection with this subject in the hands of the honourable member, if he is prepared to undertake the management of this measure.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. DICKSON—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make further provision for the construction of drains and sewers in the city of Brisbane, as recommended by the Governor's message No. 2, of 9th May, 1878.

By Mr. PALMER—

That the Return to an Order, relative to Bishop Bagnion and the immigration of Mennonites, laid upon the table of this House on the 8th instant, be printed.

By Mr. MOREHEAD—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, a return showing the amount of pastoral rents received for the years 1875-6-7 from the various districts of the colony.

By Mr. MOREHEAD—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, a return showing the number of runs taken up in the North and South Gregory districts since the 30th of June, 1875.

ENCLOSED LANDS BILL.

Mr. MACDONALD moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend An Act for Protecting Enclosed Lands from Intrusion and Trespass, 18 Vic. No. 27.

Question put and passed.

The Bill having been introduced, was read a first time, and the second reading was made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 23rd instant.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. MCILWRAITH moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of eliciting from the Government some information with regard to certain paragraphs that had appeared in the newspapers during the last few days, having reference to the progress of the railway works in the Wide Bay district. In the *Patriot* of Saturday, the following telegram from Maryborough appeared:—

"A large number of men stopped working on the railway. It is said that some of the work has been done wrong, that nearly £3,000 has been spent on it, and that the department is to blame for the mistake."

In the *Wide Bay and Burnett News* of Saturday there also appeared this paragraph:—

"A nice little difficulty appears to have arisen in connection with the Maryborough-Gympie railway works. On Wednesday, it appears, a large number of navvies were knocked off work in consequence of its having been discovered that operations were being proceeded with on the wrong track. A considerable amount of money—no less than £3,000—has, we are assured, been spent in this "deviation," and the contractor for that portion wants to know how it is he can't go on. The Government Engineer, Mr. Depree, and the contractor's engineer, Mr. Wylie, have had their confab, and probably when the matter has been duly inquired into, and has been submitted to the usual red-tape ordeal, we shall hear whose time and money has been wasted."

This paragraph had been copied into other journals—into the *Queensland Times*, for one;—and it was of that character that he thought they ought to have some explanation from the Minister for Works respecting it. It was a matter the House was justified in feeling anxious about, and he had brought it forward to ascertain if the Government had received any information concerning it, and of what character it was.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had received no official information in reference to the matter mentioned. In fact, he knew

nothing at all about it further than what appeared in Saturday's paper. He had not inquired into it, but he was satisfied that the whole thing was a *canard*—that there was no foundation for it.

Mr. THOMPSON said he did not understand the honourable member—whether he said he had not made inquiries or had made inquiries, and found out the whole thing to be a farce.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not made inquiries.

The PREMIER said he should avail himself of this opportunity of drawing attention to a statement made the other day by the honourable member for Warrego, in reference to the absence of any record of deaths being kept at the Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich. He thought it was only right that he should give a direct contradiction to that statement, which had gone forth in *Hansard*. He had been informed by the Deputy Registrar-General that not only were there regular records kept, so far as the department was concerned, but a record was also kept at Dunwich, which was exhibited in the room where visitors went to record their names. It was only due to the Superintendent that he (the Premier) should make this statement, because if the statement of the honourable member for Warrego—probably unintentionally made, and he even understood somewhat incorrectly reported—got abroad, it would probably lead to some misconception on the subject. Mr. Hamilton attended carefully to this matter, and he thought the honourable member for Warrego would readily admit that his statement was scarcely in accordance with the facts as now corrected. Probably the honourable gentleman hardly intended to convey the meaning in the form in which it had been expressed in *Hansard*. If true, of course, his statement would have shown very decided *laches* on the part of the Superintendent; but he (the Premier) must give emphatic contradiction to it, on behalf of Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. WALSH (who was indistinctly heard in the gallery) was understood to say that he did not think the honourable the Premier had heard him make use of the remarks he had referred to, but must have seen them in *Hansard*, of whose report he had to complain. He did not know who had reported him, but he had already taken exception to the report. He did not intend to say, nor did he think he said, there was no record of deaths kept. What he wished to say was, that there was not sufficient publication given to the deaths of persons dying at Dunwich; that a record should be made in the newspapers or the *Government Gazette*, so that friends of the deceased persons and the public might be assured that at least some notice was taken of deaths in that institution. What he intended to convey was, a charge,

which he would now repeat, that there was no inquiry made in the case of the death of a person there, and no publicity given to the fact beyond that which had been stated by the Premier. He, therefore, considered that he was perfectly justified in stating what he did. He would also renew the remarks which he had made on a former occasion, but which had not then appeared in *Hansard*, as to his admiration of the way in which the institution was managed by Mr. Hamilton. At times he had been as much a visitor to the institution as any member of the House, and could bear witness to the industry and ability with which Mr. Hamilton performed the very arduous duties which devolved upon him.

Motion—That this House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL— ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The debate on the second reading of the Electoral Districts Bill was resumed.

Mr. Fox said it would be in the remembrance of honourable members that some twelve months ago the honourable member for Kennedy moved, on account of the rapid increase of population in the North, for a redistribution of the representation of those districts; and the Government promised to bring in a Bill to remedy, not only their grievances, but also those of some other constituencies. Honourable members had now in their hands a Bill which was the outcome of what took place on that occasion; and he was glad to hear that by the withdrawing of the clauses from six to twelve an effort would be made by the Government to meet the views which had been expressed by the House. Notwithstanding that concession, however, he thought that the Bill was anything but such a measure as the House ought to support. The first principle of this Bill should be to attack the worst measure in the present Bill. In fact, he considered it was very much worse than the Act at present in force. He quite agreed with what had been said by other honourable members, that the principles contained in the Bill would have the effect of intensifying a great evil. Why should this colony—which was a new one as compared with New South Wales and Victoria—depart from the present adult population basis? There was great reason for this colony keeping a little longer than the other colonies to that system, because they possessed long railways into the interior, and rivers tapping their outside borders, which gave them some excuse for adopting the system proposed. With regard to the situation of this colony, it was well known that an enterprising portion of the population were opening up the western country; and in doing so, were subject to great deprivations,

and frequently carried their lives in their hands. Many had their families and homes on the coast, and some even in New South Wales or Victoria. He could not see, therefore, on what grounds the Government could bring in the gross population basis, or what they called the mean population basis. In fact, he disagreed altogether with the system. If they were to depart from the adult population basis, he would say let them go a little further, and let women vote. There was no principle whatever in the system proposed. The Government appeared to have adopted it with the idea of reconciling some of their supporters, or, perhaps, some of the honourable members on the Opposition side of the House. This course of half measures deserved to be exposed, as it had been by the honourable the leader of the Opposition, who showed clearly that the mean basis was, to all intents and purposes, the adult male basis. As far as lay in his power, he (Mr. Fox) would oppose that becoming law. He would take exception to the Bill on the arguments—not from his own side, but from the other side of the House. The arguments used by the honourable the Attorney-General, to whose opinions he was always willing to give attention, were confined to attacking the figures of the honourable the leader of the Opposition, and to proving that they were more correct than his own. He never advocated any principle of the Bill, and avoided in every way going into the matter of principle at all. He (Mr. Fox) was quite sure that the honourable member, if he were present, with the Bill in his hand, could, if he liked, in twenty minutes condemn the Bill to the minds of honourable members, and prove that it was not worth the paper it was written on. It was only due to himself to say that he came into the House with the full intention of supporting the Government, if the Bill had been an equitable one. Finding that it was neither equitable, nor founded on any principle whatever, and that it was a step backwards instead of a step forwards, he could in no one particular support the Bill. Again, he took exception to the increased number of members, and thought that some better arrangement might have been found. Admitting that the Northern and some other districts were entitled by increase of population to a certain amount of additional representation, he objected that by the additional representation proposed, the House would consist to a greater extent than before of Southern members, to the exclusion of Northern interests altogether; so that any advantage that might be supposed to accrue to the North would be more than neutralized by the twelve additional members. Nine-tenths of the House would, in fact, be Southern men. He believed, therefore, that if the

measure were passed and additional members with Southern interests brought into the House, it would bring about—what was a most undesirable object to encourage—territorial separation, than which nothing else would satisfy Northern members. A great deal had been said by the Attorney-General and many other honourable members in the House, with respect to the introduction of new principles in the Bill; but he thought the Bill was condemned by the Attorney-General's own words. He (the Attorney-General) said that the measure was a rough-and-ready one. Now, the subject had been under consideration for more than twelve months, and the measure was brought before the House by a gentleman who said he had devoted a great deal of time and trouble to it. He (Mr. Fox) believed that that time and trouble would be wasted; but he was certain that all the time must have been given to the geographical divisions in the Bill, and that the principles of it had been hardly looked at. Many honourable members had said, in reference to Hare's system, that it was a delusion and a mere theory. It might be so; but he asked why a trial should not be made with some system between that and the system at present in use? He had never heard anyone ask for double electorates, though he had heard many condemn single ones. The adoption of the proposed system would have the effect of making bad still worse. Any honourable member would know that in a country like this, where the population was centred in small towns, the town would return the two members in a double electorate, to the exclusion of the interest of the district around the town. That was not a desirable object to attain. By the single electorate system the town would return one member and the surrounding district the other, whereas by the alteration both members would actually represent the town. It was true that in some instances the evil was neutralized by the interests of the town being identical with those of the district, in which case the result was fair and satisfactory. With regard to the additional members proposed, he would like to know what advantage the North would receive if for every additional member given to it two additional representatives were given to the South. He wished that honourable members who represented Southern interests would visit the North. They would then see that the interests of the North were entirely different from those of the South, and that in almost every particular an altogether different course should be pursued. It was difficult enough now to get members to represent the North; and, were the Bill passed, he was quite sure the North would be virtually "wiped out." With the permission of the House, he

would follow up the remarks of the honourable member for the Burnett with regard to that honourable gentleman's advocacy of Hare's system. He was about to quote, not from Hare's book, but from "Mill's Dissertations and Discussions, Political, Philosophical, and Historical." At page 74, in the chapter on "Recent Writers on Reform," the author said:—

"Commending Mr. Lorimer's treatise to the attention of students in politics, we pass to a book in our opinion of far superior value, in which, for the first time, a way is really shown to that reconciliation and simultaneous recognition of the best principles and ends of rival theories, which the generality of political writers have despaired of, which Mr. Lorimer aims at, but which Mr. Hare actually realizes, and has not only illuminated it with the light of an advanced political philosophy, but embodied it in a draft of an Act of Parliament, prepared with the hand of a master in the difficult art of practical legislation. Though Mr. Hare has delivered an opinion—and generally, in our judgment, a wise one—on nearly all the questions in issue connected with representative government, the originality of his plan, as well as most of the effects to be expected from it, turn on the development which he has given to what is commonly called the representation of minorities. He has raised this principle to an importance and dignity which no previous thinker had ascribed to it. As conceived by him, it should be called the real, instead of nominal, representation of every individual elector. That minorities in the nation ought in principle, if it be possible, to be represented by corresponding minorities in the Legislative Assembly, is a necessary consequence from all premises on which any representation at all can be defended. In a deliberative Assembly the minority must perforce give way, because the decision must be either aye or no; but it is not so in choosing those who are to form the deliberative body; that ought to be the express image of the wishes of the nation, whether divided or unanimous, in the designation of these by whose united councils it will be ruled, and any section of opinion which is unanimous within itself ought to be able in due proportion to the rest to contribute its elements towards the collective deliberation. At present, if three-fifths of the electors vote for one person and two-fifths for another, every individual of the two-fifths is for the purpose of that election as if he did not exist. Whatever was the object of the constitution in giving him a vote, that object at least on the present occasion has not been fulfilled; and, if he can be reconciled to his position, it must be by the consideration that some other time he may be one of a majority, and another set of persons instead of himself may be reduced to cyphers. But this compensation, however gratifying, will be no avail to him if he is everywhere over-matched, and the same may be said of the elector who is habitually out-voted. Of late years several modes have been suggested of giving an effective voice to a minority by limiting such elector to fewer votes than the number of members to be elected, or allowing him to concentrate all his votes on the same candi-

date. These various schemes are praiseworthy so far as they go, but they attain the object very imperfectly. All plans for dividing a merely local representation in unequal ratios, are limited by the smaller number of members which can be, and the still smaller number which ought to be assigned to any one constituency. There are considerable objections to the election of even so many as three by every constituent body. This, however, under present arrangement, is the smallest number which would admit of any representation of a minority, and in this case the minority must amount to at least a third of the whole."

There was a system which the Government might have adopted. If they had provided for triple electorates, they would have met in some measure the wishes of the people and the Press. Mill continued—

"All smaller minorities would continue as at present to be disfranchised, and in a minority of a third the whole number must unite in voting for the same candidate. There may, therefore, be a minority within a minority who have sacrificed their individual preference, and from whose vote nothing can with certainty be concluded, but that they dislike less the candidate they voted for, than they do the rival candidate."

Mill then went on to describe Mr. Hare's plan, viz.:—To take 200,000 voters as the basis, and to allow any candidate who could poll 2,000 votes, to have a seat in Parliament. If any candidate obtained more than 2,000 votes, the remainder could be set free, to be given to the next in the opinion of the majority of voters. For this purpose voters would have to make a practice of putting into their voting papers a second, third, or fourth name. His object in referring to Hare's system so fully was, that the public might see the difference between it and the present system—that the Bill might be rejected, and a definite expression of opinion obtained from the country, as to which should be adopted. Mill continued—

"This arrangement provides for all the difficulties involved in representation of minorities. The smallest minority obtains an influence proportioned to its numbers; the largest obtains no more."

At page 79 he said—

"Of this, breadth, clearness, and simplicity are the principles of the plan. Indeed, if Mr. Hare had stopped here the chief difficulty he would have had to encounter would have been the doubt whether a scheme so theoretically perfect could be brought into practical operation. But, since he has taken the trouble to point out, even to the minutest detail, the mode in which the plan can be executed, and has drawn up in all legal form the statute necessary to give it effect, the danger now is, lest the inevitable prominence of the mechanical arrangements should confuse the mind of a mere cursory reader, and enable the scheme to be presented as too complex and subtle to be workable. Such a notion would be extremely erroneous. Mr. Hare's draft of a Bill is ten times more simple and intelligible than

the Reform Act, or almost any other Act of Parliament which deals with a great subject. Seldom has it happened that a great political idea could be realised by such easy and simple machinery, and there is not a serious objection, nor a genuine difficulty, of however slight a nature which will not, we think, be found to have been foreseen and met."

Again, at page 80, Mill, speaking of the incidental benefits of the scheme, said—

"In the first place, it would prodigiously improve the *personnel* of the national representation."

At page 83, he wrote—

"The considerations on which we have hitherto dwelt are independent of any possible changes in the composition of the electoral body. But the bearing of Mr. Hare's proposals on the question of extending the suffrage is of the very greatest importance. Why is nearly the whole educated class united in uncompromising hostility to a purely democratic suffrage? Not so much because it would make the most numerous class, that of manual labourers, the strongest; *that*, many of the educated class would think only just. It is because it would make them the sole power; because in every constituency the votes of that class would swamp and politically annihilate all other members of the community taken together, would put them in the same position as regards Parliament in which the labouring classes are now, without the same imposing physical strength out of doors, and would produce, or be in danger of producing, a Legislature reflecting exclusively the opinions and preferences of the most ignorant class, with no member of any higher standard to compare and confront themselves with, except such as may have stripped themselves of their superiority by conforming to the prejudices of their supporters."

Again, at page 87, the same writer said—

"Those who demand equal electoral districts, should strenuously support Mr. Hare's plan, for it fulfils in a far preferable manner their professed purposes. In his system, all the constituencies are equal, and all unanimous; disfranchisement becomes unnecessary, for every place is represented in the ratio, and no place in more than the ratio due to its number of electors."

And at page 88 he said—

"But in no way would the effects of this masterly contrivance be more unspeakably beneficial than in raising the tone of the whole political morality of the country. A representative would be under nothing like the same temptation to gain or keep his seat by time-serving arts, and sacrifices of his convictions to the local or class prejudices and interests of any given set of electors."

Honourable members had heard enough of that in the House during the present session. At page 89, Mill continued—

"Every elector's interest would be at the highest pitch. The member would be the elector's own representative, not chosen for him, but by him. Instead of having been chosen, perhaps, against him by electors of sentiments the

remotest possible from his, he will not even have been accepted by him as a compromise; he is the man whom the elector has really preferred. * * * * *

The self-deluding sophistry of indolence or indifference operates by What does it matter? Place before any one a high object; show him that he can individually do something to promote that object, and if there is a spark of virtue in the man, it will be kindled into a glow. To the new feeling of duty would be added a pride in making a good choice—a desire to connect himself as a constituent with someone who is an honour to the nation—to be known to him and the world, as one who has voluntarily sought him out to give him his vote."

Honourable members must perceive that there was a vast difference between Hare's system and the one in force in this colony. They must also remember that they had made a great stride in representation; they had extended the right to vote to everyone who had lived six months in the land. He did not object to this, but his contention was that having made great strides in one direction they should do so in another, and be careful not to exclude minorities. Previously, a certain amount of qualification was required. Even now a £10 qualification was required in some parts of England. If they went to the extreme in one direction—and they could not well go further in the matter of electoral qualification—they should take some step to protect those who had formerly their interests represented in the House from being entirely "wiped out"; the representation of the minority should not be rendered impossible. With regard to their present system, he had heard no person advocate or defend it. The most that had been said for it was that it was a "rough-and-ready" system. Why should they accept such a system? Fourteen months had elapsed since the necessity for a new Electoral Bill had been raised, and a Bill was now brought in which was supposed to provide for the representation of all interests, but they found that it effected no improvement. They were told that they should accept it because it was based on "rough-and-ready" principles which had worked well in other colonies for numbers of years. He considered that they were bound to profit by the experience of other colonies—especially Victoria and New South Wales; but were they to follow their worst measures, and not to take up their better ones? He had read only one of the numbers of *Hansard* containing the debate on the Bill, and it struck him that the speakers were much opposed to the present system, and rather favoured a system which was something like Hare's. He was not wedded to Hare, but he was prepared to meet the Government if they would introduce a Bill which would give the minority a chance even of being represented. He

felt warmly in the matter. The Bill was one that he could not support, although he was well disposed towards the Government on the question. He sat in the House as an independent supporter of the Opposition; but yet there was no member of the Government side of the House more disposed than he to support measures which were good and for the benefit of the country, no matter from which side they emanated. The honourable member for Bremer, speaking on the Bill on the 8th instant, said—

“I must admit that Hare’s system of representation seems suitable to the colony, and I think a modification of it might be adopted; and in such a group as the Brisbane group it might very well be tried. The difficulties in the way of it are simply difficulties in the registering of votes, and the sooner men are taught to vote the better. I do not think that ought to be a very serious difficulty, because the most ignorant electors could be soon instructed how to vote under Hare’s system. A great deal has been said about the representation of minorities, and as I happened to have been reading a speech of Bright’s lately, I think a great deal of mist has been thrown over the subject by the term ‘representation of minorities.’ He points out that what is desirable is not that minorities should be represented, but that all should be represented; and all the honourable the Premier said about governing by minorities I really cannot understand, because there is no contention in connection with Hare’s or any other system that minorities should rule. What they contend for is simply that all should be represented.”

He quite agreed with the honourable member for Bremer, and did not think that any other honourable member would attempt to disagree with the views he expressed. He was referring to these speeches to give weight to his argument. The honourable member for Kennedy said—

“The objections were that, by the single electorate system, a small clique in an electorate was able to control the electorate and the member; that through the existence of those small cliques, the Ministry were able to get behind the back of any refractory member and compel him to do as they wished. That was the objection which was held by many honourable members; and did this double electorate system, which the Treasurer had spoken so slightly of, remedy that? He (Mr. Macrossan) said it did not remedy it in any degree, but rather that it intensified and aggravated the evil.”

He also agreed with the honourable member, not from his own experience, but from what he had heard stated by other honourable members. The honourable the ex-leader of the Opposition said—

“For instance, the honourable Attorney-General, when comparing the arrivals by sea, only puts down the direct arrivals from other colonies; all the others are put down to Brisbane; and I defy the honourable member to

do otherwise—how is he to classify them otherwise when most of the vessels going north call in at Brisbane? I have heard a great many objections to the single electorate system, and there is a great deal of truth about the unsatisfactory way in which it is said to have worked. But they have been so often put before the House that it is unnecessary for me now to mention them; the principal objection seems to me to be this, that a member comes to this House more as a delegate to get as much as he possibly can than anything else. * * *

I have heard honourable members say that they have been ashamed at having to go cap-in-hand to the Treasury. That has been said fifty or a hundred times—at least twenty times, this session—and I believe the system has had that effect. Any evil which may exist will be intensified and not cured by the Bill before us.

He now came to the speech of the honourable member for Wide Bay, who spoke thus:—

“Mr. Bailey said he should not follow the honourable gentleman who had just sat down in his arguments with respect to Hare’s system. That system had now been before the world for many years, and had not been considered worthy of adoption in Assemblies of far higher importance than this. As it had been for a long time in the hands of eminently practical and theoretical men, and its adoption had not been attempted, he thought they might very safely leave it on one side, and avoid a discussion upon what was a mere theory.”

He did not think, however, that any honourable member would deny, after carefully reading over the speech of the member for Wide Bay, that no greater arguments than were contained in it could have been used for the adoption of Hare’s system. He considered the speech as a whole the most convincing that could be delivered in favour of Hare’s system. He could not support the Bill, and he must also inform the House that whatever he had said or done regarding the subject under discussion was entirely independent of every one. If the leader of the Opposition did not deem it his duty to call for a division, he (Mr. Fox) should certainly demand one. The Bill provided for a system infinitely worse than the existing one, and, if he should have to stand alone, he should call for a division. Should the Bill, however, get into committee he would be prepared to give it every reasonable consideration.

Mr. MORGAN said he had paid considerable attention to the speech of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down, and it afforded decidedly the best proof of the independent position which he had taken up. Neither the leader of the Opposition nor the ex-leader of the Opposition, nor the member for Kennedy, had expressed himself so strongly, and the honourable member’s position was, therefore, clearly established. The honourable member was prepared to support both the Government and the

Opposition in a generous way, but only if he thought what they did or said was right. It reminded him of Murphy—not the honourable member for Cook, but a man who was well known at home in his (Mr. Morgan's) younger days, of whom it was said:—

“Murphy hath a weather eye:
He can tell when'er he pleases—
When 'tis wet and when 'tis dry,
When it thaws and when it freezes.”

So, the honourable member for Normanby seemed to think that he was the person in the House best qualified to judge when measures were right or when they were wrong. It was not his (Mr. Morgan's) intention to occupy the attention of the House for more than a few minutes; but he thought it desirable to offer a few remarks on the Bill. When the system of single electorates was introduced by the previous Government, it answered very well for a time, and a majority of the House seemed to think that it was the right thing. Afterwards, people began to be dissatisfied with it, and that dissatisfaction found voice here last year and the year before, culminating in a generally expressed desire to have a Redistribution Bill passed. The next difficulty was, and always would be, as to the general basis of representation. He believed it was utterly impossible for any man to frame a measure of this sort, in a new country, to please everybody. The thing could not be done. Such were the fluctuations in a new country, that what seemed almost perfect to-day, might in three or four years become obsolete. It seemed to him a ridiculous satire that while the principal members of the Opposition found fault with the Bill on the ground that the Southern districts were chiefly favoured by it, yet it was from the Southern members that the main opposition to its principles came. He did not pretend to have any geographical knowledge of the electorates in the North and West; but he knew something about the one with which he was most intimately connected, and, as far as it was concerned, he was speaking the sentiments of his constituents when he said that the alteration of its boundaries would not be a disadvantage, but rather in their favour. The same thing, he believed, would be said in the adjoining electorates of Darling Downs and Carnarvon. On the whole, he thought the Bill was as fair as it could be made. Some amendments might, perhaps, be suggested in committee, but if the debate came to a division, he should vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MACDONALD said he was sorry to hear the view which the honourable member for Normanby had taken of this subject, and he scarcely thought the fears which that honourable gentleman had expressed with regard to getting members in the Northern and Central districts, were likely

to be realised. His experience during the last three or four years had led him to a different conclusion. With only two exceptions every election in those districts had been warmly contested; and if in a few cases Brisbane residents had been returned, it was certainly not for want of local candidates. He saw no great objection to Brisbane residents representing Northern constituencies. In some respects indeed, it was an advantage to have a member residing in the capital where he could always look after the requirements of his constituents. At the last election for Normanby there were not less than three candidates, and to his own knowledge, a very hard struggle took place between the supporters of two of them, and the result had proved highly satisfactory. If, at the last election at Rockhampton, there was no opposition, it was not for want of candidates. Several, as he well knew, were prepared to come forward; but the soundness of judgment, earnestness of purpose, and moderation and independence of spirit of the present honourable member for that electorate, convinced the people of Rockhampton that they would find in him a representative who would conscientiously represent the views of all parties, who would not allow himself to become the tool of any party, and who would not endeavour, by abusing his opportunities, to mislead the judgment or influence the prejudices of either party. In this he believed they were correct, and Rockhampton and the Central district might congratulate themselves on the result of that election. From Cooktown down to Rockhampton no proofs could be shown in support of the arguments brought forward against additional members. Irrespective of this, he considered that the act of the House last session in supporting the resolution of the honourable member for Toowoomba, fully justified the Government in bringing in this Bill, and the country would have been disappointed if it had not been introduced. The Colonial Treasurer said the other night that every member seemed to have a Redistribution Bill of his own. There was no doubt a good deal of truth in that, and it was certain that each member criticised the Bill from his own point of view. He was of opinion that the basis of representation proposed in the Bill was fair and generous. Some thought the basis should be that of the gross adult population, and others that of the adult male population; but it was rather strange that two or more prominent members, who advocated the latter basis, should have condemned the basis proposed in the Bill, and yet have tried to show by figures that the two were almost identical. He was certainly surprised and somewhat disappointed to find that the system of single electorates was to be perpetuated. Some honourable

members seemed to believe that the double electorate system would only intensify the evil of log-rolling which had been so much complained of. But log-rolling was not practised in his part of the country, and he hoped the Local Government Bill would be passed in such a shape as to form a sufficient check to the evils which had, no doubt, been introduced by the single electorate system. His most serious objection to the Bill was, that no provision was made in it for securing the representation of minorities. This might easily have been effected by grouping not more than three electorates, and allowing each elector to vote for two out of the three members. It seemed very unfair that when a candidate at an election obtained a bare majority over his opponent, the beaten party, though perhaps numbering many hundreds, should be politically disfranchised for the next four or five years. Another objection was, that the suffrage was given to any person who had been six months in the colony, and such persons had thus the same voting power as employers who might have expended the hard earnings of a lifetime, in finding a home for themselves and providing for large families. When it was considered that the employes were as two to one to the employers, it followed that if the former were to combine and exercise their privilege to the fullest extent, they could, in nearly every electorate, return political adventurers, who had neither vested interest nor reputation in the colony, and who would make them gigantic promises, which they never had any thought of performing. When one class had power to override another in this manner, some principle of limitation should have been introduced into the Bill, whereby minorities might have some chance of being represented in Parliament. Some such step might even yet be taken, and he hoped the subject would be taken up by other honourable members. Some honourable members felt aggrieved at the proposed alteration of the boundaries of their electorates. Perhaps no member had more reason to be dissatisfied on this point than himself, and if in committee he saw a chance of doing so, he should certainly do his best to have an alteration made in that respect. It was difficult to convince a member who was going to lose an influential portion of his constituents, that such a step was necessary; but believing that the Government, in introducing this Bill, were actuated by a desire to do justice to all parts of the country, and that they had acted to the best of their information and judgment, he did not feel justified in opposing the Bill on that account.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that, as the Bill had been already fully discussed, he did not intend to enter further into its principles

than to say that he did not believe in population being the sole basis of representation. Interests ought to be represented as well. He also wished to record his decided objection to the 8th clause and everything connected with it. He should confine the very few observations he intended to make to the electorates which he had had the honour to represent here at different times. Leichhardt, previous to the passing of the last Electoral Bill, returned two members. It was then divided into three districts, namely, Springsure, Leichhardt, and Clermont, each returning one member. By this Bill the Leichhardt district would in future return only two members, thus leaving it worse off than before. Although Normanby was not again to be included in Leichhardt, yet there had been added to it a portion of country in the north-west quite equal in extent. Although the district was as large as before the passing of the last Electoral Act, it was only to return two members. It might be said that Taroom had been taken away from Leichhardt; but it must be borne in mind that Burnett, to which it was added, at present returned one member, while Burnett and Taroom were only to return one member; so that actually there was no increase whatever in the representation. There was another thing which showed him that those constituencies had been very carefully manipulated. If honourable members would refer to the returns in their hands, they would find that at present Leichhardt contained a total population of 3,564; Springsure, 2,098; and the part of the Mitchell which was proposed to be added to it, 319; making in all 5,981 inhabitants. But the new district of Leichhardt contained 4,443; and Taroom, 891; making 5,334, thus showing a discrepancy between the electorates now and those proposed to be made of 640 persons, or something like eleven per cent. of the population; in fact, upwards of ten per cent. of the population of those districts had been ignored, and he should like to know what was to become of them. He did not intend to say much more on the matter, as he had merely desired to point out how the Bill would affect the portion of the colony with which he was more immediately connected. He was not aware how the Bill would affect other districts, but he had no doubt that in many there would be found the same cause of complaint. What he had mentioned had struck him as being very unfair, and he considered it was only right that he should lay it before the House.

Mr. FOOTE said it was not his intention to speak at any great length on the measure before them, as the leading politicians in the House had already given utterance to their opinions; and it only followed for himself and other honourable members

who had not the same high position to make a few remarks. He had not had the time to go into the merits of the Bill to the extent that many honourable members had done, more especially the honourable leader of the Opposition, who had taken considerable trouble to prepare statistics, and who had certainly furnished the House with a great deal of valuable information. He at first understood that the measure was not to be made a party question, as it was stated by honourable members on both sides, previous to the speech delivered by the honourable member for the Burnett, that it was a measure of such a character, that whilst many honourable members might object to portions of it, they intended to give what assistance they could to make it a good and valuable Bill. But on hearing the remarks of the honourable member for Burnett, it appeared to be set down as a party question; he hoped, however, it was not. Whether it was to be or not, he could not alter his views in reference to it. He believed that if the colony required increased representation it would be a very good measure and very fair and equitable, representing all classes and all interests as far as such a Bill could do so in the present state of affairs, as there appeared to be no class omitted, and the basis of adult population had been adopted as the principal basis, although that had not been strictly adhered to in every particular. But he believed that such a Bill was not required, and that the measure now introduced by the Government might very well have been left in abeyance for the next five years, by which time the population of the colony would have considerably increased. If they studied the parliamentary history of the colony for the past five years, they would find that with only forty-three members the sessions had lasted six months, whereas if the number was increased as proposed, an increased amount of talking would be involved, and the sessions would be still more prolonged to eight or nine months. All he could say was, that he should be compelled to resign, as he could not afford to give the time which would then be required. The single electorate system had not been approved of by the majority of honourable members who had spoken on the Bill, but so far as his memory carried him back, it had been the best system ever in force in the colony. He remembered the previous system and how it worked—"bunching," as it was called. In legislation as in other matters, what was every one's business was no one's, and under the bunching system, electors found that they could get nothing done for them. Certain sums of money were voted, it was true, but they lapsed session after session, and the colony made very little improvement. For his part, he approved of the single electorate system, and of each

member being held responsible to his constituents, which could not be done except under such system. Certainly, the Bill proposed to box some electorates by giving them to others; but he did not see what difference there would be between that and allowing them to remain single electorates, except that it would bring two members to bear on the Government of the day for anything that was required instead of only one. He failed to see that that would be any very great improvement. It appeared to him that if the Bill was carried out in its entirety as it now stood, it would involve a Local Government Bill and a Bill for the payment of members. In the future of the colony it was more than probable that a Local Government Bill would be a necessity, and would be beneficial to it, but he believed that in the present state of the colony, it was not prepared for such a measure. What was more, as had been remarked by the honourable member for the Kennedy, it was almost impossible to see how such a Bill could be passed to bear beneficially on all parts of the country. There were some outside districts, for instance, where the population was large but sparse, and others where it scarcely numbered three or four in five square miles of country. What tax could be raised from them, and what use would such a Bill be? And if, as had been proposed, some districts were allowed to adopt such a Bill, and others were not, it would be worse legislation than existed at present. Under those circumstances he could not see what benefit the Bill would confer on the colony at the present time, and for his own part he should oppose the second reading. Should it be carried, however, he should do what he could in conjunction with other honourable members to improve it as much as possible. Of course, as had been already observed, no Bill dealing with such a subject could be produced by any party which would be a perfect measure. It was also an absolute impossibility to introduce a measure that would bear equitably on all interests; and he believed that very great improvements could be made in the Bill before them, presuming it went into committee. For instance, he would observe, in reference to the Bremer and Bandanba districts, that if they were classed together the Bremer would always swamp the other, as one was a district with a population of mechanics and artisans, whilst the other was an agricultural district. The effect would be, that the agricultural part of the district would be disfranchised. The proper way of dealing with that question would be to bring the Bremer in with Ipswich, and also to bring the boundaries of Bandanba up to the municipality on one side and West Moreton on the other. There was also the electorate of Fassifern, which he considered

had been unjustly dealt with by the previous Bill, inasmuch as it had been taken from its natural boundary to the Logan, where there was a considerable population, so that if they put up a member it would be impossible for the other portion of the electorate to bring influence to bear sufficient to carry a member of their own. That had been proved by previous elections, and yet the present Bill proposed to give a further extension in the same direction, which, if agreed to by the House, would just hand over the representation of Fassifern to the influences of the city of Brisbane. He did not wish to speak disparagingly of Brisbane, but he thought that every electorate should study its own welfare; whereas, if the division was carried out as proposed, it would have the effect of disfranchising the greater part of the electorate of Fassifern. He trusted it would not be attempted, but if it was, he should give it all the opposition he could, as he believed that that portion of the electorate would be far better tacked on to some electorate on the other side of the range. In regard to West Moreton, which he had the honour to represent, he saw by the plan on the map, that it was proposed to annihilate that electorate altogether, or, at any rate, to make it very small indeed. Previously it was very small, almost as small as any which returned a member. He was aware that it was thickly populated, and that there was a large industrious agricultural class settled in the district; also, that it was a district producing both in quality and quantity, produce second to none in the colony. But he could not see the force of cutting down a district of that small size in order to give population to a district which was already too large for one member to represent, which extended from Laidley away to Tent Hill, to the foot of the range bounding on one side Fassifern and to the boundary of the Brisbane electorate. That district (Stanley) was an enormous one, almost too much so for one member to travel over. He thought if the introducers of the measure, instead of cutting a piece off West Moreton, had divided Stanley, and put a portion of it on to West Moreton, it would have been the most equitable arrangement that could have been made. He was aware that that could yet be done, but he saw plainly that the framers of the measure were evidently unacquainted with all matters of detail. He had no doubt that when such things were brought before them in committee they would be prepared to give way. It was not his intention to touch on the principles of the Bill, as that had been done over and over again at great length; in fact, speeches delivered not only during the present session, but in the last and

previous sessions, had been copiously quoted from by one honourable member, the honourable member for Normanby. He believed all honourable members wished to see an Electoral Act of such a character as to make it almost impossible for anyone to personate; at any rate, it should be a measure of such high character as to prevent the low practices frequently followed at elections. He recollected the Act brought in by the honourable member for Port Curtis, against which there was a good deal of prejudice, which provided for electors' rights; and he believed that if it had only been allowed a fair trial it would have been found to work very well. He thought that such a system could still be had recourse to, and that honourable members might give their attention to it, so that whilst providing for proper representation, they also endeavoured to secure purity of election. It was not his intention to take up the time of the House, as he hoped soon to go to a division; but he could see that the Bill, if carried, would involve the passing of two other measures of very serious importance, namely, the Local Government and the Payment of Members Bills. The former might be a good Bill at some future time, but the inhabitants of the Southern part of the colony were in such a state owing to the failure of their crops that they were not in a position to bear the burden of such a Bill. And as to payment of members, he was opposed to it *in toto*, and he trusted that honourable members would never vote money to fill that House with men who would be simply political mountebanks, the same as they were in another colony. He should oppose the Bill, believing that the colony had at the present time a sufficient amount of representation.

Mr. KIDGELL thought the Bill before them was of sufficient importance to induce every honourable member to give his opinion on it, whatever that might be, although it might probably have been expressed before and in better terms. At the outset he might say that he thought the measure was a fair and impartial one as regarded the redistribution of the electorates, but there were some things about it with which he could not agree. In regard to the redistribution, he thought it had been arranged in a way which entitled the Government to the respect of the House. The Bill proposed to provide for the additional and better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament. He did not agree with the honourable member for West Moreton that such a Bill was uncalled for, as he looked upon it as an absolute necessity; but even if it was not, the Government were committed to bring in such a Bill during the present session, and if they had not done so, they would have been very justly open to blame. He was

also surprised to hear the honourable member say that it was not a party question; he considered it was one entirely, as if it was not carried to the second reading, the Ministry of the day would be placed in a very unenviable position. One great objection to the Bill was as to the increase of representatives, and he thought there were many grounds for such objection. There were few honourable members of the House, and especially those residing in the outlying constituencies, who did not recognise the fact that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get local representatives for those constituencies. He did not mean to say that such constituencies would not be, in many instances, at all events, as well represented by Brisbane men, and perhaps much better. Still it was a principle that should not be admitted, and in a large colony like this, it was of the utmost importance that all portions, and especially the outlying districts, should be represented by men who had been in the districts and knew something of their requirements. Then it had been said that the increase of representatives would involve some measure being brought into the House which would provide for the payment of members; and though he was not an advocate of the principle solely of payment of members, he believed provision should be made in some moderate manner, as had been proposed by previous Governments, whereby the expenses of members from the far outlying districts should be paid by the country. A moderate sum placed on the Estimates for that purpose would be begrudged by very few people in the colony. Unless that were done, the one inevitable tendency would be to fill the House with Brisbane and Southern members, or those who lived on the railway lines, which were now being pushed on in various directions. He made no charge against the Brisbane and Southern members; but believed they had been actuated by a desire to do justice to all the colony; but this very desire might lead them to perpetrate an injustice in another way. He had seen votes pass rapidly for the Northern district with very little consideration by Southern members, and they had been acceded to from an earnest wish on the part of representatives of Brisbane and other Southern constituencies that justice should be done to the whole colony; indeed, that feeling had carried them away to do that which they often knew little or nothing about. This was one of the evils that would always result from having such a large percentage of Brisbane and Southern men in the House. There was another danger with which they were threatened, namely, a preponderance of the legal element. The present Ministry was composed, one-half, of Brisbane gentlemen in that profession,

and of the present House, one-seventh was composed of members of the legal profession. This might not be a bad thing in itself, but they should view with alarm any Bill that would increase the proportion to any serious extent. It was undesirable that any one element, particularly one so powerful as that of the legal profession, should have so large a percentage of the representation as it already had in this Assembly. A great deal had been said about the representation of minorities, and the Bill failing to provide for it, but he thought there was no great demand for a representation of minorities in this colony. Legislation should be more practical than experimental. Whatever Bill might be brought in, it would always be liable to be put aside. The House would undoubtedly retain within itself the power and privilege of initiating and bringing in new legislation upon this subject to suit the exceptional circumstances of the colony. The population was ever varying, and any Bill that might adequately provide for the equitable representation of the present population, might be totally unfitted in five or six years to come. He intended to refer to an extract on this subject from "Hare on Representation."

Mr. MOREHEAD: Oh, cut your Hare short!

Mr. KIDGELL would refer to it, because he thought it pointed to what he considered a very desirable end indeed. It was that mentioned on page 123 of the work to which he had referred:—

"There is nothing in the accidental circumstance that an elector resides or has property in a county, or city, or town represented by a plurality of members, which should entitle him to vote for more candidates than if he lived in a place which returned only one member. There is sufficient reason for giving a great community more weight in the Legislature than a small one; but there is no reason why a single elector, dwelling in a great community, should have more or less weight than a single elector in a small one."

He thoroughly agreed with the principle laid down in that extract. He did not know if Government were prepared to abandon the provision which was made in that Bill, to allow of an elector in a double electorate voting for both candidates. He thought that provision should be abolished; and were that done, it would be quite as good a step towards the representation of minorities as the present system of allowing the elector to vote for both candidates. That was not voting for a minority at all. Where there were three candidates, and two could be voted for, that would be an approach to it; while if the provision were left in the Bill, it would have the effect of intensifying the evils which had been already complained of in regard to this question. He would now refer to a remark

of the honourable member for Normanby, in which that honourable member found fault with the basis; the honourable member evidently thought the adult male population was the only correct basis of population to go upon. He (Mr. Kidgell) could not agree with him: in a colony like this, there were several reasons why it should not be adopted. Population was most changeable. What guarantee had they that on many of the goldfields, now largely populated, they in a few years would have hardly any population; and they would then have the singular spectacle of representatives without constituencies in more cases than one. On the other hand, it might be urged they might have large constituencies without representation; but the House, always retaining in itself the power of providing for additional representation, would admit this was an evil, and could easily be remedied; while it would not be so easy to disfranchise a constituency, as to give them additional representation. The honourable member for Normanby had said, "If we go so far as to take the adult population as the basis, why not go further and grant the female suffrage?" Very good writers and authorities on the subject of political economy had argued, and not without reason, in favour of this; they were splendid consumers of dutiable goods, and no one could deny that they were good producers. But women were actually bread-winners and taxpayers, and as such formed a part of the population, which should be fairly considered; and any scheme that did not include them, and that was based on the principle of adult male population, would not be a fair and equitable one. Before he sat down he would like to speak of the attempt to deal with what were called self-adjusting clauses. He was glad the Government did not intend to insist upon that portion of the Bill. Had they insisted, he could not have honestly supported the measure, as he intended to do. He believed that if these self-adjusting clauses were carried out as intended, they would intensify the danger looming in the distance, of greatly lessening the representation of the outlying, and increasing the representation of the Southern districts. A great deal of attention had been called to the question of a Local Government Bill; and he regretted that such a Bill was not running through the House side by side with the Electoral Bill, as had been suggested by the honourable member for Port Curtis. Should the Electoral Districts Bill be passed, and the Local Government Bill thrown out, the effect produced would very likely be a mischievous one. It was of the highest importance that a Local Government Bill should be introduced, and he should like to have some guarantee before the Bill was

passed that such a measure would be carried this session. Should a Local Government Bill not be passed, there would arise many of the evils which had been complained of so generally under the familiar term of "log-rolling." With regard to this, he must say that he believed the old single electoral system with a good system of Local Government (which was a necessity as much as the redistribution of seats) would be found to work well in this colony for years to come. As he had said before, any legislation now attempted should be practical, instead of experimental, and with a good Local Government Bill, and some provision by which outlying districts would be represented, he believed the Bill calculated to produce the best and happiest results to the whole colony, and it would bring about what it was required to bring—a just and equitable representation of the people.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said it was his intention to support the second reading of the Bill, and thought it was the best that could be devised for the improvement of the representation. Honourable members had referred to the basis of the Bill, and he quite agreed with those who maintained that no fairer basis could be adopted than the mean basis. He agreed with the honourable member for Port Curtis that while he had no objection to the Bill itself or the main principles, he did not agree with the distribution of power given to the various sections or groups. In looking over those groups he saw that the Brisbane group, for instance, had at the present time a population of 55,000, or more than a fourth of the population of the whole colony. That group was represented in the proportion of one to five. The member for Port Curtis remarked that London and Middlesex returned sixteen members, while Scotland returned sixty, showing that in the old country, at least, people were not represented by population, but by some other principle. With the groups in the Bill he perfectly agreed, with the exception of Brisbane. He meant no disrespect, either to the members or the constituency of Brisbane, but thought it represented far too much power in the House. In the new Bill it would have, instead of a proportion of 1 in 5, a power equal to 1 in $4\frac{1}{2}$. He did not think this fair to the other parts of the colony. If some system could be adopted of not interfering with the members of the outside districts, that was to say Moreton, Bulimba, Oxley, and Logan, it would be better. But, taking Brisbane, the central part of this group, it would be better if they had been brought together, and instead of returning eight members return five. This would be a much better plan than giving so large a proportion to the capital. Going back to the illustration of the home

country, he found that Glasgow contained a seventh part of the whole population of Scotland, but it was not represented by a seventh part of the members; it only returned three members, or a proportion of one in twenty. All large towns, he thought, should be dealt with in a similar way. He did not object to Ipswich or Rockhampton or any large town returning less rather than more members, so long as it was done on this principle. There ought to be some limit, and he did not see why, even in this Bill, some plan should not be adopted, whereby when a town arrived at a certain population it should return a certain number of members and no more. He only wanted to refer to one of the other groups, and that was the group, a portion of which he himself represented, namely group 2. It had been said that this group was over-represented according to population. Granted it was over-represented at the present time, under the new scheme it would be worse represented than in the present system, because, whereas now the group returned six members to a House of forty-three, under the Bill it would return seven in a House of fifty-five; it would thus be relatively placed in a worse position than it at present occupied. He wanted especially, however, to refer to the fact that every principal town in the colony had been given two members, whereas Ipswich, and Ipswich only, was to be left with one. It might be said that this was according to population; but he maintained it was not, because Ipswich was a divided town; the Bremer ran right through the centre of it, and the southern part was the Ipswich electorate, and the northern part went into the Bremer. He found in Toowoomba and Rockhampton and Maryborough and other large towns that parts lying round about had been added to them to qualify them for two members; but instead of adding to Ipswich, the Bill took from it and gave what was taken to Bandanba. This might be amended by throwing in the municipality of Ipswich and giving it two members, allowing Bandanba to return one. Taking it altogether, he hoped the Bill would be passed. He looked upon the basis as applying to single electorates as a whole, and as population increased the constituencies might be increased, and the members to two or three or four. He should therefore vote for the second reading, believing that the Bill might be made a very fair measure in committee.

Mr. GRIMES said that the position he took with regard to the Bill was different from that of any other member who had spoken upon it. He was not one of those who believed that such a change as that proposed had become an absolute necessity; more than that, he believed that the demand for it arose from circumstances which made the demand such as it would not be honourable in the House to listen to.

Last session there was a measure brought in by the honourable member for the Kennedy, and another by the member for Cook, with the object of dividing their electorates and giving additional representation to that portion of the colony. After some discussion, the Government, upon an amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba, decided upon bringing in a Redistribution Bill this session. The whole of the demands made for increased representation were based upon the argument that the voting power in the Legislative Assembly was not sufficient to give the North justice; in the mouth of some honourable members, this meant just what it was they could get for their constituents, and just what their constituents would like them to get. The admission, therefore, that this was a principle upon which representation should be based, was one that was not consistent with the honour of the House. He very much objected to the views which he heard very frequently expressed with reference to legislation and representation. He did not believe that it was an inherent right for every man to vote for a representative, for there were numbers of individuals whose circumstances and position rendered them utterly incapable of exercising that which was a trust imposed upon them for the good of the community in a right and proper manner. He was perfectly convinced, and the measures passed in the various countries where the representative system existed showed this fact was recognized, that the privilege of voting was extremely liable to be used by the voter in his own selfish interests, without regard to the welfare of the community. So greatly had this been felt, that the law recognised as a misdemeanor and wrong done to the whole community, the use of the vote on any other principle than for the interests of the community at large. Anyone who took the trouble to read through the English Bribery Act would see that the House of Commons had thought it absolutely necessary to guard the franchise against influences which were calculated to tempt a man to use it improperly. The selfish principle was to be found in various forms, and there were many instances of the vote being used, not only for selfish purposes, but actually for private gains. He used this so that he might draw a contrast between the condition of affairs which were so much reprobated by the legislatures in other countries which possessed representative institutions and what existed in this colony. He took it for granted that no one would object when he said that the direct selfish consideration which a man might have—by a gift of money, by a direct bribe, say to obtain food or drink at the candidate's expense, or by some promise made by his friends to find them lucrative positions, by

indirect promises of benefit, and what was set forth more at length by the acts against bribery—that all these applied more or less—that is, the principle applied to the state of affairs at the present time existing in this colony. He could not see much difference between a bribe directly offered to an individual, and a bribe directly offered to a district by a promise given of public works to be carried out in that district, which would have the effect of benefiting the property of the individuals in that district. If they looked over the state of affairs in this colony, they should find that this was the most powerful influence in the return of a member. He could put it to almost every honourable member who knew what was going on in the country, whether the very first thing that was expected in a candidate was not that he should look after local interests; and nearly every constituency had some pet project of its own, which the candidate must promise to further to the best of his ability. A candidate elected under these circumstances came into the House the elected of those who had selfish considerations of their own, and whose interests might be diametrically opposed to the best interests of the colony as a whole. He should apply these principles as he proceeded; but in the meantime he wished to say, that as both sides of the House seemed to agree that this measure was necessary, he should at once state his conviction that it was one remarkably fair, and one which he should heartily support. He did not agree that it was necessary, but being perfectly aware that his vote on that account would not influence the result in the direction in which he should desire it, he should, under those circumstances, give it to the Ministry, and vote for the second reading of the Bill. He wished, however, to deal with one or two things that had been said during the debate. It had been objected that the Bill did not do away with the single electorate system, but that it left that still to work its evil in connection with the colony. It had been assumed—for it had not by any means been proved—that the single electorate system was guilty of the evils to which he had referred, and which honourable members on both sides of the House had so strongly reprobated. He believed there was a good deal that was wrong in connection with it, but he did not believe that any of those evils could be attributed to the single electorate system. It lay somewhere else; and to do away with that evil, he maintained that they must denude that Assembly of its aldermanic character as far as possible, and clear the votes of the people from all that was liable to influence them in a direction in which they should not be influenced. The only question that should be put before them was, whether the principles of the candidate were such

as would be the best for the whole colony; and if that were done he felt satisfied that not one half the people who now voted would think it worth their while to go to the poll. He did not believe that the single electorate system required to be done away with, but he believed that the more they peddled with it in this way the greater the evil was likely to become. There were, not only in the single electorates, but in the groups of electorates in the present Bill, interests which were supposed to be identical, and he took it for granted that the representatives of those electorates would work just in a similar way as was done under the single electorate system, and seek to do the best they could for the portion of the colony they came from. He should be very glad to see the colony made into one electorate, and representatives sent to that House by the voice of the people upon Hare's system. He believed in that system; but he did not believe in the half measures that had been proposed in connection with it. He believed what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and if they adopted the system at all it would be just as wise to adopt it for the whole colony, and probably they might have a system that the colony would be proud of, not one under which they sometimes blushed when they found out the way in which elections had been made. They had a term, applied to a considerable extent in medical matters to the treatment of diseases which were treated by persons who knew very little about the nature of the disease; it was called "quackery;" and he thought the suggestions that had been made to remedy the disease in this case by honourable members on the other side of the House—by the limited application of Hare's system to the towns in the Southern districts of the colony, limitation of the number of members to be returned by populous constituencies, and the doing away with the single electorate system—savoured very much of what might be termed "political quackery." They did not seem to reach the disease at all, or even to recognize how severe it was. He hoped, before he sat down, to show that another suggestion, besides doing away with the single electorate system, would fail to produce the result expected from it. He had been very much pained to hear from both sides of the House a dead set against the Southern constituencies, of which Brisbane was supposed to be the centre. He did not see why there should be this dead set against Brisbane. If any attempt had been made to prove that Brisbane or other populous electorates connected with it had interests inimical to those of the rest of the colony, and that those interests were put forth in that way, he could understand it; but when it was a positive fact that in

every matter which had for its object the advancement of the colony as a whole, the Brisbane Press and the Brisbane people were always in the van, that, he thought, proved the very opposite of the general proposition that Brisbane interests were not those of the whole colony. In every fight that had taken place in the Liberal interests and in the interests of the people, where had Brisbane been? It had always been in the van; and if they wanted to see the influence of public opinion brought to bear upon the evils complained of at present, where did they find it? Certainly not in the country, papers each of which seemed to look to the member representing its district, to do his best to get something from the Treasury; but they found it in the Brisbane Press. They would find that in a case like the metropolis, which had a municipality of its own, the rate at which the public funds should be spent being made by law proportionate to rates levied, very little was to be gained by pressing upon Ministers the particular claims of their districts. It had been remarked by a gentleman on the other side, that Brisbane would be well represented if it had no members in the House at all; but he (Mr. Grimes) was of opinion that neither the colony nor the Liberal party could afford to throw over the thinking portion of the public, who resided in Brisbane. They were clearer in their views, and would answer more the description of what he had suggested a model elector should be, than any other portion of the inhabitants of the colony were likely to do. They had always been in the van in any movements for the advance of the colony. He could understand that certain gentlemen on the other side of the House might wish to cut off the influence which such a body of electors would have in the council of the country; but he could not understand the remarks made by the honourable member for Ipswich, who seemed to be inclined to sacrifice the interests of Brisbane for those of his own locality, and to cut down the constituency of Brisbane, simply because it preponderated over some other. It had been urged that minorities should be represented, and that the system should be tried first upon Brisbane. He claimed that minorities were represented, and probably to a far greater extent than people at first sight would imagine. For instance, a gentleman who came to this Parliament from a constituency where a difference of opinion prevailed, would be very considerably influenced by the views of the minority of his constituents. The influence of a minority should certainly not be to direct measures; their proper influence should be to moderate measures, and lead the majority in the direction to which legislation should tend. That being the case, he

held that the minority had a very material influence upon the character of legislation; for, if there were two forces, one working in one direction and the other in the other direction, it was evident that the force which preponderated would be very considerably influenced by the other force being brought to bear upon it. In illustration of that, he would refer to what took place on the previous evening, with regard to the arrangement said to have been made by the Premier with Bishop Bugnion, with reference to the introduction of Mennonites; and the interpretation which had been put upon the correspondence by the honourable member for Port Curtis. The honourable member put a question upon the paper, and he sought to show when the matter was brought up, that it was on account of the objection he had taken, that the leader of the Government withdrew from the arrangement he was said to have made, and backed out of it entirely. Where could they have a better illustration of the power of minorities? In many other instances, since he (Mr. Grimes) had been in the House, he had seen the influence of a minority triumphant over a majority. The influence of the minority must be exercised in that way, and no other. He would be sorry to see any principle adopted which would give it any other influence in the House. If the principle of the representation of minorities was to be adopted at all, why should it not be adopted all over the colony? The members of the Opposition must think honourable members on his (Mr. Grimes') side of the House very green if they thought that they would accept the interpretation of that system which had been given by the Opposition, and adopt Hare's system in those constituencies where they might possibly get one in a minority, and not extend it to those portions of the colony which were altogether under the sway of the Opposition and returned members to that side. He, for one, would willingly accept Hare's system if applied to the whole colony. He believed in it, but not in having it mutilated to serve the purposes of a party when they saw it could be employed for their benefit. There was another respect in which the minority in this House were represented. The electorates of the colony were not all of one interest, and every shade of opinion found its representative in the House. There was only one class of electors that could be named, who had a direct permanent interest, a really Queensland interest, in the colony, and who did not seem to have been properly brought to the front; but he hoped that they would soon force themselves upon the attention of the Assembly. Every other shade of opinion was represented, in a way, too, which did it no harm or discredit. Remarks had been made once or twice in the House,

that Civil servants and certain other persons having a direct interest in the Government of the colony should not be allowed to exercise their vote. He would confess that at first he held that view, thinking that their influence would probably be adverse to the interests of the community at large. He had, however, come to a different opinion latterly; because he saw that Civil servants, if they knew and appreciated their interest, would form a band of people who were concerned in the progress and prosperity of the State. They knew, or ought to know, that if the colony went down they would at once be affected by it, as no community would allow a large number of public servants who did very little for their money, to be pensioners, whilst the taxpayers were compelled to work hard to carry things through. Thus the Civil servants would see that their interests were identical with the prosperity of the colony in the future—just as in a country where loans were subscribed by the people themselves, a guarantee of their interest in the permanence and progress of the country was afforded. As dealing with the possibility, which had been suggested, of private individuals having interests opposed to the interest of the State, he would just mention one thing. The honourable member for Blackall had adverted to the fact that persons, by residing in the colony for six months, obtained the franchise, and were able to have a direct voice in the affairs of the colony. As an illustration of the way in which such electors might have interests opposed to those of the colony generally, he (Mr. Grimes) would mention the cedar-getters on the Daintree River, whose right, he thought, ought not to be recognised. They had come from other colonies, and as soon as the cedar was exhausted they would probably be away. Yet, at present, those gentlemen resided there, and had as large a share in the representation of the colony as gentlemen who held a much larger stake, and whose interests were altogether connected with the place. That fact incontrovertibly proved that it was necessary that care should be exercised in not giving to certain portions of the population a larger share of representation than was consistent with the welfare of the colony as a whole. He would offer a remark which appeared to him an apt illustration of the evil condition of the colony, from local influences being brought so prominently forward. He had been told by a bee-master that sometimes in a hive several bees would commence robbing other hives or stealing from the general store; and that in such cases, when the bees had once taken to the evil habit they could never be turned from it, nor induced to exert their energies in the interest of the community. The illustration appeared to be very applicable to the present state of

the colony. Wherever a constituency had been once corrupted by the promise of public works, or had got the idea that they would get more by bringing influence to bear upon Ministers than by honestly legislating for the benefit of the whole community, that constituency would never be reformed, but would follow the same line as long as anything was to be got. He did not, however, wish to convey the idea that he thought the prospects of the colony were so very bad in the future; because he thought they were fast arriving at that state of affairs when the evil would cure itself. It had been brought on by the not too scrupulous leaders of the Liberal party in the past, who had done more to make the Liberal party stink in the nostrils of right thinking men, than had the Opposition by their arguments against the practice. The only remedy for the state of things to which he alluded was to do away with the power of the House to vote large sums of money to be expended in the districts, and to confer it upon local boards. He should vote for the second reading, not because he thought the Bill was called for, or would remedy the existing evils. The only remedy for them was a determination on the part of those who conducted public affairs not to be influenced by parliamentary representatives, but to do what was right, turning neither to the right nor left. He hoped the Bill would not be altered in committee, for he believed it to be as fair as it could be drafted. It would not look well of honourable members to alter it with regard to their own electorates, and before he should support any alteration of boundaries good reasons would have to be alleged. Objection had been made to the increase of members by some honourable members, who seemed to think that twelve additional members, the equal of those in the House, could not be found. He believed a good many more suitable men could be found; but if fifty more could be obtained it would not remedy the state of things against which they were complaining. The talking capacity of the House would be increased, but the existing state of things would not be remedied, the cure lying in another direction.

Mr. MOREHEAD did not intend to be unnecessarily harsh upon the honourable member for Bulimba; but still, whilst listening to the honourable member, he could not help thinking of one of the lines of England's greatest poet—

"A tale that is told by an idiot,
Full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

The honourable member did not touch upon the question at all. As regarded the Bill before the House, he (Mr. Morehead) held that the basis of representation was bad on the face of it. He maintained that it was impossible to formulate a fixed basis for this colony; seeing the colony was con-

tinually progressing, it was utterly absurd for any Government to formulate a fixed basis upon which representation could be allocated. It was all very well to do so in a country fully settled; but in a young colony it was impossible. He maintained that the proposition of the Government, as contained in the Bill, although apparently fair, was really unfair. So far as he could see, it was intended rather to increase the representation of the large towns—leaving the outlying districts, which really created the large centres of population, unrepresented. He was justified in referring specially to his own district as a case in point. In the year 1864, the electorate he now represented had 157 inhabitants; in 1871, its population was 692; and in 1875, when the last Census was taken, 2,821; in other words, it was increasing in population in a series of quadruples. He found, further, that the allocation of members to the Mitchell, as provided by the Bill, was based upon the Census of 1875. Since that period, nearly the whole of the country to the west of the Thompson, known as the North and South Gregory, had been occupied; and by a return laid upon the table that day, it appeared that that outside district—which was not recognised in the Government tables—contributed £18,000 to the revenue; and that since 1875, 1,308 runs had been taken up. Yet these facts were not taken into consideration. Why should they legislate on the Census of 1875? The member for West Moreton had spoken of the size of his electorate. His (Mr. Morehead's) district contained nearly 150,000 square miles of country, and there was not a single unit who settled in it and formed a run, who did not become a source of wealth to the whole community. Where would the towns be without these back districts? The population of these districts could not be treated upon the unit system, and the principle that one individual was as good as another. Theoretically, the principle was right enough; but was it fair that those who went into the interior and settled it—who made the colony, and were still making it—should be treated as having only the value of units, because they had no wives and children with them? It must also not be lost sight of, that those who had wives and children could not take them with them, but had to leave them in the towns, and they, on the principle of the Bill, would be credited to some other district and counted against them. When the Mitchell district returned a member of Parliament, it had a population of something like 500. The Gregory had probably now a much larger population—an unnumbered population—who were, however, not to return any member. He was instancing a case where he thought the Government had not given full consideration to those who were outside the

large centres of population. He wished to point out that the Government were doing a gross injustice to the men who were making the colony. With regard to the Burke and other Northern districts, he found that they were simply unrecognised by the Bill, because it was alleged they had not a certain amount of population. But the want of population was not proved, inasmuch as the Government had not had an opportunity of taking a census. There was a large population entitled to representation in these districts, and it was grossly unfair that they should be deprived of their rights, because the Government had not got statistics. He should also like to point out that the seaports got the benefit of many arrivals by sea who settled in the interior. He admitted that there were no means of checking those who went into the interior; but his contention was, that some consideration should be given for such accessions of population. Then, again, let honourable members look at the size of his electorate, and the revenue it contributed. Over £36,000 out of £166,000 received for pastoral rents, or more than one-fifth, was derived from his district; or, to put it in another way, 1·42 or 1·43 of the whole revenue of the colony. Some honourable member had spoken of taxation and representation going together. This was direct taxation, and on that item alone, which did not embrace all the revenue by taxation derived from the district, his electorate was entitled to representation. He hoped the Government would give very serious consideration to the good case he had made out for giving North and South Gregory, and possibly the Burke, additional representation.

The Hon. R. PRING said he did not intend to speak against the principles of the Bill, and then vote for its second reading. He intended, if the House came to a division, to vote against the second reading, for reasons which he had arrived at after a careful consideration of the provisions of the measure. He maintained that this was not the proper time for the introduction of electoral reform. It was not the proper time, on the eve of a general election—and especially at the end of an expiring Parliament—to introduce a system of electoral reform, when he had yet to learn that that reform had been demanded by the country. Additional representation was, no doubt, required, as a simple act of justice, to certain portions of the colony, in consequence of the increase of population and prosperity; but this was not the proper time for the introduction of a general measure of electoral reform. The present Electoral Districts Act was introduced by the honourable member for Port Curtis. That Act introduced the system of single electorates, and this Parliament was the result of it. One Parliament was hardly a fair

test of the validity of that system, and nothing had yet occurred to show that some new-fangled scheme was necessary. When the occasion demanded a change, then that change should be effected, but not *ad captandum*, because it might suit the purposes of a Ministry. The existing electoral system had only been questioned by the supporters of the Government. If any fault was to be found in the single electorate system, it was because, as alleged, it opened the door to corruption. It had been stated here that an amount of pressure had been brought to bear on members which was as disgraceful to the Government as discreditable to themselves. If such were the case, then the system was bad, and stringent legislation was necessary to prevent its recurrence, or the Legislative Assembly would soon fall in the estimation of the people. If, on the other hand, the system was good, it should have a proper trial. No real allegation had been made against the working of it. He himself had been opposed to the single electorate system from its introduction; but his opposition to it arose, not from any imputed conduct, or anything which he had heard said in this House, but because it did away with the representation of minorities. The present Bill meant more than a Bill for additional representation; for, according to the seventh, eighth and following clauses, the system it introduced was to last for years. The Bill neither adhered to the system of single electorates, nor introduced the grouping of electorates. Unless some better system could be devised, either one or other of those must prevail. If the former, then the provisions of the Bill were bad, because it contained all the disadvantages of the single electorate system without any of the advantages of grouping. While there were several single electorates provided for in the Bill, there were others to which two members were allotted. In short, single electorates were carried out for one purpose and dual electorates for another. It was questionable for what purpose the Bill was introduced in its present shape. Why had several electorates been so shaped as to require two members? He had never heard any sufficient reason given why Wickham should be merged into North Brisbane with only two members, when there was at present one member for each. Was it because the Government could carry Wickham and not North Brisbane, and so have one vote more? Probably that hint had been given them by the result of the late election for the city of Brisbane, and they sought to get two votes where at present it was one against one. The amalgamation could produce no good effect on North Brisbane whatever, and it certainly would not benefit Wickham, for, as sure as he (Mr. Pring) sat there, the honourable member for Wickham would never get in

for North Brisbane, and would have to look out for a seat somewhere else. The next Parliament was the Parliament to decide what should be the system of electoral reform, if electoral reform was needed; for when certain additional representation was given, the colony would be more fairly represented in the House. Considering that the single electorate system had only been tried for five years, it would certainly have been advisable, without going to the expense of preparing maps, *et cetera*, for Government to have introduced a set of resolutions affirming a principle, and then, when the Bill was brought in, honourable members would be far better able to discuss it than now, at the fag-end of a Parliament, when an enigmatical measure was placed before them for consideration. He was in favour of grouping the electorates, so as to enable minorities to be represented—not with the idea that minorities should have a preponderance either in the House or in the country, but that they should have that fair amount of representation to which they were entitled. The minority did not rule in this House, neither did it rule in the electorates; but it should have a controlling effect to a certain extent over the opinions and acts of the majority. That could only be done by grouping electorates, by which means the principles of the single electorate system would have a chance of being fairly carried out. The representation of minorities should be introduced, even though the effect may not actually be produced by the result of the elections. To sum up the arguments he had used—for he did not intend to occupy the time of the House longer—if the single electorate system was bad, this Bill did not alter it, for it provided for two opposing systems, both of them bad. To go further, the reason of his opposition was, that he was not in favour of single electorates; and also, whether right or wrong in his arguments, that the present was not the proper time for electoral reform of the description proposed. Feeling as he did that the present was not the time, it would be his duty to oppose the second reading of the Bill. At the same time, should it pass the second reading and go into committee, he should endeavour to reduce it as far as he could do so to a Bill for creating additional members. He had done with the Bill, excepting as regarded additional members; and he should not allow it to proceed one clause farther than that; and he hoped to see a great alteration made in it before they got even as far as that. Coming to clauses 7 and 8, it was unnecessary for him to offer more than a few remarks on the provisions of the Bill themselves. The honourable members for Maranoa, Port Curtis, Kennedy and the Attorney-General, and others, had gone into the

question of figures, and results therefrom, and had respectively drawn their own conclusions in a manner which would give more satisfaction to the House than anything he could say on the matter; therefore he felt perfectly safe in leaving those calculations with the House. But he objected to the House passing a Bill which, whilst it provided for a continuation of the single electorate system, in some cases, also proposed a system of double electorates for, it did not say how long; but he believed its object was to provide a system for far longer than he thought at all advisable. In making that speech he had no fear of giving offence to his constituency, as he had received no instructions from it. He was perfectly satisfied that North Brisbane should have two members, and Wickham none, if the people of North Brisbane thought proper to recognise such an alteration; so far, however, as he could see, they would get nothing from it. At the same time he could not see the force of the argument adopted by some honourable members on his side of the House, that Brisbane would get everything by the Bill, for if male adult population was to be the basis of the Bill, wherever there was the greater adult population, there the greater number of members would be called into existence. As regarded new country, he was as willing to give increased representation to it as any honourable member of that House was; at the same time, whatever system was acknowledged to be the basis, should alone be carried out, and no other. He had no wish to detain the House longer, but would accept the advice given by the honourable Attorney-General a few evenings ago, although not acted upon by the honourable gentleman himself.

Mr. FRASER said he had no wish to detain the House, but an opinion had been expressed that honourable members on both sides should give their views on the Bill before they came to a division upon it. He had listened to the various opinions which had been expressed, and they certainly had been very varied. With regard to those which had been expressed by the honourable member who had just sat down, he was not disposed to dispute the position taken by that honourable member, that perhaps the last session of a Parliament was not the best in which a measure of reform such as additional representation should be introduced; but the honourable member must have forgotten that the Bill before the House was the result of a resolution passed by that Chamber last session, binding the Government to bring in such a Bill. That being the case, there was no blame attached to the Government, but on the contrary, they deserved credit for bearing in mind the pledge given by them last session. As he had remarked, there were

various opinions on the Bill—opinions more varied than he had ever heard expressed on any measure before; and although much could not be said in favour of it, on the other hand, much less could be said against it. It was the result of a resolution passed last session for additional representation to certain parts of the country, and also the result of a generally expressed feeling against the system of single electorates; and he thought it would be granted by honourable members on both sides, that the Bill on the whole was a fair one. It had undergone a very searching investigation and close analysis, by the honourable leader of the Opposition; and although he had pointed out that the figures of the Government were not quite correct, he had admitted that the measure was very fairly worked out—an opinion which was shared by honourable members on both sides. In reference to the second part, it had been objected that the single electorate system had worked badly. One objection was, that it enabled a clique in every electorate, not only to return a member practically, but also to bring influence to bear upon him, and through him upon the Government, which worked badly for the country. It had also been asserted, that under that system, members, when entering the House, rather sacrificed the interests of the colony generally to those of their own constituencies, and he believed there was a certain amount of truth in those things. Then, again, it had been said that the single electorate system had not had a fair trial, and, that provided it was accompanied by a Local Government Bill, such as was proposed, it would work better. But if even that Bill were in force, he was still of opinion that the root of the evil lay in the single electorate system, and that its defects would not be wholly remedied by such a measure as Local Government. They had also heard the system of grouping advocated; but it must be remembered that they were very glad to get rid of that system when they had it, although no doubt that was more owing to the manner in which voting was arranged. It was well known that at that time groups were returned to the House because a system of “bunching” prevailed, and that the clique which now returned one member used to return in some cases half-a-dozen members. Then, again, a great deal had been said about the basis of representation, and various opinions were entertained on that matter. He believed that if they searched every House of Parliament under constitutional government, in none other could they find the system advocated which had received such prominence in their own House, that was the male adult population basis of representation. It was originated in this colony—he did not think it had obtained

elsewhere, and he did not wish to quarrel with it, although he was himself in favour of a general population basis. The next matter which had been objected to was the preponderance said to be given to the Southern portion of the colony, and more especially to Brisbane. They had heard of Russophobia; but it really appeared to him as if there were in that House honourable members suffering from Brisbaneophobia; and, in fact, one great argument made against the Bill was that it was a Brisbane policy introduced by a Brisbane Government. They had heard that repeated so often that, like the little boy who was constantly crying "Wolf," when the danger came they would disregard it. He observed that there was another inconsistency running through the whole arguments advanced in the debate from both sides of the House. It was contended that the adult male population should be the basis of population; but when they came to deal with the capital and with other centres of population, that basis was immediately objected to, but upon what ground he (Mr. Fraser) could not conceive. If the basis of population was fair for one district, it was fair for all; and if it was not fair for all it was fair for none. Then they were pointed to the old country, and to the case of London and other localities, whose system and whose traditions they were advised to adhere to and pay attention to. Now the English system was no system at all. It was the growth of ages and development of circumstances, and he ventured to say that if England had to manipulate a fresh electorate system they should find the whole thing made very different from what it is. In reference to what had been said by the honourable member for Kennedy, with regard to a motion introduced by Mr. Blennerhassett in the House of Commons, he might say it was a notorious fact that as to the present electoral system of England there was a large section of advanced thinkers—men who were the leaders of political thought in that country—who had for a long time been dissatisfied with the present system, and had been agitating to recast the whole of the electoral arrangements. Great stress had been also laid on the fact that London, with its population of three and a-half millions, only sent sixteen members to Parliament, while Scotland, with not the same population, sent sixty-two. But it must be borne in mind that London included all the metropolitan districts, and that the city of London proper had only a population of 74,000, which sent four members of Parliament. So that whereas the average was one member for 50,000, London had a member for every 18,000. Therefore, to apply the condition and circumstances of England to this colony, was no analogy

whatever. Having said that much, he did not mean to say he was satisfied with the Bill. It was not such a Bill as he could have wished, or that he had hoped the Government would have introduced. It met the demand that had been made to a certain extent, but only to a certain extent. It was open to some of the objections urged against it, and it could not, after all, be regarded as other than a temporary measure. Allusion had been made to Hare's system; but he was not sufficiently conversant with it to pass an opinion upon it as to its suitability to the colony, but he thought some of its leading principles might be carried into effect in a modified form. The attempt made at self-adjustment under such a Bill as this was utterly impossible; but under a modification of Hare's Bill, the whole colony being divided into groups, it might have been made constantly self-adjusting, so that it would have been unnecessary for Ministers to come periodically down to the House and attempt to recast the electoral system, time after time, as they were now doing. He should have thought that the honourable the Premier, who was given to philosophical studies and pursuits, would have brought down some comprehensive and philosophical scheme applicable to the requirements and circumstances of the colony. He was disappointed indeed that that had not been the case. It had been remarked with regard to the Local Government Bill that if it passed, there would come as a necessary corollary, local taxation. That, no doubt, must be the case; and he thought it would be a very good thing, if before the session closed, they could carry a Bill of that kind. There was a good deal of misunderstanding in the country as to what this Electoral Bill meant, and it would be just as well, before the House came to a close, that a Bill of this sort should become law. He must confess, however, that it was one of such a formidable nature that he did not think it would come into law this session, however much he, in common with other honourable members, might deeply regret it. There was one other matter to which he would allude—the electoral rolls. There was nothing in connection with the present system about which there were greater causes of complaint than the present arrangement of the electoral rolls, and the mode of collecting them and bringing them together. He was sorry to say this matter escaped the attention of the Government; but he hoped, if they passed the Bill into committee, a clause would be introduced to meet the necessity. The evils that had arisen were another instance of Government attempting to do for the people that which the people should have tried to do, and should have been left to do for themselves. An objection had been raised that it was impossible in a new coun-

try like this to fix a factor for representation. Looking at the example of America, he did not think that it was impossible at all—that as a young country growing in population more rapidly than we did, from the very foundation has had a factor of representation from which they have never deviated, and he did not see why here we should not adopt something of the kind and settle the matter finally. Coming to the electorate he had the honour to represent, he saw it was absorbed in the electorate represented by the honourable member for Bremer. He could see no good reason for this. It would still return two members, and he thought it might have been left as it was. He was glad to see that the Government did not consider that part of the Bill, described somewhat irreverently by the honourable member for Port Curtis as the Athanasian creed, as an integral part of the measure, and that there was a likelihood of having it removed. It was a portion of the Bill he could not understand until he was enlightened by the honourable member for Maranoa. The Bill was not what he had expected, but it met the requirements in some respects; and as to the objection to Southern members for Northern constituencies, he thought that did not hold good. Several members of the House of Commons representing country districts, were London merchants, and they had in the late election for Bowen, an instance of a city man being returned in opposition to a local gentleman of considerable standing and influence in the district. He thought, therefore, that the objection to having an additional number of members from the Southern portion fell to the ground.

Mr. MURPHY said that whatever might be the general opinion of honourable members in reference to this Bill, it seemed to him that it had been introduced at a very opportune time. It appeared to him that being on the eve of a general election, it was a very proper time to bring forward such a measure, so that the constituencies might have an opportunity of taking advantage of the increased representation it afforded. He therefore thought they might fairly and dispassionately discuss the measure in relation to the general interests of the country, which could scarcely be well considered by a Parliament chosen in the way suggested by the honourable member for North Brisbane. He would also point out as another reason in favour of its introduction this session, that since the time the present Act was passed, five or six years ago, the colony had largely increased in population, and it was only reasonable that the number of members should be increased. He thought the honourable member for Blackall had shown, in his address that evening, that, at any rate, there was no dearth of gentlemen

willing and able to offer themselves as candidates for constituencies in the North—who were ready to come down at their own expense to represent those constituencies; and, leaving himself (Mr. Murphy) out of the question, he could point with satisfaction to the successful manner in which the Northern members represented that part of the colony in that House. He was sure it would be admitted on all sides that there were gentlemen of highly respectable character and intelligence fully able and willing to represent the Northern constituencies with which they were connected; and he said therefore the issue was proved in favour of the assumption of the honourable member for Blackall. No doubt, in one or two cases Northern constituencies were represented by Brisbane residents. Bowen was represented by a gentleman resident in Brisbane; but, as the honourable member for Bandanba had pointed out, that gentleman had been chosen by the electors in preference to a highly respectable resident of the district, who was admittedly popular, and deservedly so, and who would have been no discredit to that Assembly if he had been elected. In his own case, which he might be pardoned for referring to, he was invited by requisition to come forward or he should not have intruded himself on the district; and the electors took him for better or worse in preference to the local gentleman who opposed him, and who did so fairly and honourably, in every sense of the word. He therefore said, viewing the matter dispassionately, that the mere fact of gentlemen who might be elected, living in the Southern part of the colony, had not been felt hitherto by the Northern constituencies, and was no reason why they should be struck off the ballot-paper in their elections. They seemed to think that they would be done justice to, and acted accordingly. He candidly confessed that in the case of local men who lived long distances from Brisbane, and who were able and willing to become representatives but had not the means to enable them to do so, it was well worthy of consideration whether sufficient means should not be given to them for that purpose. At the same time, however, he would not be disposed to support the broad principle of payment of members. He hoped all honourable members would be disposed to do justice to every part of the colony; and he might say that, in his opinion, the honourable member for Mitchell had made out a case worthy of consideration, whether his district was not entitled to another member under this Bill. The honourable member had certainly laid the foundation for the full consideration of that question. In reference to the Bill itself, it was a matter worthy of remark that the Government

seemed to have taken a very fair view of the whole question, for they had actually expunged the electorates of two honourable members who had always consistently supported them—the honourable members for Bandanba and Wickham. They seemed to have been got rid of, “snuffed out,” as had been said; and it was therefore evident that the Government had not stopped to inquire whether their supporters would be thrown out or not, any more than honourable gentlemen opposite. The honourable member for Normanby had complained about the position in which his electorate was placed, but he (Mr. Murphy) thought if the honourable member would look at it on the map he would find that it would have been very difficult to join that electorate with any other. The honourable gentleman's electorate extended from the west of Clermont to Broadsound, and if it had been joined to Clermont and given two or three members, what would have been the result? That Clermont would have returned the whole lot, and the immense district the honourable gentleman now represented would be disfranchised. He, therefore, thought the honourable member had scarcely a fair case to make out against the Bill in relation to the way in which his particular district had been fixed by it. A good deal had been said, and very properly said, in regard to the desire to see minorities represented if possible, and he agreed with the general opinion that they should be represented. But the double electorate system would, to some extent, give that. He remembered in New South Wales, some years ago, on the occasion of an election for Sydney, there were five or six candidates, and four of them were returned. There it was practically a single electorate; but four of them bunched together and were returned as one. He thought the bunch consisted of Messrs. Campbell, Parkes, Cowper, and Wiltshire, and Mr. John Hubert Plunkett was the rejected candidate. The same thing could be done under the double electorates; so that minorities could be represented by plumping for particular candidates. With regard to the basis upon which the Bill was founded—the adult male basis—the honourable member for Normanby had made a suggestion with which he quite agreed. He would go to the extent of making it adult population, and not merely adult males. In that way the electorates would be largely increased, and he was satisfied, assuming that females as well as males had votes, that those who were returned to the House would not be in the least degree lowered in the public estimation, or in rectitude of conduct or ability. At any rate, he was prepared to support the honourable member for Normanby in that view, if he took any action in connection with it during the

progress of the Bill through committee. The way in which the electorates had been allocated was a fair matter for discussion and objection. It would be impossible, however, to do what was perfectly right and to please everybody; but he thought the Government had endeavoured to fairly mark out the different electorates. In the cases in which increased members were given, there seemed to be sufficient reason for it, and there seemed to be no desire to give a preponderance to the towns of the interior as against the country and suburban electorates. The principle he would like to see carried would be that which would ensure the full and fair representation of all, without allowing any particular electorates, from the way they might be grouped together, to swamp those adjoining them. The increase to the district he represented and to that represented by the honourable member for Kennedy was, he thought, fair under the circumstances. It was in consequence of the motion which had been brought forward by the honourable member for Kennedy, and the one subsequently introduced by himself (Mr. Murphy), upon which an amendment was moved by the honourable member for Toowoomba, that the Government gave a promise to introduce a Bill, and the measure before the House was the result. The Government had kept their promise, whether they had fully met the wishes of honourable members or not. On the whole, he believed the Bill was brought in with a desire to benefit the whole community. As far as he had seen, it was a good one, though there were some defects, which might be amended in committee. For instance, with regard to the clause which related to the way in which elections were to be conducted in the future, he should like, if he had an opportunity, to do away with that provision, and introduce the system of hustings nomination; because he would rather see a man's face in public, and test him and hear what he was going to do, than not know until he got into the House. He also objected to the existing bribery clauses, which seemed to be so framed that every gentleman who came to the House would be bound to overstep them. If the Act were strictly construed, nearly every gentleman returned, if properly appealed against, might be unseated. It was almost holding out an invitation to electors to raise a question as to the legality of a member's return. People were not in the habit of wilfully breaking the law, and should not be made responsible for what somebody else did. It was quite enough that a man should suffer for his own sins without being called upon to answer for other people's. For the reason he had stated, namely, that he thought it was a fair attempt to carry out the resolutions of the House, and that it was a step in the

right direction, though far from being a perfect measure, he was of opinion that the Bill should be supported.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Rockhampton) said that so much had been said about the Bill that it was impossible to say anything new, and he was therefore almost inclined to let it pass without further remark. However, he felt bound to say a few words. The preamble said that the Bill was to "provide for the additional and better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament." He thought all would agree as to the "additional," though there might be some doubt as to the "betterness." He was free to admit that on the *data* the Government had compiled they had endeavoured to act fairly by both sides of the House; but that *data* had been shown to be exceeding inaccurate and entirely misleading. He did not think that the Bill was at all wanted, and the speeches that had been delivered supported that view. Even the speeches from the Ministerial side of the House "damned it with faint praise." He did not know how they were to get a better representation of the country. The old House in which they sat had been found quite sufficient, and the whole business of the country had been done by it with perfect ease. No one looking through the Bill could say that the new electorate would give a better representation. Honourable members on both sides had very freely condemned the single electorate system, but no attempt had been made to deal with that matter at all. It was perfectly plain that under the dual electorate system introduced by the Bill, those electors who had before returned one member, would in future return two; it was impossible for any other result to be attained. In the redistribution, there had been an attempt made by the Government that it should be fair; but the returns were altogether inaccurate, and the time of the House should not be taken up with such Bills. Once in ten years was quite often enough to bring in such a Bill. As it was necessary to such a measure that a fair and accurate return should be arrived at, it was perfectly certain that, if passed, the measure would have to be revised in 1881, when the next Census was taken, or in the session immediately afterwards. Members on the Government side of the House spoke lightly of the additional members, but he thought it was one of the worst points in the whole Bill. It was no easy matter to get members for the outlying districts, from the absence of any leisured class in the colony. Everyone required all his time to attend to his own business, and it was a very serious drawback to have to attend the House four, five, or six months in the the year. The effect of having the additional twelve

members would be to lengthen the session, and thereby add to one already very great difficulty. Honourable members on the other side seemed to think it was rather an advantage for a constituency to be represented by a Brisbane resident, but he (Mr. Macfarlane) could not see it in that light, and he thought if the position of parties were reversed, those honourable members would not see it in that light. He had no unworthy jealousy of Brisbane, and thought that members should be able to take a perfectly dispassionate view of the subject. It had been pointed out by some honourable members that every member was in no unimportant sense a member for Brisbane. The whole of the Ministry necessarily spent nearly all their time in Brisbane, and every member from four to six months in it, and those members were therefore interested in seeing that it was a city fit to live in. He thought there was very great room for improvement in that respect, and next time he came down he would give his support to any means of making it a city fit for a man to live in. After all, what was the Redistribution Bill? It was only a tool to work with, and if all their time was spent in sharpening axes there would be very little else done. The Government should have been content to go on with the Act at present in force. He had heard a great deal about the evils of the single electorate system, but though he sat upon the benches on that side of the House, he did not agree with everything that was said there. He did not think the single electorates had had a fair chance. So long as the centralization lasted—which the Local Government Bill was designed to do away with—so long as every road and bridge that was wanted was the subject of an application to the Treasury, so long would the struggle for money last, and electors find a way of getting at members. He wished to see minorities represented, and it seemed to him that the single electorates had secured the representation of minorities to a great extent. He thought it was best for every man to give his own opinion fairly and frankly, and then from the coalition of ideas they arrived at a sound basis. He was of opinion that the minority on his side of the House had exercised considerable influence, and that, had it been much stronger, the Government would not so long have kept their places. Had the Government taken the advice of his side more, he thought it would have been better for the country. He was afraid that in the "bunching" system, there was room for any amount of scheming and managing—quite as much as under the single electorate system. It was quite probable that the system was worse than the single electorate one, as each voter had the right to vote for two members; he, at any rate, would prefer the

single electorate scheme. He would rather see a system of triple electorates, voters not to be allowed to vote for more than two members: but the Bill made no such provision, and under the dual system it was utterly impossible to attempt its recognition. He considered that some districts had great reason for complaining at the way they had been treated. The honourable member for Mitchell had made out a good case for his electorate. He (Mr. Macfarlane) knew a great deal about it, and could back him up. The Mitchell electorate was an enormous district. It was composed of the pastoral districts of Mitchell, and North and South Gregory, and began 300 miles west of Rockhampton, extending to the South Australian boundary and to within 250 miles of Normanton. It was utterly impossible for one man to represent it. In the returns laid before the House—and they were compiled on the Census of 1875—the district had 1,597 male adults, exclusive of Chinese and Polynesians. It had been shown over and over again, by members on the Opposition benches, that the basis, after all, of the Bill was the adult male basis, and that 1,091 would return a member. The Census of 1875 gave the Mitchell 1,507 white adults; but he was perfectly confident that the number was now more than 2,000. Even on the Government's own basis, the district was entitled to two members, and if the Bill reached committee he hoped the sense of justice would be strong enough in honourable members to give it its due. He was not speaking for it because it was one of the "Central group." He wanted justice for it, and considered it absurd to lay down a hard-and-fast line, and that it was unfair that men in the far North should be grouped in the same way as the residents of towns. The towns had advantages over outside districts. Even if some of them had no member, they could always get at Ministers, and experience had shown that Ministers were very "squeezable." But with the far outside districts it was different. What could one man do for such a large electorate as the Mitchell? He was not speaking in disparagement of the honourable member for Mitchell; but if he were possessed of ten times his ability, what could he do alone? He hoped that in committee honourable members would give that district another member. He would not say how he should vote; he did not think he was called upon to say how he would vote. Certainly, if honourable members on the other side carried out their convictions, they would not vote for the Bill; but if it should pass the second reading, he would do his best to make it a workable measure and one that would give satisfaction for the next four or five years.

Mr. PETTIGREW said that he should like to make a few observations before the

debate closed. They had had a long but very good debate on the whole. The question had been fully dealt with so far as figures were concerned, and the Bill had been thoroughly gone into. The measure had originated in rather a simple way. The honourable member for Kennedy finding, as he (Mr. Pettigrew) believed was the case, that the members who had been returned for the North were not so compliant as he had anticipated, put a resolution on the paper asking for increased representation for the Kennedy and Cook. A Bill was brought in by him, and at its second reading an amendment was proposed by the honourable member for Toowoomba—whether at the instigation of the Ministry or on his own responsibility he did not know. A debate ensued, and the Government consented to bring in a measure; but beyond that, he believed the country never asked for the measure. He could not see the slightest necessity for bringing it before the House. The political party to which he had the honour to belong had an itch for nibbling at every fresh agitation, and if they would improve upon what they interfered with, he would think nothing of it; but they made everything infinitely worse. The first Bill passed by the Ministry formed under Mr. Macalister during the present Parliament was an instance in point. It did away with electors' rights—the great protection against impersonation, and established a new system of polling districts, which no Government since had put into force, the result being that impersonation was carried on more than before. The only necessity that he could see for the Bill existed in the anxiety of the Ministry to do something. Had they considered what must be the ultimate effect of the measure? If there was to be direct representation to the House from the constituencies, it must be paid representation, for men could not be expected to leave their business in far distant places to come to the House, and stay there for six months, and pay their own expenses. A Payment of Members Bill would no doubt be brought in next session. He was reading, lately, the opinion of two gentlemen who came to represent the North in the first session of the present Parliament—Mr. Hodgkinson, the member for Burke, and Mr. Graham, the member for Clermont; and they distinctly stated that there was no possibility of getting members who understood the local requirements of the districts unless they were paid. A great deal had been said about single electorates; but it struck him that the people who condemned the system knew nothing about it. He had seen letters and editorials in the Press, and had heard all sorts of objections made to the single electorates—that they led to all kinds of jobbery and everything

else; but these people must remember, if they had any memory, that triple electorates had been tried. Ipswich and West Moreton were triple electorates; and what was the result when they were in full swing? He had no hesitation in saying—corruption. Cliques were formed for the return of the members in “bunches,” and an independent man had no chance of being returned, although the West Moreton electorate alone extended from the Range to Woogaroo, and from Spicer’s Creek to the watershed of the Mary. Not more than twenty men decided who should be returned, and the election meetings were, generally speaking, held in one of the small rooms in the School of Arts. If any independent candidate came forward, and sought support from any other quarter, it soon began to be whispered about that he had been seen with the priest, or that the priest had been seen with him, until at last the cry of “No Popery” was raised; and on one occasion a man who might have been as greater a reformer as John Knox was branded as a Papist. What was the result under the single electorate system? At the election of the honourable member sitting near him (the member for Ipswich), his opponent was ahead up to eleven o’clock on the polling day; at that time the “No Popery” cry was raised, and his honourable friend won by 70 or 80 votes. At the recent election for Fassifern they tried on the “No Popery” cry at Harrisville, but it did not go down, because the electors there could not combine so readily as in town. That was the practical outcome of the system. The Ipswich party, Mr. Justice Lilley once said in this House, invariably supported every Government, and no doubt for reasons thoroughly well known to themselves and the Ministry. Since the introduction of the system of single electorates, members were thoroughly independent of coteries. He could laugh at all the coteries in the country if they came between himself and his constituents. Even the Premier himself would have no quarter there. But were the Government in earnest in carrying through the Local Government Bill? If they were, he could not see the slightest necessity for any increase of members, for there would be nothing for them to do. There were no less than twenty-seven clauses or sub-sections in that Bill, which relieved the Minister for Works of nearly all his duties, excepting with regard to the railways. The Treasurer was left in a somewhat similar position. The Minister for Lands would have nothing to do but receive rents, and the Colonial Secretary would have to take the Foreign Office. As to private members, there would only be left to them the harbours and rivers, the Volunteers and defences, and the dry-dock in South Brisbane. The next thing would be to pass the Estimates

in globo, and then they would be graciously dismissed until their services were again required next year. In this measure the Government were dealing with a question they did not understand. The country had never demanded the Bill, and it did not require it. It would cost £16,500 to put it into operation, to pay its members; and what good would it do after all? Would they get better legislation? The present system had only been in existence four or five years, and had never had a fair trial. Had the members elected under it not done their duty to their constituents? Was it not better to return men who knew the wants of their constituents rather than that a gentleman, no matter how learned and able, should be required to leave Queen street, in Brisbane, to go up to Cooktown to represent them? Was it not better that a member understanding all about sugar and the Polynesian question should come from Mackay than that he should go from the Supreme Court to them? The present member never saw his constituents from one end of the year to the other, and was directed solely by the letters he received from some of them. If he (Mr. Pettigrew) were to listen to half the written directions given him, he should have to torment the Ministers’ lives out of them. The more closely honourable members were connected with their constituents the better, and when the House was filled as nearly as possible by local men, they might begin to talk about increasing the representation. A Bill like this should not be introduced on the eve of a general election, because it was splitting up old boundaries, ideas, and associations, and old members had to make new friends all on a sudden. For instance, what a mess they had made of the honourable member for West Moreton; and they had saddled him (Mr. Pettigrew) with an entirely new generation, who knew not Joseph. Each member ought to represent the colony, and the colony had not spoken on this question. His own constituency had spoken against it, and so had the constituency and the Press of Ipswich. As to himself, he never wished to go against both his own private judgment and the wishes of his constituents; so that he should, with great grief, no matter what the result might be, vote against the second reading of the Bill. He must vote for the protection of himself, his constituents, and his country before he voted for the protection of his party.

Mr. PERSSÉ said he wished to make a remark on the manner in which the honourable member for Stanley had drawn him into the question. No such cry as that of “No Popery” was raised with regard to his election for Fassifern. He was returned simply because his constituents thought they had got hold of a man who

would do well for them, and not on any party or religious cry.

Mr. PATTIGREW said he never charged the honourable member with being returned on the cry of "No Popery." What he said was exactly the opposite.

Mr. PERSSE said he must have misunderstood the honourable member; but there certainly was no such cry raised in the district.

The PREMIER said he wished to reply on the assumption that the remarks he might have to make would close the debate, and that there was no other honourable member who wished to address himself to the subject. The matter had now been discussed by the House at some length, and he was glad to say that they had to-night had an expression of opinion, which it was very desirable they should have had. Reference had been made to the history of this Bill, the causes that led to it, and the result. He thought that the causes were sufficient, namely, that various inequalities had disclosed themselves in the existing system of representation. The honourable member for the Kennedy had referred to them, more particularly in regard to the Northern districts, and it was well known, that in some of the Southern districts the same state of things prevailed. Now, if they did exist, then the present session was the proper time to bring forward some remedy. It was possible and even probable that the demand which was represented as existing for the present measure was not very great, but it was evident that if it had to be dealt with at all for some years to come it must be dealt with during the present session. Complaints had been made by honourable members opposite that the Bill was not decided enough—that it was not radical enough in the changes it proposed, and that it was not comprehensive enough, as it did not deal with the whole subject; but he would ask honourable members whether, if the Government had attempted a radical change, there would have been much probability of their carrying it? Their duty was plainly to bring forward a measure which they considered would meet the circumstances, and to endeavour to pass it; and presuming it was not all that was desired, at any rate it might do away with some of the evils which had been disclosed. Availing themselves of the best basis they had, namely, the Census of 1875, they had applied to the Registrar-General for further information. He contended that the Census was a good basis, and although he was free to confess that it might not be altogether correct as regarded the Northern districts, it was sufficient for the Government to put the matter in motion, and they then ascertained from the Registrar-General what was the existing state of the population. In his speech on introducing

the Bill he adverted to the fact that even within the last twelve months great changes had taken place in the colony, and that, in some respects, they could not pretend to say that the figures which had been prepared were, in some cases, even a close approximate to the actual facts, but they had endeavoured to arrive through those figures at the best and fairest result they could. He did not mean to say that the basis they had taken was the best one; but they had brought to bear upon it, the total population and the total adult male population, and had also taken into connection with those two the territorial division of the colony; that they had made the ground-work of the Bill. He mentioned that, because he considered that the statements made by the honourable leader of the Opposition required to be to some extent answered. He held in his hand a letter addressed by the Deputy Registrar-General to the Registrar-General in reference to one branch of the inaccuracies which had been referred to by the honourable member, namely, the increase in the number of Kanakas in Mackay, and their diminution in the Mitchell district. He felt it was due to the honourable member to mention how that was arrived at, and he could not do so better than by reading the letter he had referred to. It was as follows:—

"General Registry Office,

"Brisbane, 8th May, 1878.

"SIR,—I beg leave to report that the proportion of Chinese, Polynesians, prisoners, and lunatics, which was estimated to exist in each Census district on the 31st December, 1877, was ascertained in the following manner:—

"The percentage of such persons resident in each district to the whole number in the colony at the time the Census was calculated, and the same percentage of the total number of such persons estimated in the colony on 31st December, 1877, was allotted to each Census district. Where the Census districts were grouped according to territorial division, the following appeared as the gross number of such persons in each division:—

"Southern division, 6,442; Central division, 1954; Northern division, 15,341. Of the figures for the Northern division, from Wardens' report and other sources of information, it was estimated that 14,159 resided in the Cook and Palmer districts, leaving only a balance of 1,182 to be proportionately divided amongst the other Census districts that in territory, which were adjusted as follows:—Bowen, 17; Burke, 12; Cardwell, 90; Etheridge, 23; Gilberton, —; Kennedy North, 164; Kennedy South, 21; Mackay, 680; Somerset, 118; Townsville, 57. Total, 1,182.

"With respect to the Mitchell electoral district, the Census districts within the boundaries of which are—Blackall, Marathon, and Tambo, the percentage of Chinese, &c., found to exist in each of these districts at the time of the Census was as under:—Blackall, 1'64; Marathon, 0'94; Tambo, 0'29. The proportion of

the total Chinese in the colony at the end of 1877, according to the above percentage, is represented by the following figures:—Blackall, 389; Marakho, 225; Tambo, 68; total, 682, the number as published in the printed Tables.

“I have the honour, &c.,

“WILLIAM T. BLAKENEY,
“Deputy Registrar-General.”

That was a reply to the statement that the Government had attempted to arrive at results not warranted by facts, and that owing to Polynesians being reckoned as white men in one case, the electorate was not entitled to the representation given to it by the returns. He thought, however, a very fair approximate had been made in the returns to the population of the several districts. He wished, in connection with that matter, to refer to what had been said about the Mitchell district, and the disproportion of representation allotted to it. A vast deal of the country in the Diamantina district had been taken up within the last year or two, and, consequently, some disproportion might exist in regard to it; but he wished to inform the honourable member for the Mitchell, that taking the Census alone, without going into the returns furnished by the Registrar-General, taking what actually appeared in the Census, he found that in the group of districts represented by Normanby, Clermont, Leichhardt, and the Mitchell, there was a total proportion of 11,331, and an adult male population of 7,478, giving the proportion to that population, on the supposition that the whole electorate was to be represented by five members, of 3:90. Now, whatever injustice might have been done to the Mitchell itself, considerable justice had been done to the group of electorates of which Mitchell would form a part. At the same time, whilst he would admit that there were inequalities of numbers which required to be accounted for, he thought after what he had said, the Census itself might be taken as a fair basis, and that, whilst the Government were not giving more than their due to the coast districts, they were giving more than their due to the inland districts; in fact, that was a complaint which had been made to them. Then again, with regard to the group comprising Condamine, Maranoa, and Warrego, according to the Census returns they would be only entitled to 1:99 of representation, whereas they had in reality four members allotted to them. That, surely, was not an injustice to them. The Brisbane electorate, on the same basis, remained much as it was. The centesimal proportion was 15; but on the calculation of the honourable member for Maranoa the centesimal proportion was 15:25, so that even there there was a near approach to the figures in the centesimal calculation of the Government. He was rather disposed to take notice of the objections which the

honourable member for Maranoa had put forward to the Bill under five heads; the first of which was that no remedy was provided for the single electorate system. No doubt the single electorate system had its evils; but he did not think, as had been stated that evening, that its evils were attributable to the fact that the Government had not yet succeeded in establishing a system of Local Government. It would appear as if from some remarks which had been made that the system of single and double electorates had not been tested in other colonies, but he found that in New South Wales, out of seventy-two representatives, fifty were chosen for single electorates. In Victoria there were eighty-six members, and of these, twenty-nine were single electorates, and twenty-one double electorates. In New Zealand there were eighty-eight members, and though he had not been able to find out how many were actually single electorates, he believed a great proportion of them were, while there were two or three triple electorates. In Tasmania, the whole of the representation was composed entirely of the single electorates, thirty-two in number, returning thirty-two members. In South Australia, there were eighteen double and three triple electorates, in a House composed of forty-six members. It would be apparent that in the neighbouring colonies they were not indulging in experiments. They had been guided by a reasonable consideration of what was best for the circumstances of their respective colonies. Another objection which the honourable gentleman took was, that there was no provision for the representation of minorities. He was inclined to think that the worst system of representation of minorities referred to was that which was known as “the three-cornered system,” under which in an electorate of three, the electors were only entitled to vote for two. A good deal more could be said for the system of minorities under which the elector in a double or triple electorate was only allowed to vote for one member. In connection with this subject, and referring to the remarks made by the honourable member for Kennedy, he cited as a case in point a debate in the House of Commons; but he (the Premier) would remark that the narration was not finished, for the debate took place in a very thin House, which was counted out. He did not think the principle of representation of minorities was, at any rate, one held in high esteem in the mother country. Another objection the honourable member took was, that there was an unnecessary increase of members from forty-three to fifty-five, and the honourable member took exception to what was not on argument of his (the Premier’s), but a statement, namely, that though they had arrived at this increase on arbitrary

grounds, it was in imitation of what had previously been done by the member for Port Curtis. That was true; but it was a coincidence only that six or seven years ago the honourable member brought forward a Bill involving almost the same number of electorates; and if he did so, there was no great harm in the present Government doing the same. He (the Premier) at once admitted that when they went into this investigation of the subject they had not arrived at a decision as to what the number should be; they could only arrive at it by a thorough investigation of the claims of the different parts of the territory; and on the whole, he thought there was no great difference between the member for Kennedy and the Government upon the subject. The honourable member said a better arrangement could have been made by an increase of five rather than of twelve members; but that was simply a matter of degree, and a decision could only be arrived at after an investigation of all the circumstances of the case. In New Zealand, the House of Representatives consisted of eighty-eight members, and he did not know that the affairs of New Zealand were conducted in a worse manner than the affairs of this colony were likely to be with fifty-five members. It did not follow that because the number of members was increased, its efficiency was diminished. On the last occasion, when the honourable member for Port Curtis increased the number of the representatives to forty-three, it was probably considered that men could not be found to represent the constituencies; but the country rose to the occasion, and capable men, as capable as any, had been found to represent the additional electorates. Why was so much said about the difficulty of obtaining a proper representation of the Northern districts? There was considerable difficulty at the present time, no doubt, and there would be a difficulty in getting local men; but he entirely differed from those gentlemen who affirmed that it was absolutely necessary to secure local representatives. Some of the most capable, working, and useful members of the House at the present time were not local members. He would take the honourable member for Kennedy himself. He could scarcely be called a local member. Some years ago he had a local interest in the Kennedy, but he was now almost as much a Brisbane man as any of them. The honourable the Speaker was another illustration of a gentlemen living in Brisbane who represented a Northern constituency. Could it be said that his constituents were not well represented? Was it to be said that the honourable the Speaker was not perfectly competent to fill the position he filled, or that he would not be competent to fill even the position he (the

Premier) filled? Take, again, the member for Port Curtis. Was he a local member? Was he, even by property or direct association, connected with the electorate of Port Curtis? But would the electors of Port Curtis find a more efficient representative than the honourable member, in a tradesman, storekeeper, or publican in the town of Gladstone. On the contrary, it was well known that they had secured a very excellent representative, and would have to go a long way among themselves before they found a man equally fit to represent them and their local interests. It was true their local interests were not of a very pressing character, and he was not aware that the honourable gentleman had bored the Government respecting them, though he had succeeded in getting a post office and telegraph office far in advance of the necessities of the town of Gladstone. Then there was the member for Maranoa, who, whatever he once might have been, was not, that he (the Premier) was aware, personally connected with Roma or the Maranoa district at the present time. But was he disqualified because he lived in Brisbane and had property chiefly in the Western districts? Was it to be said even of himself (the Premier) that it was a disqualification to the electors of Maryborough that they had honoured him with their confidence? He had no local concerns with Maryborough. He was thankful to say the electors of Maryborough only applied to him a certain amount of gentle pressure on matters of detail, which was to be expected. He had represented several constituencies, and he must say that the amount of pressure applied was very little. He had always found that a certain amount of attention was required to matters of local concern, but he had never found that they were pressed unduly upon him so as to make him weary of his parliamentary duties.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh, oh!

The PREMIER said that honourable gentleman seemed to be inflicted with a perfect mania on the subject of "log-rolling," because certain demands in his district had been overlooked. The point he was attempting to enforce was this, that he doubted whether there was any truth in the everlasting cry about the constituencies bringing undue pressure to bear upon their members. The only honourable member who had been particularly pertinacious and successful in securing attention for his electorate was the honourable member for Toowoomba, who had been, in the point of view they were now considering, a "pattern member;" but in looking around him in the House he could not see any member who was unduly pressed by his constituency. The Minister for Works probably had an amount of pressure brought to bear upon him in connection with roads and bridges, and it was only right that he should have

that pressure brought to bear upon him; he must expect it, and local representatives would fail in their duty if they did not make their representations, and the Minister for Works would fail in his duty if he did not listen to them, and endeavour to the best of his ability to remedy what they complained of. On the whole, he (the Premier) was led to the belief that it was an unjust indictment against the constituencies because they brought forward these matters, and pressed them with an earnestness which was only natural under the circumstances. He believed this pressure, however, had nothing whatever to do with the votes given in the House, and that a member was bound to make representations, as required by his constituency, to the Minister for Works. If they were properly explained, the Minister invariably attended to them—let them come from friend or foe. These accusations, then, were overdrawn altogether, and it was time the House estimated them at their real value. He should wish it quite to be understood that, while making these remarks, he freely admitted there was a necessity for a Local Government Bill. They had gone on far too long imposing duties upon a central authority, instead of putting them upon local authorities; and he hoped during this session they might be able to remedy the evil. He entirely differed from the remark made by an honourable member on the other side, that the Bill now before the House was not calculated to work a reform in this respect. He was afraid it was only too stringent; that representatives of constituencies would shrink from applying it when they came to deal with it. They would find it was rather too pressing. He only hoped that the Government might receive support from honourable gentlemen opposite, who had professed to be so very willing to support that Bill.

Mr. PALMER: We never said that Bill; we said a Local Government Bill.

The PREMIER said he supposed that would always be the way—that the Opposition would not be satisfied with any particular Bill. They professed to support the principle of the measure; but when that principle came to be enforced into practice, that support would possibly be refused. With regard to the subject of local representation he did not know that there was a more efficient member in his way than his honourable friend the Attorney-General. He did not know that he (the Attorney-General) had any special local connection with Oxley; yet, the electors of that constituency were not unwilling to trust their interests to him. He, therefore, said, taking these instances, and others which he might refer to, that men, not local representatives, could, with perfect justice and success, undertake the duty of representing distant

constituencies. A good deal had been said about the payment of members in connection with the Bill, and it had been contended, that if the measure passed they must eventually have payment of members. He did not think that he had ever voted upon such a question; but he professed to prefer, and he did prefer the voluntary unpaid services of representatives. He had for many years performed those duties, and he should prefer to continue to perform them in the same manner. There were, he was prepared to admit, circumstances—which he hoped would be only of a temporary character—that would admit of their considering the question of the payment of members, especially as applying to distant constituencies. If it was to be applied in any case it probably could be effectually applied to those constituencies; but at the present he held that it was a libel on the present representatives in Parliament assembled to say that the people were not effectively represented under the system now in force. There were, he repeated, exceptional circumstances in which the payment of members would be justified; but he hoped those circumstances would be of a temporary character. When society became more consolidated there would be a larger number of men who could devote their time to the business of politics; and he must submit that, on the whole, it was desirable that the business of politics should be conducted by those who had leisure to devote their time to it. Men of genius—men of determination—were not prevented from finding their way into that House. There were examples of men who had had great difficulty in getting into Parliament, and it was in consequence of their pecuniary circumstances. But he contended that it would be better for them to battle with such circumstances, and find their way there by the will of the people. If they had the right stuff in them, the people would send them to Parliament, and he was quite sure that in time their choice would be justified. But on the whole he preferred unpaid services. In saying so, he admitted that there were circumstances, and times and places, that that might be temporarily departed from; but he objected to commit the Government to any definite line of policy upon this point. He expressed his own opinion, nothing more; but at present they were not discussing the payment of members, and he did not see that it was by any means a necessity that if this Bill passed its present form, therefore it involved the payment of members. A considerable point had been made by the honourable member for Maranoa as to the defective character of the statistics furnished by the Government; but he thought his honourable friend the Attorney-General had sufficiently disposed

of that. The very slight difference in the estimate circulated by the honourable gentleman and that framed by the Government, was not sufficient to justify much stress being laid upon it. But why was it that the honourable gentleman, having taken all these objections to the Bill, had not met the Government openly by a direct vote? He (the Premier) thought the honourable gentleman, as leader of the Opposition, was bound to meet the Government by a direct vote in opposition to the Bill. Why had he not proposed that it should be read that day six months? The direct inference from all his remarks led to that conclusion; but yet he had not taken that course. In fact, he had abrogated his rightful position as leader of the Opposition by refusing to meet the Government in that way. If the Bill was bad, and contained all the evil principles which had been asserted of it, why had not the honourable gentleman rallied his followers, announced that it was a bad measure, that it would result in all that he most wished to avoid, and brought all the opposition he could to bear against it? Instead of that, he had left it to an independent member on the cross-benches to get up at the last stage of the debate, and declare that he would secure a division upon the Bill. He (the Premier) said the honourable gentleman, in taking that position, had failed to grapple with the subject as it deserved to be. He was afraid that if they did not succeed in passing the Bill this session they would not pass a Bill for amending the representation for some years to come. His honourable friend the member for West Moreton seemed to think that this was not a party measure, and had informed the House that there would be no necessity for an amendment of the representation for the next five or six years. In that respect he differed entirely from the honourable member, who, at the same time, was quite right to assert his independence of the Government, if he conscientiously believed that they could go on as they were for the next five or six years; but if he supposed that this was an open question, he was very much mistaken. It was quite impossible, after the Government had pledged themselves to bring in a Bill, and after they had placed it before the House as their principal measure of the session, that they could accept a defeat on it without taking the consequences of that defeat. It was the measure of all others that was required now; because, if this attempt to deal with it did not succeed, the same opportunity would not occur for some years. Another objection taken to the Bill was, that it did not deal sufficiently with other important matters connected with the electoral law; but the Government had never intended to do so, and did not profess to do so. They would have enlarged

the area of controversy if they had to do so especially if they had gone into the modes of representation referred to by the honourable member for Bulimba, who seemed to differ from the principle of residential suffrage. But they did not propose to raise such questions as that on the present occasion, because they would only increase the difficulty of dealing with the subject, and the Government found that they were bound to minimize the difficulties as much as possible. They felt bound to secure a redistribution of electorates before the general election, which they knew must come under ordinary circumstances before the end of the year, and which might come before then. They felt bound in their duty to the country to endeavour to remedy some of the glaring defects of the present distribution, and they had done that in the Bill now under the consideration of the House. It had been said by some honourable members, "Let us pass it into committee, and we shall do what we like with it there;" but he wished honourable members clearly to understand that the Government would not submit to treatment of that kind. The honourable member for Port Curtis had spoken of the possibility of worrying the Bill into some shape in committee, but he hoped honourable members would not attempt to do anything of the kind. He wished to affirm the intention on the part of the Government not to submit to an increase of members beyond fifty-five. They should not submit to any material increase, and should oppose as much as possible any further increase. What wrecked the Representation Bill in New South Wales was this—when the Bill went into committee, after passing the second reading, it was made fair game of, and an addition of fifteen members was made to it, and when it came out of committee it was a very different Bill from what it was when it went in. Then when it went to the Upper House it was very righteously rejected as being entirely different from the Bill introduced by the Government. The Government would not submit to any treatment of that kind in connection with this Bill. They would rather discard the Bill altogether. He wished honourable members would have the courage of their opinions. If they believed the Bill was fraught with all the evils they described, let them by all means reject it, but do not let them play with it. In the matter of boundaries, he was quite willing that there should be some modification. In that respect he admitted that the Bill was by no means perfect, and he was quite willing to receive light from any quarter; but he was not willing that the Bill should be made sport of and spoiled by any number of members who might band together for that purpose. He would rather discard it at once. Let them try

conclusions on the second reading; but let them not trifle with the Bill in committee. When it passed the second reading it must be dealt with promptly in committee or not at all, and it must be apparent that it must be passed through the Upper House in time for the collection of the rolls and the proper treatment of it under the electoral laws. He hoped, therefore, if there were any doubts—if there were any honourable members who had been accustomed to support the Government who did not feel that they would be justified in their consciences in voting for the Bill, let them vote against it rather than trifle with it, and think they would tire the Government out in committee. He had no desire to retain office any longer than it was the will of the House to impose that duty upon him. He had observed for some time that there had been a shifting of the old land-marks of party politics, and probably the sooner the change came the better. Let them define better than they were now defined the principles upon which their parties were to be framed, for he must confess that at present there was not sufficient cohesion either on the Ministerial side of the House or on that of the Opposition. If it should be the pleasure of the House to pass the Bill during the present session, it should be undertaken with the full consciousness of the fact that if the opportunity now offered was allowed to pass, it would probably pass for the next two or three years. He admitted that the Bill was not all he could have wished; but, at any rate, it was a genuine and honest attempt to meet existing defects, and he hoped it would be met in that sense—it was an honest attempt to remedy those defects, in the belief, that now was the time to deal with them, and that if they were not dealt with now, they could not be dealt with for some time to come.

Question—That the Bill be read a second time—put.

The House divided :—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Douglas, Miles, Dickson, Griffith, Garrick, Kingsford, Hockings, Kidgell, Fraser, McLean, Grimes, Low, Morgan, Groom, Murphy, Persse, Beor, Macdonald, Tyrel, Macfarlane, (Ipswich) Beattie, and Bailey.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. McIlwraith, Palmer, Ivory, Pettigrew, Thompson, W. Scott, Foote, Macfarlane (Rockhampton), Macrossan, Graham, Stevenson, Morehead, Fox, and Pring.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

The Bill was then read a second time, and on the motion of the Premier, its committal was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved, That this House do now adjourn; and stated at the same time, that the Government proposed to take the Local Government Bill into consideration to-morrow,

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 10 o'clock.