

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 1878

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 22 May, 1878.

Questions.—Unfurnished Returns.—Formal Motions.—
Electoral Districts Bill—Committee.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. WALSH, with the permission of the House, asked the Honourable the Speaker—

If he will cause to be prepared, and will lay upon the table of this House, a report from Mr. Senior, Principal Shorthand Writer, upon the progress and prospects of the Parliamentary Shorthand Cadet Class?

The SPEAKER said he had already requested the Principal Shorthand Writer to supply a report, which would be prepared immediately.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Secretary for Public Works—

When will a punt be placed at the Yengarie Ferry, which has been, in other respects, ready for traffic for several months?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Miles) replied—

A punt will be provided for Yengarie Ferry as soon as the amount provided on the next Estimates shall have been voted. It is reported the approaches have not yet been completed.

Mr. BELL asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Are the Government aware that delay in the transmission of telegraphic messages is so great that postal communication is quicker in some of the districts in the colony?

2. Are the Government going to erect a second telegraph wire from Brisbane to Dalby and Roma, and on other lines requiring increased facilities for communication?

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) replied—

1. No. Delay may occur in exceptional cases, but if they are submitted for investigation, a reason is assigned.

2. The business on Western line between Brisbane and Roma has increased; it is proposed to provide an additional wire between those places.

Mr. BELL asked the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Is the site decided upon for the proposed Hospital at Dalby?—and, if so, where?

2. Will the money to be expended for the purpose be asked for from Parliament, or taken from Railway Construction Loan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:—

1. No site has been decided upon for a Hospital at Dalby.

2. An amount will be expended from the Railway vote for a Hospital either at Dogwood or Dulacca.

Mr. MACROSSAN asked the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Is it a fact that the Bridge at Collidge's Crossing has a foundation consisting mostly of solid rock, and the contract was let specifying that the piles should be driven twenty feet into the bottom?

2. On reconsideration, do the Government think the site chosen the most useful for a crossing-place?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:—

1. It is a fact that the foundation consists partly of rock, and the piles for the first two piers have been driven to a depth of 13 and 18 feet. The contract provides for 20 feet.

2. The site chosen for the bridge is considered the best available, and the only place where a bridge could be erected suitable for the inhabitants of that locality.

UNFURNISHED RETURNS.

Mr. WALSH said he rose to a question of privilege. He had before him a list of returns ordered last session, but which he had been credibly informed had not yet been produced by the Government. The following was the list—"Area of land alienated or contracted to be alienated up to the 30th of April last," on motion of Mr. Macrossan; "Abandoned conditional and homestead selections," on motion of Mr. McLean; "Reserves for camping purposes," on motion of Mr. Low; "Cost of preparation and printing of returns to orders and addresses, and of *Daily Hansard*," on motion of Mr. Murphy; "Cost of buildings and works in and near Brisbane," on motion of Mr. Bailey; "Survey of roads branch of Works department," on motion of Mr. O'Sullivan; "Condition of the Aborigines at Durundur and Bribie Island," on motion of Mr. Macrossan; "Letter from Dr. Challinor to the Colonial Secretary," on motion of Mr. Thompson; "Proposed railway extension to Bulimba," on motion of Mr. Beattie; "Proposed railway extension from Oxley to South Brisbane," on motion of Mr. Pettigrew; "Mr. Wylie's report on proposed railway from Ipswich to Fassifern," on motion of Mr. J. Thorn; "Quarantining of the steamships 'Mecca'

and 'Thales,' on motion of Mr. Murphy; "Agent-General's report *re* ship 'Zamora,'" on motion of Mr. Walsh. Notwithstanding the strict orders of the House, these returns had not been laid upon the table by the Government. In fact, they had not paid the least attention to them; and he thought it was a farce for honourable members to move for returns if the orders of the House were treated with the impunity they were at present.

The SPEAKER said no debate could take place in reference to the matter unless a question was before the House.

Mr. WALSH said he had always understood that when the rights of honourable members were in any way invaded, an honourable member addressing the House respecting the matter should rise to a question of privilege. This was strictly a question of privilege.

The SPEAKER said the honourable member had a right to introduce, without notice, a question of privilege, which took precedence of all other business; but a question should be submitted to the House in order that the matter might be debated. If the honourable member wished to make a motion he could do so.

Mr. WALSH said he would conclude with a motion. His desire was to see that no Government should be allowed to trifle with the business of the House; and that when once a return was ordered, it was the imperative duty of the Government to furnish it with as little delay as possible, and as faithfully as possible. He did not hesitate to say that the list he had read was a list of indictments against the Government for not taking the slightest notice of the strict orders of that House, which should be respected and obeyed. He moved the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said he was not in the House to hear the opening remarks of the honourable gentleman in connection with this matter, but on looking at the list of returns, he saw that some of them were now being prepared, and he believed that some of them had been furnished, although he was not in a position to state positively whether such was the case or not. The first was a very important return—"The area of land alienated or contracted to be alienated up to the 30th April." A portion of this return had been laid upon the table, and the remainder of it would take some months to complete, being a very extensive return. He at once admitted that these returns ought to be made, and he thought it would not be a bad practice to revive lapsed returns of the preceding session and to have them called out with the unfurnished returns every week. He did not think there was any objection to revive returns that had been ordered and not made. Of course it was a question whether sometimes it was worth while to prepare returns

as a matter of form. The House generally admitted of a motion calling for returns passing as formal, and sometimes those returns involved very expensive processes, and the results were not commensurate with the outlay. Various methods had been suggested to put a stop to the printing of returns, which were sometimes called for without sufficient cause, and which involved a large amount of printing and codification; but he must admit that he had not yet arrived at any practical result as to how it was to be done. He did not mean to say, that when once the House had affirmed its desire to have a return made, the Government had any right to withhold it; and the only remedy he could see was for honourable members to exercise a certain amount of moderation in asking for returns. Very often elaborate returns were called for to secure a small amount of information, and he hoped, in calling for returns in future, some moderation would be used, for last session, the volumes of the proceedings of the House were extended to an unnatural and portentous size. A great deal of matter was introduced that was totally irrelevant to the effectual conduct of the business of the House. With reference to the particular returns referred to, he thought they ought to be furnished to the House, and he should cause inquiry to be made into the matter; and he would be prepared at a later date with some further information in connection with them. If the honourable member was anxious that they should be revived, probably a definite resolution to that effect would meet the case. Another return, he observed—that having reference to the cost and preparation of the daily *Hansard*, was laid upon the table the other day, with the information made up to date. That respecting the condition of aboriginals at Durundur had, he believed, also been made. However, he would see that proper inquiries were instituted, and that an answer would be forthcoming as soon as possible.

Mr. PALMER said if the Premier had confined himself to his last sentence it would have been quite sufficient answer to the honourable member for Warrego; but instead of that he had gone all round the question. He began by stating that these returns involved great expense and trouble, and then he said, notwithstanding that, that the House having once ordered returns, they were bound to be furnished. He (Mr. Palmer) maintained that the Premier was himself to blame for the voluminous and unnecessary returns that were placed on the table last session. They were absolutely a disgrace to the Votes and Proceedings, and it was the duty of the Government to oppose such returns. He called the attention of the Premier to the fact last session, and he agreed that a number of the returns

ordered were of no earthly use, and were furnished at considerable expense. There was then a sort of understanding come to that he (Mr. Palmer) should assist the Premier in opposing what were considered useless returns, but it was no use, for the very first return asked for on his (the Premier's) side of the House—a most useless one, about some policeman, which now cumbered the Votes and Proceedings—was granted. The Votes and Proceedings of last session amounted to three large volumes, and the result was that it was almost impossible for a person to find any important matter which he wanted, having to wade through such a mass of rubbish to do so. It was the duty of the Government to oppose useless returns, and not to allow them to be ordered. They should make a member asking for a return show what use it would be to the House. They had a return last year about some unfortunate policeman at Nerang Creek, a matter that he was sure no one took the slightest interest in. That was only one sample. He thought it should be at least one of the duties of the Printing Committee to decide which of the returns should appear among the Votes and Proceedings and which should not. It was bad enough to print such rubbish; but to put it among the Votes and Proceedings was beyond bearing. It was the duty of the Government—and as one private member, he would assist them—to oppose such motions; and unless good reasons were shown, the returns should not be furnished at all, but above all things they should not be printed.

Mr. GROOM would take advantage of the motion for adjournment to bring a case under the notice of the House which deserved some consideration at the hands of the Colonial Secretary. It was well known that there were in the different towns of England a class of gentlemen who represented themselves as being sub-immigration agents; and he had had occasion before to call attention to the flagrant actions of those gentlemen in grossly misleading immigrants who on arrival in the country found themselves deceived, to the very great injury of the colony. The case in point showed that such a man had been guilty of the grossest misrepresentations, if not fraud. The document he held was dated February, 1876, and bore the name of a gentleman who called himself George Wright, and who was described as an accountant living at Ipswich, England. He had been canvassing for emigrants, and had represented to parties that every passenger who paid his own passage was entitled to £40 worth of land orders. It would be remembered that the land order system was abolished in 1874, it being one of the first Acts of the incoming Government that followed Mr. Palmer's administration.

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There was, therefore, no excuse in this case on the score of ignorance. The receipt given to James Cooper ran as follows:—
 “Clarence House, St. Margaret's Green, Ipswich, February 26, 1876. Received of Mr. James Cooper the sum of sixteen pounds—shillings—pence, for passage to Australia.” Honourable members would notice that it did not say Queensland, but was good for any part of Australia; and as the name of the receiver was printed and not written, the paper was perfectly valueless as a receipt. Mr. Wright represented that he was fully authorised to act on the part of the Queensland Government, and gave James Cooper this document:—

“George Wright, Accountant, Clarence House, St. Margaret's, Ipswich, to Mr. James Cooper, Ringshall.

“Windsor Castle,” March 7th, 1876.

“DEAR SIR,—I enclose ticket for yourself and wife. You must pay the other £16 to Messrs. Devitt and Moore, 118, Leadenhall street, city London, and have a receipt entered on the ticket. Then take the ticket to the Queensland Government Officers, 32, Charing Cross, London, when they will supply you with the land orders for £40 worth of land. You can get any information you require at either of these places. Wishing you a prosperous voyage,

“Yours truly,

“GEO. WRIGHT.”

The unfortunate immigrant went to London to Messrs. Devitt and Moore and paid them £16. He then went to the Agent-General's Office, as he had been instructed, where he was laughed at, and told he had been fooled by George Wright, who had represented himself as an immigration agent. This was a case in which the man had endeavoured to obtain justice, and, failing, had asked him (Mr. Groom) to take the matter in hand. He thought the House should take some action, and if the person had been treated as was represented, George Wright should be compelled to make the man a present of the land orders he had promised, or be no further employed by the Government. Unfortunate people were deluded by such persons as this George Wright, and he did not think they should be employed as sub-agents. He would be glad to hand the papers to the Colonial Secretary, and he hoped some justice would be done to this man, who had come out on the distinct understanding that he would receive certain land orders, and who was consequently now a dissatisfied man.

The Hon. R. PRING was sorry that under motions of adjournment such questions were allowed to take up the time of the House, which was required for the consideration of more important matters. He would not keep the House five minutes; but would simply answer the remarks of the honourable member for Toowoomba. If the Government knew the man who com-

mitted the wrong, the Government were answerable for his action; if the Government did not know the man who committed the fraud, he (Mr. Pring) could not see how the loser could require the Government of the colony to give him what he had lost any more than if his pocket had been picked in England.

The PREMIER said the case appeared to him to be one of direct fraud, if the statements made were correct; and the best way to deal with the matter would be to send the documents to the Agent-General, and instruct him to prosecute the man for obtaining money under false pretences. It would appear that the man who complained had an opportunity of making his complaint to the Agent-General, and making him acquainted with the fact that he had been deceived. Probably the Agent-General would have taken action at the time. There was nothing in the papers to show that the individual was authorised by the Queensland Government, and it rather appeared that he was purporting to be an agent when he was not one. He (the Premier) would take care to forward the papers to the Agent-General in order that he might make inquiries.

Mr. PERKINS said that last session, when an increase was proposed to the salary of the Agent-General, he called attention to the quality of the men employed to perform the duties in connection with the office. He did not think it at all extravagant to suppose that this system of canvassing was repeated in England, Ireland, and Scotland. It was evident to any ordinary honourable member that in the absence of a signature, there were no means of tracing the man, even if the Colonial Secretary forwarded the papers to-morrow; there might be many men of the same name in Ipswich. That showed the way in which business was conducted in the Agent-General's department at the present time; and he was not hazarding an opinion when he said that within a few years several serious defects would be discovered in connection with the department. From rumours he had heard—and seen verified by documents—he thought they would be called upon in a couple of years to send some expert home to investigate matters; and perhaps it would be a better way to send a competent man home now to see that intended immigrants were not imposed upon and decoyed, in a manner worse than that which took place at the New Hebrides. The honourable the Premier hinted that the man did not go to the Agent-General, but he (Mr. Perkins) believed he did go, and that, instead of getting encouragement, redress, or explanation, he was told if he did not shut up he would be kicked out of the office. He wished honourable members to bear in mind the rumours abroad and the correspondence

that had been read the other day by the honourable member for Port Curtis in connection with the "Groper," that they might see the system of swindling and fraud that was being practised upon the Government of Queensland at the present time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it appeared to him that the honourable members for Aubigny and Toowoomba were going a little bit too far. There was nothing at all in those papers to show that George Wright was an agent of the Queensland Government, and he hoped honourable members would not hold the Agent-General responsible until such could be shown to be the case. It was very possible that George Wright might have taken in this man, but the Queensland Government could not prosecute everybody who committed a robbery.

Mr. BAILEY had understood that it was the duty of the Agent-General to protect immigrants, and when an immigrant came and said he had been defrauded by a man who claimed to be a sub-agent, it was the duty of the Agent-General to prosecute or to find a remedy. He thought that some one connected with the office must have neglected his duty, as they had it in black and white that George Wright had taken the man's money on false pretences, and sent him to London on the understanding that he was to receive those land orders in return for the money paid. The very plain duty of the Agent-General was to prosecute the fraudulent sub-agent, and it would be very foolish to send the papers home now, because it was too late.

Mr. MORGAN had never heard more inconclusive documents than those read; and there was no proof, beyond the bare unsupported assertion, that the Agent-General had threatened to kick the man out. There was, in fact, nothing to show that George Wright was employed by the Agent-General in any way, and it was wasting time to consider the matter at all.

Mr. McLEAN thought the charges of fraud made against George Wright were rather unjust, as there was nothing to show that he did not believe when he received the £16 that what he stated was a fact. It was not so very long since the land order system was abolished, and a good deal of ignorance with regard to Queensland prevailed, some of the sub-agents knowing as much about Queensland as they did about the moon. As to their geographical knowledge, some thought that Brisbane was in New Zealand, and Melbourne in Tasmania. To send instructions home to the Agent-General to prosecute a man for saying what he, no doubt, believed to be true, was ridiculous altogether.

The Hon. R. PRING: No indictment would lie.

Mr. McILWRAITH agreed with what had been said by the last speaker. The man

gave a receipt for the money, and wrote a business-like letter telling the emigrant what to do. Every document was complete, and there was nothing about them to show that the man was acting fraudulently. It was more probable that he acted from want of information, thinking that the land order system was still in existence. The fraud which had been attributed to him was certainly not borne out by any document there. He (Mr. McLlwraith) would take the opportunity of the adjournment to elicit some information from the honourable the Colonial Treasurer as to the Estimates, and in doing so would notice, that in that respect things were getting worse year by year. The Estimates should be prepared and put on the table when the House met, or at all events, within a week or two later. That was the position of affairs to which they tried to attain a few years ago. The first Parliament in 1874 met on 6th January, and the Estimates were laid upon the table the next day. The second Parliament in that year, met on the 25th March, and the Estimates were tabled the same day. In 1875 it was a little worse, but then the interval was only two weeks, and in 1876, the Estimates were tabled within seven days of the meeting of Parliament. Last year it was worse, the interval being three weeks; but now the Parliament had been in session just four weeks, and they had not heard anything about the Estimates yet. There were special reasons why, this year, the Estimates should have been placed upon the table at an early period. A short session was anticipated, and the House had been called together so late, that the financial year was nearly up, and the old system of voting money, before the discussion of the Estimates, might be forced upon the House. He would, therefore, ask the Colonial Treasurer when the Estimates would be put upon the table of the House, what had been the delay, and why he had departed from a custom which had contributed to the convenience of honourable members?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. Dickson), in reply to the honourable member for Maranoa, said the Estimates would be placed on the table on Tuesday or Wednesday next. It was the desire of the Government to afford honourable members an opportunity of seeing them as soon as possible, but circumstances had combined to delay them. The extension of public works in connection with the railway department had rendered it necessary that the engineer should go very carefully into matters of detail with reference to the surveys during the ensuing year. The returns from Rockhampton had only arrived last week. Those circumstances had combined to render the compilation of the Estimates a little behind the time that he would have wished to lay them upon the table.

If laid on the table next week, he thought honourable members would have no substantial reason to complain of delay. Last session they were not laid on the table till well on to the end of May—or the beginning of June. Not only would the Estimates be laid on the table next week, but the Financial Statement would be presented on Wednesday or the following Tuesday. It was the desire of the Government to get on with the Estimates as speedily as circumstances permitted. With regard to the other subject before the House, he thought that the House had arrived at a premature conclusion in either adjudging Mr. Wright guilty of fraud or in inculcating the Agent-General. Nothing should be said which tended to a direct censure until a full investigation of all the circumstances had taken place. It was due to the Agent-General, whoever filled that high and responsible office, that he should not be readily suspected of neglected duty. His honourable colleague would make it his business to fully inquire into the whole of the circumstances, and if the fault lay at the Agent-General's door, that gentleman would receive the censure due to him.

Mr. WALSH said, with the permission of the House, he would withdraw his motion for adjournment.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the PREMIER—

1. 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 further regulate and control the introduction and treatment of Polynesian Islanders.

By Mr. STEVENSON—

That there be laid upon the table of this House,—

1. Copies of all correspondence and minutes which have passed between the Government and the Immigration Agent, or sub-agents, relative to the introduction of Polynesians into the colony, since 1st May, 1877.

2. Also, copies of all correspondence and minutes which have passed between the Government and Government Recruiting Agents, relative to the same subject, since the above date.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL— COMMITTEE.

The House went into Committee to resume the consideration of this Bill.

The PREMIER moved that Clause 3—Number of members of Legislative Assembly—be postponed.

Mr. McLLWRAITH wanted to know the reason for the postponement. Did the Premier intend to alter the number?

The PREMIER said he did not propose to move an amendment upon the number.

The Hon. R. PRING said that, as it was not intended to alter the number, he would not object to the motion, although he did not think the Premier was adopting the correct course.

Motion put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that Clause 4—Electoral Districts and Members—stand Clause 4 of the Bill.

Mr. GROOM considered it his duty to move an amendment upon the clause. As he did not speak on the motion for the second reading of the Bill, he would take advantage of the present opportunity to state that he disapproved of the very large preponderance of members which was given to the metropolitan constituencies. Although he was quite prepared to give the Government credit for apportioning the representation proposed by the Bill as fairly as they could on the basis adopted by them, he still believed that too large a proportion in number had been given to the metropolitan group. If the committee took the districts of North Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane, Enoggera, Moreton, Bulimba, Oxley, and Logan, they would find that these electorates returned twelve members in the aggregate as against forty-three for the whole of the other portions of the colony. He believed this proportion to be too large, and he therefore proposed, with a view to testing the feeling of the committee, that the fourth and fifth lines—"North Brisbane, two members; Fortitude Valley, two members"—should be omitted with a view to the insertion of the words "North Brisbane, three members." If honourable members looked at the geographical position of the Valley and North Brisbane they must consider them as one constituency with identical interests. They were only divided by an imaginary boundary, and he was under the impression that the electoral rolls showed that a number of persons had votes for each electorate; in point of fact, in sharply contested elections the same persons could decide which candidates should be returned for both electorates. He fancied, from looking over the speeches of the twenty-six members who had spoken on the second reading, that the majority were decidedly in favour of the representation of minorities. His amendment would give them an opportunity of granting representation to minorities on the plan known in England as the "three-cornered constituencies." In Great Britain the representation of minorities by this plan had to a certain extent been secured, with the exception of Birmingham. The "three-cornered" electorates returned three members, but the electors had the right to vote for two only. Birmingham, however, returned three Liberals—Messrs. Muntz, Bright, and Chamberlain. In Leeds, on the

other hand, two Conservatives and one Liberal were elected, the Liberal coming in as a "three-corner" representative. In Manchester, strange to say, a Conservative, Mr. Birley, headed the poll, but had two Liberals with him. In Glasgow two Liberals and one Conservative were returned. By the plan of having "three-cornered constituencies," therefore, the representation of minorities had to a certain extent been effected in England. If members of the committee who had expressed themselves in favour of the representation of minorities chose, they had now a splendid opportunity of securing the adoption of the principle in this colony. They could give North Brisbane three members, as proposed by him, and a clause could be afterwards inserted, providing that electors should have the right to vote for two candidates only; and it could, of course, be extended to any other "triple electorates" that might be created. In moving the amendment, it must be distinctly understood that he was not doing it from any personal consideration, but simply under the belief that the country districts were not fairly treated in comparison with the metropolitan groups. He would, of course, admit that the metropolis was entitled to every consideration in the preparation of the Bill; but even under the present system, Brisbane was well represented, because every member of the House considered himself a Brisbane member to some extent, as was shown by the discussion on the previous evening. There would be no opposition to the Government asking for a vote of money for the drainage of Brisbane; but the House objected to a pettifogging Bill being given precedence over such an important measure as the Bill now before the committee. Honourable members must also bear in mind that during the recess, scarcely a day passed without Ministers being "deputationised" by some portion of the Brisbane electorates. This practice must have been a perfect nuisance; but it was not from the country districts, but the neighbourhood of Brisbane that the deputations came. It could therefore be easily seen in which way Brisbane was, and would be, always well represented, as it should be; but when they were dealing with an Electoral Bill they were bound to consider the colony as a whole, and not Brisbane alone. He therefore begged to move his amendment.

The Hon. R. PRING said he accepted the honourable member's remarks in the spirit in which he said he had been actuated in bringing forward his proposition; but he could not conceive why he should take exception to the Government action on the clause, and interfere with the electorates of North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, when their members were present. He denied the correctness of the honourable

member's proposition—that by the amendment they would obtain a system of representation of minorities. Probably the honourable member aimed at a speech made by him on a previous occasion, when he (Mr. Pring) admitted, as he did now, that the minority should be represented; but he also said that when he advocated such a system, it must be a whole, and not a partial one. The honourable gentleman proposed a “three-corner” electorate system. He must have got the name from some English paper. He (Mr. Pring) had never heard it before.

Mr. GROOM: From John Bright.

The Hon. R. PRING: It never was the creation of his own brain. He (Mr. Pring) would go in for the representation of minorities if a proper Bill was introduced, but he could not support it for one electorate only, when there were twenty others represented under the “single electorate” system. As to the representation of Brisbane, the honourable member had not made out a good case. If he grouped the electorates of North Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane, Enoggera, Moreton, Bulimba, Oxley, and Logan, as having an effective force in the House, because they were represented by “Queen street gentlemen,” the argument was not sound, inasmuch as it would be found that the interests of these particular electorates were very different. The honourable member proposed that North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley should be grouped and have only three members. Under the present Act, the Valley had one member, Wickham one, and Brisbane one. In one sense of the word it might therefore be said, that by grouping the representation for the metropolis it remained numerically the same; but the result of the elections would be very different. He was not going to inform the committee what the probable result might be, as it was unnecessary; but he would wish to point out that the Government themselves actually proposed the increase of members for North Brisbane and the Valley. But the honourable member for Toowoomba objected to the increase, and proposed to “lump” the electorates together and apply what he called the “three-cornered electorate representation of minorities” system to it. If population was to be taken as the basis of representation, he did not see upon what grounds the honourable member could say that Brisbane was over-represented. Certainly in populous places like Brisbane that basis might have an undue influence on representation; but, as that particular basis had been chosen, there was no reason why it should be applied to all parts of the colony but one. He could conceive that in outlying districts like Mitchell, property, and not population, might be made the basis of representation; but the population basis

should not be shorn of its value because there happened to be more people in one place than in another. Under the existing Act, Brisbane, Wickham, and Fortitude Valley were each entitled to one member, or three in all, and taking them on the population basis, they were entitled to four. As to the triplicate electorate, he should oppose it as long as he had a tongue to be heard in the House.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was rather surprised to find the honourable member for Toowoomba taking the action he had done, for it only showed how well he himself had been treated in the Bill. The honourable member was certainly incorrect in his facts when he said that if an election was to take place at Fortitude Valley, the property-holders of Brisbane would be able to carry it any way they pleased. Fortitude Valley had been divided and subdivided over and over again, and every portion of it was occupied by the working community of this part of the colony. Indeed, he might go so far as to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred were tradesmen having holdings of their own. If the honourable member thought the property holders of Brisbane could carry an election there, let him contest it at the next election with their help, and he would very soon find out his mistake. The male adult population of Fortitude Valley was 2,897, and the total population 9,590; and it was proposed to give it two members. Drayton and Toowoomba, which was also to have two members, had a male population of only 2,024, and a total population of 7,747, or nearly 2,000 less than Fortitude Valley. And yet the honourable member wanted to merge Fortitude Valley into a constituency which already contained a population of 11,000. He could not support any motion which would do injustice to any part of the colony. The Northern districts, as he had often said, were not properly represented, and he agreed with the last speaker, that where there was a large amount of property at stake it ought to be represented here; but if the House was going to start with an injustice of this nature, how could it be expected that members with Liberal tendencies could support increased representation in the North? The honourable member could not complain of the way in which his constituency was represented. Taking it either on the male adult or the total population basis, it was represented nearly as three to two compared with the metropolitan constituencies. Those constituencies did not ask for their full share of representation, because, forming the capital, they possessed certain advantages, while every honourable member who lived in Brisbane rendered good service towards its representation. But that was no reason why an injustice should be done,

and he hoped the good sense of the House would dismiss the fallacious argument that Brisbane was over-represented. Had the motion emanated from some member whose constituency was not properly represented, he should not have been so much surprised; but whenever a piece of injustice was to be done there was generally found some one on the Liberal side to do it. He should be sorry to think that the honourable member for Toowoomba had been made a cat's-paw of in this matter, and he did not believe the leader of the Opposition would be guilty of dealing such a blow as this against a constituency principally composed of working men, who would keenly feel the indignity of having their constituency merged into that of North Brisbane. Since the foundation of the colony Fortitude Valley had been an electorate, and now, at one fell swoop, on the motion of a member whose constituency was over-represented it was to be done away with and merged into the electorate of Brisbane. He saw no objection to the doing away of Wickham because that constituency was brought into existence under the single electorate system, and he did not think any serious injury would arise from wiping it out; but to wipe out Fortitude Valley would be one of the greatest pieces of injustice ever perpetrated in this House. If the amendment was carried it would prevent him from doing that justice to other portions of the colony which he ought to do, and which was demanded of him. He hoped the committee would not agree to the amendment.

Mr. HOCKINGS said that, along with previous speakers, he had felt great surprise at this proposition being brought forward. He might say that when the Bill was introduced, he was disappointed to find that an important constituency like Wickham should have been merged into Brisbane, because he could not see any sound political reason for it. If they had any faith in the growth of Brisbane, it would have been much better to leave the two electorates separate, even if they only returned a single member each, until the population increased to such an extent as to entitle them to further representation. Sydney was divided into two or three electorates, each returning two members, and it might reasonably be supposed that, instead of giving two members to a town which was growing rapidly in population, Government would have seen reason for leaving the electorates as they were until the growth of the population demanded extra representation. He thought that being within a municipality was another reason why Wickham should have been retained, where there was no such temptation as there was in the country districts to introduce that spirit of localism which had been so often complained of.

Being within the municipality, neither Brisbane nor Wickham required to make those demands on the Government which had been felt so objectionable on the part of many other constituencies. In both places, the residents had the privilege of taxing themselves, and providing their own roads and improvements. He was, therefore, unable to see any good political reason for the union of the two constituencies; but, seeing that there was a strong community of interests among the residents of both, he was willing to waive that objection, and give his support to the Bill as brought in by the Government. He might add, that he further objected to the union of the two constituencies, because by apportioning to them only two members, it left the joint constituency under-represented. On that account he was also all the more adverse to the amendment now before the committee. When the House consisted of only thirty-two members, three were apportioned to Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, and Wickham. When the number of members was afterwards increased to forty-three, one additional member was given to Brisbane; and now, with a proposed House of fifty-five members, the number was to be again reduced to three—a procedure which he considered altogether unjust. It had been said that members representing country constituencies were also in some sort representatives of Brisbane, and that Brisbane, therefore, required fewer representatives of its own. It might with equal truth be said, that Brisbane members represented in the same way the country constituencies, for they could not ignore the grazing, mining, banking, agricultural and other great interests, which were all more or less concentrated in the metropolis, and made up its importance. Although Brisbane had occasionally got some advantage from the kindly sympathy of country members, yet on every occasion when the great producing interests of the colony had been under consideration, they had received the same kindly and warm support from members representing the metropolis. He denied that the proposed amendment would introduce the system of the representation of minorities, for unless carried out in its integrity it would have no effect whatever in that direction. In England, where parties were sharply defined, there might be some excuse for three-cornered constituencies; but in this colony elections were generally decided by personal considerations, and not because the candidates were attached to one side or other of the House. Mr. Bright, whose opinions were at all events entitled to respect, had strongly denounced the system of three-cornered constituencies. His opinion was the same, and he held that if the amendment were carried, it would be a standing injustice to

the metropolis, which was already greatly under-represented. On the population basis, North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley were entitled to six members instead of four, and yet the honourable member for Toowoomba wished to reduce the number to three. He trusted the good sense of the committee would prevent such a proposition from being carried.

The PREMIER said that, seeing the leader of the Opposition rise at the same time as the honourable member for Toowoomba, he had anticipated hearing some remarks from him on the amendment. The Government considered they had done very scant justice indeed to North Brisbane, which had a total population of something like 11,900 persons by giving it only two members, while the ordinary average proportion of representation was one member for every 3,248. He thought that the honourable member, under the guise of liberality, was going to ask the committee to reduce the representation still further than they had reduced it already, and he could not help thinking that, if that was the object of the honourable member, he ceased to be entitled to be connected with the Liberal party at all. The Government had strained to the utmost their endeavours to meet the claims put forward by honourable members opposite who had argued all along that Brisbane had an undue proportion of representation; and they had cut down as much as possible the representation given to Brisbane, which, it must be remembered, was the capital of the colony. They had, in fact, gone so far as to allot the disproportion subtracted from Brisbane to country districts which might otherwise suffer from their distance from the capital. Having cut down Brisbane to almost one-half of its right proportion in order to do justice to the country districts, he certainly thought it was going too far for the honourable member for Toowoomba to propose a further reduction. He confessed that he could not understand the new-born zeal of the honourable member in the cause, as he said, of the growth of the new districts which were springing up. Did the honourable member mean to say for one moment that the men, women, and children in the city had not an equal right to make themselves heard in the State as the inhabitants of Toowoomba had? They were, at least, as industrious, and had equally as large a stake in the permanent interest of the colony, and their lives and interests were as much committed to the care of the State as the lives and interests of those in other districts; and yet they were to be sacrificed to, as the honourable member proposed, the interests of the country districts. The whole thing was most unfair. The honourable member had also introduced, as a new feature, the representation of minorities; but the second reading of the Bill was the proper time for

the discussion of that theory, and if the honourable member was of opinion that the representation of minorities was of such very great importance, he should have raised the question then, and have opposed the second reading of the Bill. Surely the honourable member would have satisfied his conscience better by doing that then, than by raising it now, when the principles of the Bill had been affirmed. He hoped the honourable member would not persevere with his amendment, because if so, the principle of it must be applied to other places as well as to Brisbane.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he rose for the purpose of explaining, in reply to some remarks made by the honourable the Premier, that when he stood up at the same time the honourable member for Toowoomba rose, it was for the purpose of speaking on a different matter altogether from that introduced by that honourable member.

Mr. GROOM wished it to be understood by honourable members, that he had introduced his amendment entirely independently of either side of the committee. He had acted entirely as an independent member, and he had yet to learn that he was to be a mere voting machine, and not to have the right of expressing his own opinions on any subject that might be brought before the committee. Sooner than he reduced to such a position he would take up his hat and leave the House. He had been told by the Premier that if he persisted in his amendment he would cease to have any claim to be considered a member of the Liberal party; but he was not going to leave his party from any remarks of the Premier, as he was perfectly aware of what constituted the Liberal party. They were now discussing a Bill for the representation of the colony generally, and it was, in his opinion, the duty of every honourable member to express his views independently of any party, and unfettered by any party ties. He was not one of those who believed in the wisdom of giving up to party what was meant for mankind. In regard to the representation of minorities, he might at once say that he had no sympathy with it, nor was he going to propose any three-cornered constituencies, but he merely stated, that to those honourable members who expressed themselves in favour of such a system, a good opportunity was now offered to them. Notwithstanding what had been said by the Premier, he entirely dissented from the preponderance of representation which had been given in the Bill to the metropolitan constituencies, as in fact he had always done. On looking over the little volume he had in his hand (Whittaker's Almanac), he found abundant proofs of the great inconsistency there was between the representation of large cities at home and the city of Brisbane in this colony, inasmuch

as Manchester with 63,938 electors returned only three members, whilst Hereford, with only 8,304 electors, returned three members. On looking over that book casually, as he had done, and observing the number of members allotted to the various constituencies in Great Britain, he saw nothing to induce him to alter his opinion, as expressed in the amendment, or his intention to press it to a division. Then, again, with regard to the remark of the Premier, that because an honourable member voted for the second reading he was bound by the Bill, he ventured to say that if the majority of honourable members who voted for it thought they were thereby committing themselves to every principle contained in it they would not have voted at all; they knew full well that when it went into committee many amendments would have to be made. Again, it did not follow that because he moved an amendment it should be carried, and he entirely disputed the remark of the Premier when he accused him of trying to introduce into the measure what was contrary to the feeling of the Liberal party. If that was to be the interpretation put upon his action, then it was high time that those party obligations should cease. At any rate, he should not be one to bind himself to any party under such circumstances, inasmuch as his endeavour would always be, as it had been, to do his duty, not to any party, but to the colony generally.

The Hon. R. PRING said that in answer to what had fallen from the honourable member for Toowoomba, in reference to any remarks made by himself, he could only assure the honourable member that he perfectly concurred with him in what he had said, of his right as an independent member to move the amendment now before the committee. What he had intended to convey to the committee was, that, inasmuch as the people of Brisbane and the people of Wickham had not informed either himself or the honourable member for Wickham that they were not agreeable to the action taken by the Government, he presumed that they were agreeable to it, and acted accordingly. For that reason, he did not see on what ground an outside member should take upon himself a duty which the people of Brisbane would never thank him for.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he thought that many honourable members were not aware of the real nature of the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Toowoomba, as on either the total, or adult male population basis, Brisbane was entitled to six members, whilst the proposition was to give it only three. There appeared to be an opinion that the Government wanted to give Brisbane an additional member, but it was nothing of the kind; and, therefore, he was at a loss to understand the opposition which was shown, unless it was be-

cause it was considered by honourable members opposite that Brisbane should be unrepresented. In the year 1872, the honourable member for Port Curtis, in his Bill, had not ventured to propose anything so unjust as was now proposed; and now he (the Attorney-General) did not know whether he was addressing honourable members who wished to do something manifestly unfair to Brisbane, or to do something which would have the effect of throwing out the Bill altogether. It was very strange that, whilst in New South Wales they were revising the representation and proposing to give to Sydney an increased number of members, here there was an endeavour being made to do just the reverse, although Brisbane had increased in population as much as other places, the representation of which it was proposed to increase. At present it was not over-represented on any basis honourable members might choose to take, and, considering that the Bill added to it a large additional territory and population, it was most unfair to say that it should not be equally fairly represented with other places. Brisbane had increased as much as any other part of the country. The tables of 1872 showed that the total population of East Moreton group was then 29,000 as against 50,000 at the present time; in fact, the population in that part of the country had increased more rapidly than anywhere else, whilst the population of Fortitude Valley, which was then 4,700, had increased to 9,590, or just double, and in addition to that, there was a large additional area tacked on to it. It was just as well to call things by their proper name, and therefore he said that, if the amendment was carried, it would be grossly unfair. It was a very singular thing, that not one honourable member on the Opposition benches had spoken upon it; but it might be that they would vote as they had done on the previous day, or whenever anything was moved that would have the effect of injuring Brisbane, namely, in support of it. He did not agree with the honourable member for Toowoomba when he drew a parallel between the representation at home, and that here, as the whole representation in the mother country was in the hands of a large landed proprietary, until lately, when there had been a struggle going on to get it into the hands of the people. Here, however, we had started at the other end; but now there appeared to be an attempt to go backwards. Let the people in the back districts have their proper share of representation, but when it came to large cities let them have one-half of what they are entitled to—that was the nature of the arguments now put forward. He would remind the honourable member for Toowoomba of one fact, of which he

did not think he was aware—that the new boundaries of Fortitude Valley and Brisbane had been considerably altered, they had had a large amount of territory added to them.

Mr. PALMER said the honourable member had made a speech with more fire in it than usual; in fact, the honourable gentleman had made a splendid electioneering speech. He had given some reasons for not voting for the amendment, and others for doing so. He had also taxed some honourable members of the Opposition with being ready to vote for anything that would throw out the Bill—and why should they not do so?—had they not voted against the second reading of it?—and why, then should they not vote for anything that would throw it out now? Surely there would be nothing contradictory to their principles in doing so? He would like the Premier and the Attorney-General to go a little further, because they might then decide a great many wavering votes, if they would state that if the amendment were carried they would at once withdraw the Bill and abandon it. A great many members who had not decided whether they would vote for the amendment or not, would in that case soon decide. The honourable gentleman opposite had taxed the Opposition with not having expressed their opinions upon the amendment, but the taunt came with a very bad grace from that side of the House, where, with the exception of two Ministers, no member had expressed his decided opinion in favour of the Bill, and where there were only two Ministers who had favoured the House with their opinions to any extent worth speaking of. They, on his side of the House, had a strong suspicion that it would be a very decided triumph to the majority on the Treasury benches if the Bill was thrown out altogether. He believed the Attorney-General would be delighted if it were thrown out. He believed the Attorney-General was ashamed of that triumph of his great genius—the seventh and succeeding clauses. The fact was, the Attorney-General knew the Bill would never work, and he (Mr. Palmer) believed that anything that would bring that creation of his brain to a premature fate—would make it, in fact, still-born—would give its author a great amount of pleasure. The members of the Opposition were not called upon to say, without further argument from the Government side, how they were going to vote on this amendment. He was not going to tell the Premier what he was going to do, but if the Premier and Attorney-General would say that they intended to withdraw the Bill if the amendment was carried, he, for one, would make up his mind in a very short time, and many other members would do the same. But if they did vote for the

amendment, he denied *in toto* the imputation thrown out by the Attorney-General, who was copying the absurd declaration of his colleague, the Premier, when he said that any member of the House who might record his opinions and votes in a certain way was animated by an unnatural and unwarrantable prejudice against the interests of Brisbane. He denied, as he always had denied, that since 1864, when he admitted the city was, to a great extent, robbed by the great Liberal party under Mr. Macalister, the interests of Brisbane had been considered in anything but a perfectly fair manner. They had been considered more than fairly; they had been considered liberally. The remark of the Premier, re-echoed by the Attorney-General, was, therefore, perfect clap-trap; and the Attorney-General's was nothing but an electioneering speech, intended, no doubt, for a new electorate, which he would attempt to represent, unless, meanwhile, he was transplanted to a higher sphere. The Attorney-General had no right (nor the Premier) to impute to any Opposition member who voted for the amendment "unnatural or unwarrantable" hostility to Brisbane and its inhabitants. The honourable gentleman knew as well as any man that there was no such feeling in the House, and had not been for many years.

Mr. KING said he had always held that the representation of the colony generally should be based upon the general population, but he had always held that such exceptions should be made as would prevent a few large centres of population from swamping the whole country. At the present time, there were what might be called five Brisbane electorates, which returned five members, or one-ninth of the whole House, and if this Bill became law, they would have four electorates returning eight members, or a little more than one-seventh of the whole. He was certain many honourable members, if they voted for this measure, would be sorry for it in years to come, because it would be an enormous power to place in the hands of a small party. It was a thing not to be thought of, for four town electorates in the city of Brisbane would be able to return more than one-seventh of the new House. If such were the case there would be formed the nucleus of a very formidable party. There was no saying to which side of the House such a party might not turn, and it was certainly not to the interest of any party to give such a preponderating influence to Brisbane. Mention had been made of the representation of Sydney, but the honourable member who had referred to that subject would find that the town of Sydney did not actually have such a large proportion of the representation of New South Wales as it was proposed to give to Brisbane by this Bill. The preponderance that

would be given was even increased by the manner in which it was done, by making four constituencies return two members each. The manipulation of these town constituencies would place in the hands of a comparatively small number of leading men an undue power, and they would have in the House a preponderance which it was not to the interest of the country that they should have. There were five other town constituencies, namely, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Ipswich, Toowoomba, and Warwick, and these were the only five that could be called town constituencies; but the town of Brisbane would return as many members as the whole of them. He hoped honourable members would agree with him that it was unreasonable that such a preponderating power should be given to the metropolis. He was happy to believe that there was no intention whatever on the part of either side of the House to advocate anything injurious to the city of Brisbane. In fact, if there were only six members instead of eight, there would be enough in a House of fifty-five to ensure fair play, and as the honourable member for Port Curtis had said, Brisbane for many years had not required a preponderance of members to secure for itself ample justice.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Attorney-General had charged honourable members on that side of the House with an intention to act unfairly by the city of Brisbane in dealing with this Bill, and had told them that if they voted for the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba, giving three members for Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, they would not only be doing what was unfair, but doing it with the knowledge that it was unfair. He supposed the honourable gentleman was drawing upon his imagination when he made that statement, or that he referred to the time when some years ago he tried to act so unfairly himself towards the constituency that he (Mr. Macrossan) represented. When the honourable member for Port Curtis introduced his Bill, he gave four members to the North; and when the Bill was passing through committee the honourable gentleman, associated with the same party as he was associated with now, in the absence of the honourable member for Kennedy, tried to disfranchise that electorate, knowing at the same time that he was doing what was grossly unfair. He (Mr. Macrossan) supposed that act of the honourable gentleman's was weighing on his mind, when he charged the Opposition with a desire to act unfairly towards Brisbane, if the amendment proposed should happen to pass.

Mr. BEATTIE wished to correct some of the statements made by the honourable member for Toowoomba as to the composition of the electorate of Fortitude Valley;

and to say also, that he thought it unfair that Enoggera should be included as a town constituency. That was stretching the long bow rather too much, and showed that the map had not been consulted by honourable members. The Enoggera electorate had no more connection with the city of Brisbane than the city of Brisbane had with the county of Stanley; and he could not, for the life of him, understand what the representation of Enoggera had to do with that of Brisbane. It was very unfair to represent to honourable members unacquainted with the localities that these eight members who had been spoken of represented the city. The Fortitude Valley electorate was composed of working mechanics—men who held freeholds of their own, and tradesmen of every degree; and therefore it was unfair that an honourable member should tell the House that the residents of Brisbane could go down and swamp any election that might take place in the Fortitude Valley electorate. He denied that such could be done, and dared anyone to prove that he had made the slightest mistake in making that statement. He trusted the good sense of the House would not allow the electorate of Fortitude Valley to be swept out, as was proposed by the amendment. The honourable member for Toowoomba had said that no one knew that he was going to move his amendment; but he (Mr. Beattie) could assure him that he heard of the matter yesterday. It was spoken of about town; but he did not believe it was done at the dictation of any leader on the Opposition side of the House. He believed they had too much sense of justice to allow a constituency to be wiped out, and he hoped the committee would be found of the same way of thinking.

Mr. BEOR said they had heard a great deal about unfairness and sense of justice; but he did not suppose that those who were going to vote for this amendment would be deterred from doing so by being told simply that it was unfair or against a sense of justice. It was just as well, however, to consider whether what the amendment proposed was really so unfair as was stated. It might be that it appeared so to those who were unable to bring anything within the scope of their vision but the numbers of the population, and he granted that if they looked simply at numbers, the proposition involved in the amendment might be unfair. But was that a statesmanlike way of looking at a question like this, where not alone numbers but rather the conditions and circumstances of every particular part of the colony which was to become an electorate, should be looked into? Sydney had been quoted as an illustration of a metropolis having a preponderance of members over the country districts; but if they looked to another colony, was it not a fact that in Melbourne

the proportion of members was very much smaller than those given to the country towns in Victoria? Was it not true, also, that in Sydney, notwithstanding all that had been said, the proportion of townmembers was much smaller than those for the country? The Attorney-General had attempted to meet the unanswerable arguments of the honourable member for Toowoomba with regard to the representation of town and country districts in the United Kingdom. The other evening, during the discussion on the second reading of this Bill, he, and the honourable member for Normanby, took the trouble to go over some of the most glaring contrasts in the United Kingdom, and found some ten or a dozen electorates that they compared together. They found Birmingham, with a population of half a million, returning the same number of members as Rutlandshire with 30,000 people; Manchester, with about half-a-million of population, returning the same number of members as Breckonshire with 40,000; and Leeds, with also something like half-a-million, returning the same number of members as Radnorshire with the same number of inhabitants—showing that the populations in the country districts were always more largely represented in proportion than the town electorates. And why? Because it was believed that one of the main objects should be that every interest throughout the country should have its representative, and have a voice in the legislation of the country. But if they were to give an enormous number of members to the metropolis, what would be the result? They would prevent, to a great extent, the expression of the voice of the people from the country districts. He (Mr. Beor) thought the metropolis was sufficiently represented at present, and would be if there were only two or three members to represent it. The honourable member who had preceded him had stated that Enoggera was not a Brisbane electorate; but it was a corner of Brisbane, notwithstanding that the honourable member was anxious to say that it was a separate electorate, and that the people of Brisbane did not return the members for Enoggera. He would ask honourable members who wished to deal with this question in a fair spirit, what was Enoggera principally composed of as regarded its inhabitants? Were they not the suburban residents of Brisbane, who worked and did their business in Brisbane? If Enoggera was not a Brisbane electorate he did not know what was; and it might become a most disastrous thing for this country if the city were to have an overwhelming voice in the representation. This was certain to be the case if the large proportion proposed was allowed to it, and they were to go on in-

creasing the numbers of city members as the Bill proposed, which would lead to the whole country being practically governed by the city. It had proved so in history over and over again. What had been at the root of the disasters of France except that it had been governed too much from Paris, from the centre? And the same dangers that had attended the government of France from its centre would attend us here if the colony was to be governed from Brisbane.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that although France was governed from Paris, it was not parliamentary government, but a despotism having its centre in Paris which had caused the evils referred to; and what was now working a cure for the evils was a representation system founded upon a population basis.

The Hon. R. PRING said he could not allow the remarks of the honourable member for Bowen to pass without expressing his opinion of them—utter and absolute worthlessness; and why he had imported himself into this committee, when he had not spoken on the second reading, he (Mr. Pring) really could not conceive. The honourable member evidently did not understand the colony, and that was, perhaps, the reason he had made such a speech. He had said that it was grossly unjust that certain outside constituencies should be admitted within the representative system because they belonged to Brisbane; and because Brisbane would be the centre of five constituencies, each having the interest of Brisbane at heart, they were not to be considered. Such an argument seemed to him to be simply a begging of the whole question.

Mr. THOMPSON did not think he should have said anything about this proposal had it not been for the Attorney-General's attempt to influence the feelings of honourable members by saying that it was an unfair thing to do. It was, therefore, necessary to consider in what unfairness consisted. On the second reading of the Bill he tried to point out the way by which the people should be represented. They could either be represented by a territorial system, as he had called it—that was, a system of dividing their territory into portions and returning members representing interests according to the divisions of that territory—or else they must have a scientific system, by which all phases of opinion should be represented. In the one case they must cut up the country into divisions which must return members, and under that system it was manifestly impossible to have a mere population basis, or any basis founded on population. They must either represent interests as well as they could, in a rough-and-ready way, to use the expression of the honourable the Attorney-General, or they must have a scientific system such as he had mentioned. There-

fore, in considering a system of this sort, it was unfair to say it was unfair when they took into consideration other matters besides that of mere population. The honourable member for Wickham had made use of this argument:—Although he admitted that Brisbane was represented by the country constituencies, still he said that Brisbane, being the centre of all the interests in the colony, and its prosperity depending on the interests of the colony, therefore it took care of all those interests, and consequently should have additional representation. But that argument cut both ways. The interests of Brisbane were one; they were the interests of the metropolis—of the seat of Government. In fact, Brisbane was merely the machinery for distributing the wealth of the colony. He took that point on the second reading of the Bill, and contended that the mere distributors of wealth were not entitled to the same representation as the producers of wealth; and if they analysed what the Brisbane constituencies were, they would find they were merely the agents of the outside population; and why they should have a preponderance in representation he could not discover. Their local wants, as had been admitted, were attended to by the whole colony. In this rough-and-ready system, as the honourable member for Bowen had eloquently pointed out, they must take other things into consideration besides population, and he thought it was very unfair to say it was unfair. What did they find? That the group of electorates comprising Brisbane City, Wickham, Fortitude Valley, Enoggera and South Brisbane, which under the Act of 1872 returned five members, would, under this Bill, return eight. That appeared to be an enormous increase of power.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not the same boundaries.

Mr. THOMPSON: What did the difference of the boundaries amount to? The only difference was in Enoggera, which run away back into a piece of country, whether it was inhabited or not he did not know, but still the number of members for those constituencies were the same—eight. If the taking in of that little piece of country would have any effect, it would be that it would be swamped by the immediate neighbourhood of Brisbane. The argument was just as good one way as another.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the principle the Government had particularly in view, in framing a Bill for redistributing the representation at the present time, was to see that no constituency possessing representation should be reduced, so far as that representation was concerned. That was to say, that every constituency possessing representation in that House, if it could not show a claim to additional

representation, should at any rate, have its claims recognised to the full extent accorded to it under the Act of 1872. The amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba distinctly cut away that principle which the Government had primarily in view in introducing this Bill. The three constituencies of Brisbane, Wickham, and Fortitude Valley now returned three members; but under the Bill now before the committee, the area of Fortitude Valley being considerably enlarged, and taking in a densely-populated district, if the suggestion of the honourable member for Toowoomba was carried out, it would virtually possess less representation as against population than it possessed at the present time. He held that that was a principle they could not refuse to give their consideration to. It was no use honourable members saying it was unfair or fair; there was a distinct issue before them, that representation was sought to be accorded to a large population in a less ratio than it at present possessed. In addition, that view, he contended, was one that in all fairness they ought not to extend to Brisbane alone, because it happened fortuitously to be the metropolis, but should extend to all populous and expanding parts of the colony, if they wished to apply the principles of increased representation in accord with what they conceived to be the demand for representation by the people of the colony. The area included in the proposed new electorate of Fortitude Valley was an area that carried with it a large and industrial population; and he contended primarily that in this colony, and, in fact, in all countries, there should be no taxation without representation; and that a large population contributing, as this newly-incorporated area did, very largely in excess of, possibly, other equally populous areas, to the taxation necessary to support the Government of the country, ought certainly to receive that consideration due to it by being accorded increased representation in proportion to population. According to all principles of fairness it was manifestly unjust to say that an increased population should receive less representation than it had hitherto had. The remarks of the honourable member for Bowen did not commend themselves to his (the Colonial Treasurer's) approval. He referred to the constituency of Enoggera as being of a largely metropolitan character. Under the present form it partook more of that character than it would under the amended form, in which the boundaries receded considerably from the city, and included a larger farming population than was included at the present time. The only portion of the new constituency which, from containing a number of persons following avocations in the city, would have a direct influence or interference as Brisbane electors in elections for Enog-

gera was Toowong. Under the new form, the representation of Enoggera would not be by any means decided or influenced by the electorate of Brisbane. The chief point of the honourable member for Bowen's remarks was to the effect that because several well-known and well-recognised abuses existed at home, we should be satisfied with a system of most unjust representation which had been gradually extracted from feudal landowners. To accept that system as the basis of our representation would be retrogression with a vengeance. He had in his possession a recent publication which dealt particularly on this question of representation in Great Britain, and also referred to what was called the three-cornered system. The system of representation at home was one that all reformers considered was based on a radical error, and the inequality of the representation of centres of population compared with districts and boroughs was constantly shown. A great deal had been achieved in the direction of equalising those balances of representation. He would read a short extract from the *Financial Reformer* for 1878. After comparing the 251 cities, boroughs, burghs, and districts, having a population of twelve millions, and 1,771,521 electors returning 360 members, with 159 counties and divisions with a population of eighteen millions, and 1,113,100 electors returning 283 members, the writer made the following comment:—

"Hence it would appear that the population of the counties exceeds that of the boroughs by 5,477,914, and that their payments to Income Tax were only £1,226,770 less. It is to be observed, however, that the counties are credited with population and assessments of all the unrepresented towns and places within them, and also the eleven newly-created boroughs of Burnley, Chelsea, Darlington, Dewsbury, Gravesend, Hackney, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Stalybridge, Stockton, and Wednesbury, which, according to Mr. Eastwick's return, were assessed to the aggregate amount of £10,659,442 in the year ended April 5, 1871. The differences must therefore be much greater than those stated. The number of borough electors on the register for 1876-7 was 1,771,521, an increase of 34,362 compared with the year preceding; that of county electors, 1,113,100, an increase of 9,025. Hence the borough electors exceeded those of the counties by 658,421. These tables demonstrate with equal clearness, first, the monstrous anomalies of our present electoral system; and, secondly, the folly of the pseudo-philosophers who imagine that the only true principle of representative Government—viz., Government by majorities—is erroneous, and ought to be partially nullified by minorities. They have, so far, succeeded, by means of their three-corner crotchet, as to place the great towns of Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester, on a footing of perfect equality, as regards voting power, with the most insignifi-

cant places in the kingdom—a feat which has been accomplished in every instance excepting that of Birmingham. The last summary shows that 191 boroughs, &c., with aggregate populations of 3,485,520,—500,828 electors, and payment of £776,679 to Income Tax, return 246 members to the House of Commons; whilst sixty others places, with nearly thrice the population, nearly thrice the number of electors, and paying more than six times the amount of Income Tax, have only 114 members."

That was a standing protest against the three-corner system. To do the honourable member for Toowoomba justice, he did not state that that system was a necessary principle of his motion; but the honourable member, in introducing his motion, had spoken of the advantage it would confer in affording an opportunity to try the three-corner system in Brisbane, Wickham, and Fortitude Valley.

MR. GROOM: And other places too, if you like to try it.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said the honourable member for Bowen had travelled as far as France, and informed them of the terrible example to be seen in too large a concentration of electoral power in the centres of population; but every tyro in the study of history, knew that the French revolution was brought about by other and far deeper causes. The unsettled state of the finances, the long interval between the convocation of the States-General, and many other causes, had combined to produce that event. He might, however, take the argument of the honourable gentleman and show, that notwithstanding the awful horrors of that time, Paris, and indeed all large cities, had exhibited a great advance in the cause of progress. All great reforms had emanated from the centres of population in large countries, where men were brought together, and where by collision of intellect and thought, the cause of progress was advanced in every direction. Were they to be debarred from the proper amount of representation because they happened to be more progressive than country districts? He would utter his distinct protest against any such idea as that, where large communities were centred in a focus, their representation should therefore be restricted. The idea had been introduced at home to suit the extremely Conservative views of the landed proprietors of Great Britain; but he hoped the people of the colony would emancipate themselves from that old-fashioned superstition, and advance in the course of political reform by according to constituencies the proportion of representation to which their population entitled them. He would not follow the honourable member for Bremer, who appeared to wish to introduce a system by which a manufacturing or producing place should be represented in a different degree to other con-

stituencies. It seemed a very fanciful idea which even in theory would not hold water, and certainly would not work in practice. He thought that as much wealth was created by transactions which took place in the city of Brisbane, as was created in any other part. It was a market for production, and the centre of population produced the market without which, as a mere fact, a producing power had no recognised value. He did not wish to introduce any local jealousy into the discussion, and his remarks to the committee would have been given as urgently if the representation of Cooktown or Charleville had been in question. The measure had been framed by the Government with a desire to accord and distribute equitable representation throughout the colony.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it had been distinctly understood when the Bill was brought in, that the general principles of it were to be discussed on the second reading, and that the discussion after that would be on mere matters of detail. The speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer would, therefore, have been much more appropriate on the second reading. He laid down several principles which hardly bore upon the Bill. He advocated that taxation should be the basis of representation. To that he (Mr. McIlwraith) would answer, that the basis of representation was to be the mean population basis according to the measure; and taxation could only be twisted into the basis of representation, by the Colonial Treasurer assuming that every man, woman, and child contributed equally to the revenue. If that principle were applied, moreover, they would have to give an increased number of members to the Northern and Western districts in greater proportion than the Colonial Treasurer fancied. He repeated that it was not the principle of the Bill, and he was perfectly satisfied that no member of the Treasury benches would advocate it if it was made the basis really. The Colonial Treasurer had also said that the proposed increase was no more than the due proportion to which the Brisbane group was entitled of the increase proposed to be made to the House; but if this were tested, it would be found that the group would be entitled to eleven members, which was the number proposed by the honourable member for Toowoomba. The Colonial Treasurer had further intimated pretty plainly his belief that the amendment was got up by collusion with the Opposition. He had only to give that assertion his denial. There was not the slightest doubt that the amendment would secure what the honourable member for Toowoomba meant it should—namely, a trial of the triple electorate system. They wanted a trial of the system of representation by minorities in the colony, and he would do a great deal to

secure it. If honourable members could show any other system to attain the same end, he would be quite willing to give it his consideration. The argument that had been adduced to show that Brisbane ought to be represented in proportion to the basis of population, was completely answered by the Government themselves, for according to their mean population basis, the group would be entitled to fifteen members. By their own allocation, the Ministry admitted that the metropolis should not be represented in the same degree as other parts of the colony—that it ought not to be represented according to their own mean population basis. The question, therefore, was reduced to one of degree. He was surprised that the honourable member for Toowoomba had not asked the Government what their intention was with regard to clause 7, for the clause bore upon the question under discussion. If the effect of the discussion was simply to knock off one member from the Brisbane group, it would be little gained, as the next census taken, according to clause 7, would give them four additional members. It was hardly necessary for him to say that he supported the amendment out of no inimical feelings towards Brisbane members or Brisbane interests.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Attorney-General called "Hear, hear," ironically; but he could appeal to members of the House that the Opposition had always supported Brisbane interests; they must do so for the sake of their own interests. Their action on the previous evening proved his assertion. The Opposition would never condescend to carry a small job through the House, and prevent the adoption of a complete measure, not only adapted to Brisbane, but to other places in the colony. A great deal had been said to show that Brisbane should have as many representatives as other localities, but very little credence had been given, by Ministers at all events, to the fact that the metropolis was well represented by members not elected by Brisbane constituencies. The honourable member for Rockhampton had truly said that he could point out many honourable members who represented Brisbane and other constituencies at the same time. The honourable member for Cook might be referred to as an example. He did not say that the honourable member did not make a good representative. He represented the interests of the Cook perfectly well, but everyone must agree that, since he had been in the House, he had been also a good member for Brisbane. He would like any honourable member to point out a case in which the converse had taken place. What chance would a Cooktown man have of representing Brisbane? There were certain outside districts which were

obliged to return Brisbane members, and therefore Brisbane was more fully represented than it would otherwise be. This state of things could not be helped, but it ought to be taken into consideration when deciding the number of members for Brisbane. If they took off one member from the Brisbane group they would secure a great advantage; they would find out the working of the "three-cornered" system of electorates. No harm would be done the Brisbane group, and they would possibly keep up the number to fifty-five members by finding a much better place for the member taken away from the Brisbane group.

The PREMIER said he thought that the best way to follow the doctrine laid down by the honourable member for Maranoa, that perfect fairness should be done to Brisbane, and that Brisbane interests invariably found a response from the other side of the House, would be to treat Brisbane fairly on this occasion. It was all very well taunting the Ministry by saying that Brisbane might get a better measure than was introduced and rejected yesterday, but he should be glad to see it done. In the meantime, something that might have been done cheaply and quickly had been stopped; and there was no guarantee that a better measure would be carried into effect shortly. As to the matter of representation, he must submit that the foundation was justice. Equality before the law, and the recognition of the rights of all as citizens, was the fundamental principle upon which their politics were founded. If violence were done to this principle, the persons injured were placed in a position to complain; and therefore, if they denied that justice in the matter of representation to the inhabitants of the Brisbane group of electorates, which they were willing to give to other parts of the colony, they gave them a grievance, and a just right to complain. He was astounded to hear the arguments of the honourable member for Bowen. Much as he admired the old English Constitution, he should have thought the honourable gentleman better read in history than to advocate that the anomalies which existed in it should be adopted here. Where had the political reforms lately adopted in England been first initiated, but in Australia? Residential suffrage was first initiated in Australia.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

The PREMIER said, were they to abandon the right use of the ballot, which was first adopted in Australia, and afterwards in England; were they to go back to worn-out precedents—to admitted anomalies in the English system of representation. Was that the style of argument to be adopted by the expounder of Liberal principles? He had also been struck by the argument used by the honourable member for

Ravenswood, who had hitherto been looked upon as an exponent of advanced Liberal principles. The honourable gentleman now said that a section of the country sending eight members to a House of fifty-five exercised an undue proportion of influence. Would the members for the Cook and Kennedy electorates exercise a preponderating influence on legislation? Of course they would to the same extent, but the difference would be that, whereas in the one case they represented a smaller proportion of the population, they would enjoy the same political power as the electorates of Brisbane. The clique which they had been told would exercise a prejudicial influence was to have less power than the outside districts of Cook and Kennedy. He did not think there was any justification for the anticipations of the honourable member. What right had he to assume that the members for these districts would exercise a prejudicial influence? Had they done so in the past? And they could only judge of the probabilities of the future by the facts of the past. Had their conduct been such as to destroy the confidence of the Ministry or the party in them, or such as would lead them to suppose that in the future they would exercise a prejudicial effect upon legislation?

MR. PERKINS: Yes.

The PREMIER said that was the cant expression echoed throughout the country by, in some respects, a venal Press. He had seen it stated in the northern papers, for instance, that the country was governed by a clique of Queen-street politicians—shopkeepers they sometimes called them. At a time when Liberal principles were at a discount, when the representatives of the really Liberal party had to fight foot to foot and hand to hand against those opposed to them—led as that Opposition was in a Ministerial capacity by the honourable member for Port Curtis—they found succour and help in the representatives of this group of electorates. At a time when that honourable member assumed a sort of dictatorship, when he adjourned this House for five whole months, taking from the people the right of being heard in Parliament, the representatives of this portion of the country stood to their colours, and there was every reason to believe that they would do so in the future. They had endeavoured to open up the land for settlement. They had persistently advocated and supported that system of immigration which had made this country what it is. They had identified themselves with liberal land laws, with progressive legislation; and he appealed to the history contained in the records of the Parliament to prove that what he stated was correct. And yet they were told to-night to view the possible ascendancy of members coming from those electorates with suspicion and

dismay. If such was the style of arguments they were to be treated with from the members of the coming Liberal party, he must confess that he despaired of Liberal principles. It might be said from the other side that the city of Brisbane would exercise an undue influence on the group of electorates surrounding it; but the same would be the case with the provincial towns in the electorates in their vicinity. It would certainly be the case with Rockhampton and Maryborough, throughout the districts of which they were the local capitals. He did not say there was any harm in it, but the Opposition had no right to attribute to this group of electorates tendencies which they did not attribute to others. In no session of Parliament had the representatives of the Southern districts attempted to do more justice to the Northern and outlying districts than during last session. All those who valued liberalism, and were not led away by the clap-trap cry either here or in the Press of the country, would and must do justice to this maligned group of electorates. Was the present member for Brisbane a representative of that clique? The leader of the Opposition was probably as well aware as himself of "the secrets of the prison-house," and would know that when he (the Premier) wished to consult his friends on important affairs of State he could not have recourse to the honourable member for Brisbane. In fact, he was afraid he did not possess that honourable gentleman's confidence in any way; and yet he was the honourable member for Brisbane. It was just possible that either in this or some future session some policy would have to be propounded in connection with railway extension. As the leader of the Opposition knew, he (the Premier) could not have a more difficult card to play than to reconcile the differences that existed between some of the members representing this group of electorates. Were he to advocate the small extension to the North Quay, he feared that some of his friends behind him, who were on usual occasions his most earnest supporters would immediately go over to the other side. If, on the other hand, he recommended that the railway should be carried to Bulimba, he would be met with equal opposition from that united clique which governed the country. Yet in the face of these facts, they were told that the representatives of this group of electorates were a united party bent upon selfish and exclusive legislation.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Premier had taken the honourable member for Bowen to task for his ignorance of history; but he had shown that his own ignorance was equally as great. Australia was not the first country which adopted manhood or residential suffrage, but America; and the

fathers of the American Republic were so fearful of giving a preponderance of legislative power to the large cities that they founded their capital in the wilderness. So much had been said of justice, that one would think the present occupants of the Treasury benches were the most just set of men who had ever sat there. He had a vivid remembrance of their justice when, last year, they withdrew the Financial Separation Bill. The Premier had talked about the eight representatives coming from the North having as much preponderating power as the eight gentlemen who would represent Brisbane; but he was certain the honourable gentleman did not believe it, for he must know that some of those eight, and perhaps the majority, would be Brisbane men. But even if they were all local men, they would not have the same weight on Ministers as eight members for Brisbane would have, because they would not be backed by the weight of public opinion. They would not be able to send deputations and delegates to overwhelm Ministers with their demands. If Brisbane was unrepresented, its deputations would be a sufficient representation.

The PREMIER: Deputations do not represent votes.

Mr. MACROSSAN said they did not represent votes, but their influence on the Ministry represented votes; and that was a fact that should not be forgotten. A good deal had been said about "those maligned districts"; but there had not been a word uttered by any member of the Opposition which could be construed into maligning. The Premier confessed that a feeling against the Brisbane members pervaded the whole colony. If such were the case, there must be some foundation for it. The honourable gentleman ignored the opinion and weight of the Press; but he (Mr. Macrossan) thought he should have given a little more attention to it. If they were to continue this discussion, they had better leave the general principles of the Bill alone, and keep to the details. They were simply discussing if these three electorates should have three members instead of four, and he did not think it was necessary to go back upon the principles of the Bill, or to arguments which should have been used on the second reading. The sooner they came to a division on the question the better, for there was very little use in prolonging the debate, which he did not believe would influence any honourable member on either side of the House. The sooner they divided the sooner they would be able to get the Bill through and forward it to the returning officers. But if the discussion was to continue as it was now going on, he was afraid that instead of the Bill reaching the returning officers in July, it would not do so before October.

Mr. GROOM said he desired to offer a contradiction to the statement that this amendment had been brought forward by him in collusion with members of the Opposition. He had acted by himself, and his action was unconnected with any single member of the House; and therefore the statement was simply untrue. The honourable the Premier, when he indulged in the remarks he had done as to liberalism, and leaders of it, should remember a little of history. He should very much like to know how many members of the Government that was formed when the honourable member for Port Curtis retired, were now sitting on the Treasury benches? Not one. Liberalism as it had since been developed, meant that those who professed it were liberal to themselves and not to the colony. They helped themselves at the expense of the country; and there was not the slightest doubt that not one of the so-called old Liberal party now sat on the Government benches; though those who were there had got to that position on the shoulders of that party, who had well provided for themselves before their present successors had got into office. He (Mr. Groom) repudiated this so-called Liberalism, though he had been as strong a supporter as any in the House of Liberal legislation, and made as many sacrifices as any other member—and, indeed, far more than some had done to support the Liberal party. But how had the constituencies been treated by the so-called Liberal party? Look at the Darling Downs at the present time. Look at the enormous landed estates that were to be found there, as they might gather from the document moved for by the honourable member for Kennedy. From that they would find that among forty-three estates there were no less than 1,343,000 acres of land divided. And who were the parties who had alienated that land? Not the honourable gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, but the so-called leaders of the Liberal party. This cry of Liberalism had been so frequently raised that it positively stank in the nostrils of the people; and a high compliment had been paid to them to-night by the Premier when he spoke of the action of what he termed a venal Press;—of the clap-trap that was spoken as to the Government being a Queen-street Government, administered and dictated to by a few residents of Queen street. But it was not clap-trap. What was said was a matter of fact. The honourable the Premier had put himself forward as a leader of Liberalism; and said that he had introduced a Liberal Land Bill. He (Mr. Groom) said it was an illiberal Land Bill, and that the Premier had played into the hands of the pastoral tenants of the Darling Downs, who were now so satisfied with him and his Government that they

did not wish to have him displaced. They said, "Oh, they are so squeezable, we can get anything we want out of them; so for goodness' sake let them remain." Not long ago he (the Premier) had put up some 11,000 or 15,000 acres of Yandilla land, but not for the benefit of the people—that was a secondary consideration—but for the benefit of Mr. Gore. This, at any rate, was the general opinion. It was all very well to talk about Liberalism and to challenge honourable members with leaving their so-called Liberalism, advocated in years gone by. But the Liberalism advocated in these days had developed by a succession of years to this—that each Liberal leader endeavoured to benefit himself at the expense of the rank and file of the party. That was abundantly proved by the present state of the Treasury benches. It was seen by the conduct of the heart and soul of Liberalism, the Hon. Arthur Macalister, who, at the invitation of the honourable member for Port Curtis, left his party to accept the Speaker's chair. He sold his constituents, and they sold him afterwards; but where was he now? Comfortably provided for in a good position as Agent-General of the colony in England. Those who were the true exponents of Liberalism were they who attended to the affairs of the country, and were not feathering their nests at the expense of the colony. The honourable the Attorney-General had made some reference to the Electoral Bill of New South Wales. He (Mr. Groom) happened to be in the Legislative Assembly in Sydney when the Bill was under discussion; and he noticed that Sir John Robertson, who seemed to be the actual leader of the House, instead of the Premier, allowed three additional members to be given to East and West Sydney; but he moved certain amendments afterwards, which gave fifteen new members to the country districts, and so counteracted the three given to Sydney. So that even in that Legislature members were fully determined that the country districts should have a fair share of the representation. He was simply endeavouring to have the same principle carried out here—not out of any antagonism to the city of Brisbane, but that the country districts should have justice. After all, where would the city of Brisbane be but for the country districts, to develop its trade and commerce? It was therefore only fair those districts should have that voice in the Legislature to which they were entitled.

Mr. PALMER said he felt bound to set himself right in one particular, as to what had fallen from the honourable member, namely, that Mr. Macalister came forward as a candidate for the Speakership at his (Mr. Palmer's) invitation. He denied that *in toto*. Mr. Macalister was a volun-

teer for the Speakership. He came to his office, and asked him for his support, and he (Mr. Palmer) believing he was fit for the office, and being glad of the opportunity of detaching him from the party, of which he was the leading member, did support him; and there were gentlemen on his side of the House who knew all the proceedings—that he was a volunteer, and as they all knew, one volunteer was better than two pressed men. He wished to say a few words on the subject of the speech of the Premier, and would appeal to the Chairman if it was not the most ungracious speech that he had ever heard made. Last night the honourable gentleman was very thankful to the Opposition for defeating him on what he could not but term a Brisbane job; but to-night he took a different view. However, he should not prolong this debate. He was anxious that the Premier should have given him an answer to the question he put to him early in the evening, for on that reply should he know how to vote. If they would only say that if this amendment were carried it would be fatal to the Bill, he should be quite decided. But as they did not know what the effect of carrying the amendment might have, perhaps the better plan would be to go to the vote at once, and then they would see.

Mr. KING said that when the Bill of 1872 was discussed, and they were talking about representation on the basis of population, it was frequently said that if London was represented on the basis of population it would swamp the House of Commons. They did not ask that the representation here should be on the same basis of population. He saw that Mr. MacDevitt opened the debate on the Liberal side, and was followed by Mr. Lilley and Mr. Hemmant, and they all took the same ground, that there would be considerable difficulty in applying the principle of representation on a population basis to towns and other large centres of population. That debate bore out what he perfectly remembered—that the members of the Liberal party repudiated the idea that population pure and simple was to be the basis of representation; that was to say, that the representation of large centres of population was to be in proportion to population. It was felt by the Liberal party that that principle, if carried into practice regardless of circumstances, would land them in a difficulty. The same might be said of any theory. There was no theory that could not be reduced to a *reductio ad absurdum*. There was no doubt that population should, to some extent, be a basis of representation; but at the same time, if the country population was going to be swamped by the population of the towns, they must take measures to prevent it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was not going to sit there and hear his colleagues who had occupied seats with him on that bench accused of feathering their own nests without saying a word in vindication of them. He said the charge was entirely without foundation. Let them see who his colleagues were—who were the first members of the Government who sat there in 1874. There was Mr. Macalister at the head; he was said to have feathered his nest. Well, he thought the statement was pretty well answered by looking at the fact that that honourable gentleman began politics in this colony about fifteen years ago as a rich man. His income was between £3,000 and £4,000 a-year; he devoted himself to the interests of the Liberal party until he became a poor man. Had he feathered his nest? He had about the smallest income of any Agent-General representing Australia. If he had feathered his nest he (the Attorney-General) would be sorry to feather his in the same way. Then there was Mr. Stephens, who had lost his life in the service of the country. He had never heard that he (Mr. Stephens) had made anything for himself. Mr. Hemmant—did he make any gain by sitting on those benches? Did the honourable member for Maranoa, who was one of the then Government, feather his nest—or make anything by it? Did Mr. MacDevitt make anything by it? He did not know what the late member for Ipswich, Mr. Thorn, made by sitting on those benches. The cheers with which such a charge of corruption was received came very well from individual members who, representing as they did, and always had done, the purely pastoral interest in this colony, applauded a member of that House who said the present Government favoured the squatting interest. Their votes, always in opposition, showed whether such was the case or not. He (the Attorney-General) was in the House in 1872, and heard what was said then about population being the basis of representation; and he remembered not only what was said by the honourable member for Toowoomba, but also by the honourable member for Ravenswood, who was then a prominent member of the Liberal party. At page 349 of *Hansard*, he found that the honourable member for Ravenswood, in speaking on the second reading of the Electoral Districts Bill, said:—

“They had been told by the honourable the Premier that it contained a variety of principles, but seeing that some of those were conflicting principles, it was tantamount to having no principle at all; for if there were two conflicting principles it could not be said that there was any principle at all. They were told that it was based partly on population, partly on property, and partly on extent of territory. Then, again, they were told that it was based partly upon adult male population—that, how-

ever, was not a correct basis. He was bound to contend that population, pure and simple, was the only proper basis for representation in that House; and he made that contention on the ground that it was the population in this colony that paid the taxes and all the expenses of Government, and that, therefore, it was only just and proper that population should be the basis, and that the people should have the power vested in them of creating the Government. A great deal had been said and quoted in the course of the present debate about the anomalies existing in the representation of England; and it had been argued that because the city of London had not the number of representatives to which it was entitled on the population basis, that they should not make a claim to have representation on that basis in the colony. He had already shown, on a previous occasion, that such an argument was not applicable to this colony, because, in the first place, they did not ask for the exact fraction of representation to which every and each district was entitled; but they only asked that, as was the case in England, the places where population was large should be more liberally represented than places where there was little or no population. They found also that although London had not the number of representatives to which it was entitled in proportion to its population, it still had a great many more than any small boroughs."

That was what was then said by the honourable member for Ravenswood; and he might also refer to the memorial which that honourable member was going to present to the Governor, in which a calculation was made as to the total population represented by the then Opposition as compared with the numbers represented by the Government supporters at that time. He remembered that the whole argument was based entirely on a population basis. The honourable member for Toowoomba, who spoke on Mr. Lilley's amendment proposing additional members when the population justified it, which he supported, said at page 448 of *Hansard* :—

"He could not see that there was any harm whatever in the new clauses proposed by the honourable member for Fortitude Valley; on the contrary, there was a great deal of good in them, for they made provision for the rapid influx of population into the colony, and for the representation of that population after it had settled. * * * * * In two or three years, at most, the Legislature would have to fall back upon the system of giving towns and large centres of population representation for themselves by as many members as they were entitled to, without being cut up in the way called 'gerrymandering.'"

Further on, the honourable member said, in reference to the amendments proposed :—

"If they should not be carried, in a very few years a very different Bill from the present one would be passed by the Assembly; and if honourable members on the Ministerial side cried out, now, that the people were over-repre-

mented, they would have still greater cause to cry out by-and-bye when the people had proper representation."

In the present instance, the honourable member for Kennedy had favoured the House with a statement in reference to the preponderating influence of Brisbane; but he would point out that they had heard a great deal for years past about grievances of the North. He was quite sure that all honourable members of the House were anxious to give the North and every part of the colony justice; but if it was a question of giving the North double the representation of the South, he fancied the tables might be turned in time. Fairness to all parts of the colony was the best way of keeping fairness; and yet that honourable member had avowed himself a supporter of an amendment which was to give the 20,000 people in the city of Brisbane three members, while the 20,000 in what was called the Northern Division of the colony would get eight. He (the Attorney-General) agreed with what had been said by another honourable member that evening, that for all who professed Liberal principles, and did not act up to them, or changed their votes as imaginary exigencies might seem to require—for such members there was a sure retribution. It might be a long time coming, but come it would. And honourable members who professed Liberal principles, and acted up to them, need never be afraid of any consequences that might occur. He could say honestly that since he had had a seat in that House, he had never changed his principles, except in details, as advancing knowledge gave advance in wisdom. Upon the question that representation should be on the basis of population, he said the opinions of the Liberal party in 1872 were clear and distinct. It was the basis of the fight for years, and now they were told by members who had belonged to that party that it was no longer the basis. Talking of retribution, it always came on the right shoulders. "Curses came home to roost." He thought it would be unworthy of him to sit in that House if he did not repudiate the utterly unfounded attacks made upon his former colleagues.

Mr. KING said he must again deny that it was ever a principle of the Liberal party that the metropolis should be strictly represented according to population. He had heard it repudiated a hundred times when it was thrown out as an objection to the policy of that party. With regard to the memorial mentioned by the Attorney-General, it referred to the fact that the Liberal party represented not the city of Brisbane alone, but all the populous constituencies; whilst on the other side, the members represented no populous constituencies at that time. With reference to the comparison between the population of

the North and that of Brisbane, he would point out that the tables upon which they had to allot members were not precisely accurate. It was impossible to say where the inaccuracy existed; but there was good reason to suppose that a good many people had gone North who were not accounted for, and he believed that when the Census was taken, it would be found that the population of the Northern districts was larger than it was held to be at the present time, and that possibly the population of some of the metropolitan constituencies would be found to be something less than estimated.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Attorney-General had used the word retribution. Did he recollect the time when he (the Attorney-General), with that late very Liberal leader, Mr. Hemmant, sought to disfranchise the electorate of the Warrego, and would have done so, but that the unfair and dishonest attempt was prevented by the honourable member for Warrego and the present honourable member for the Mitchell? When he was going through the list of his colleagues, and defending them from the charge of having feathered their nests, it was a great pity he did not take up his own position, because though he had not yet feathered his nest, he was in the process of doing it very fast. He (Mr. Macrossan) would read a paragraph which appeared in the Queensland *Patriot* upon this very question. The paper was dated May 17, and was not, therefore, very old:—

“When referring, in a late issue, to the apparent anomaly of Mr. Griffith’s (the Attorney-General) introducing Mr. Power as his substitute for the prosecution of criminals, while he himself carried on his own private practice in the civil court, we were not aware of the manner in which Mr. Power’s services were remunerated. On referring, however, to our file of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, we find in its issue of February 12th an allusion to a similar anomaly, and in the succeeding issue an explanation of it. From this we learn that on the appointment of a District Crown Prosecutor, a special stipulation is made that he shall do the Attorney-General’s legal work, when called on, within his own district. It is, therefore, evident, on the one hand, that the substitution causes no extra expense to the country, and, on the other, that a District Crown Prosecutor’s billet is not quite so easy as the non-official public suppose. But this does not make the situation less anomalous. The prosecution of great offenders is certainly an important State duty, and a permanent lawyer is therefore chosen for the part of Attorney-General. But the choice is, apparently, evaded, and evaded habitually, by the little arrangement we have described—and *all* District Crown Prosecutors may not display the talent evinced by Mr. Power. Suppose we put the matter in another light. If a patient sent for a well-known physician of established name, and paid him his extra fee, would he be quite satisfied if the M.D. handed him over to a

young neighbouring practitioner, however able and promising a member of the profession he might be?”

From that it would be seen that the Attorney-General, when he defended his late colleagues, would have done well to explain and defend his own conduct.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the imputations which had been made were entirely irrelevant to the subject, and he could defend himself when the proper time came. He would not be led away by the bad taste of the honourable member for Kennedy, to display equally bad taste by answering him. That honourable member had twice referred to a motion which was brought forward in 1872. It was brought forward as a practical joke, and was never seriously intended. As soon as the motion was made, it was met by a joke from the Premier, and the discussion was carried on in a jocular manner. It was only intended to draw out the Minister for Works, who had just before said something about miners.

Mr. WALSH said that, after the explanation, perhaps it would be best to regard the whole Bill as a practical joke. The House was, however, not the place for the Attorney-General, or any representative of the colony, to carry on practical jokes.

The Hon. R. PRING said that for the honour of the profession to which he belonged, and in defence of the Attorney-General, he would speak to the remarks of the honourable member for the Kennedy. He had always advocated the appointment of public prosecutors since Sir George Bowen, the first Governor, landed in the colony. He, as Attorney-General of the colony, with the sanction of the existing Government, confined himself entirely to the legal branch of the business. But if the Cabinet chose to ask the Attorney-General to give them his advice and opinion on political matters, and in the discharge of those duties he was compelled to be absent from the Supreme Court in the prosecution of criminal offenders, he (Mr. Pring) held that the Attorney-General had a right to be absent. If the honourable member for Kennedy thought that the administration of justice had suffered by the handing over of a case to the Crown Prosecutor, he would satisfy him (Mr. Pring) that the action of the Attorney-General was wrong; but if a Crown Prosecutor could not hold a brief in the Supreme Court, he was not fit to be a Crown Prosecutor at all.

Mr. GRIMES was very sorry to see that members on the Liberal side and in the Liberal interest were the first to attempt to alter the principles generally held by the Liberal party. For some time past he had heard the question of representation debated on the basis of gross population and adult male population, but he had never before heard it debated outside those two princi-

ples. Leaders on both sides of the House seemed to have generally agreed that the question of representation should be fought out in that arena. It was proposed now to reduce the representation of the Brisbane district so as to make the proportion one member for about 4,000 adult males. He failed to see the principle of that, as it was nearly twice the proportion of population to what had been fixed in any other portion of the colony. He would like to know whether a person, simply because he resided in Brisbane, was to be debarred from having a proper influence. Many members held more property, and were more deeply interested in the local prosperity of the place, than those who actually represented the district. Representatives, however, had something more to do than to get as much as they could for the district they represented. They had to secure the future prosperity, and mould the future policy of the country. There were other interests at stake than the immediate direct pecuniary interest of those who sent members to the House. When he looked to this fact, he saw that the influence of the members for metropolitan constituencies had always been exercised in a right direction, and the battles of the Liberal interest, and of the colony, had been fought by those members. That was the reason why it was sought to reduce their number and curtail their power. He remembered the time when nearly the whole of the colony was held by gentlemen who were themselves in Parliament and made the laws under which their tenure was secured, and he remembered the struggles which were made to redress that state of things, and provide for the future settlement of the colony. The settlement which was now taking place in the interior was mostly traceable to the influence of members sent to Parliament by metropolitan constituencies. Another reason why the representation of the metropolitan constituencies should not be reduced was, that the actions of those representatives were much modified and directed by the influence which an intelligent Press brought to bear on them. He was sorry to say that the opposition to the number of members given to the metropolitan constituencies arose simply from other districts who were jealous of the prominence which Brisbane seemed to be assuming. Was it fair to thus cut away the influence of Brisbane in the conduct of public affairs? If honourable members were jealous of the size of Brisbane, and thought that the concentration of population in it should be discouraged, and people should be induced to settle inland, let legislation be directed to that end; but do not seek to secure this by cutting off from the metropolis its proper power in the State. He held this would be beginning at the wrong end.

Mr. FRASER intended to oppose the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba, though he would at once admit that the honourable member had a perfect right to move an amendment affecting any constituency. At the same time, he wished to point out the injustice connected with the proposed alteration. It had been said that Brisbane would control the election, but it would be found that Fortitude Valley would do so in the main, if the amalgamation took place. As an elector of North Brisbane, he objected to this most decidedly. They had also been told that those who advocated Hare's system would now have a fair opportunity of giving it a trial; but the "three-cornered" system was not part of Hare's, and was entirely repudiated by him. He had been somewhat amused at the arguments advanced in support of the amendment. If population was to be accepted as the basis of representation, whether it be the general or male adult population, he had yet to learn why it should be applicable to one part and not to another. He also wanted to know why he, as an elector, should not have as great a weight in the constitution of Parliament as an elector in any outside electorate because he happened by the force of circumstances to reside in Brisbane. The position taken up by the supporters of the amendment was most illogical. The honourable member for Bowen had said that something more than population should be taken into consideration. If wealth were meant, it would be found to aggregate where population aggregated. The honourable members for Bowen and Toowoomba had referred the committee to the state of population and representation in the old country; but it must be borne in mind that no principle determined the representation with reference to population in the old country; and he ventured to say, that if the honourable member for Toowoomba would turn back and examine the population of certain districts at the time of the Reform Bill, he would find a very different state of things to what existed now. The honourable gentleman also told them that the centres of population purposely received fewer members than country districts, and cited Manchester and one or two other towns in support. He would give him instances which would tell the other way. Lincoln, a large manufacturing place, with 5,000 electors, returned two members, and South Lincolnshire, with 10,000, returned only the same number. There was no analogy and no argument to be drawn at all by reference to the home country. They had also been told that it was dangerous to permit large representation to centres of population. He should like to ask where the liberties and rights of the people were protected and defended in England, if not by centres of population?

The Reform Bill, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and Free Trade, were all carried by the centres of population; and at the present time, they found that in the effort to equalize the franchise for country districts, towns and districts sprang from the centres of population. If they were to draw any conclusion from the influence exercised by centres of population upon the well-being of England and other countries, they must come to the conclusion that the representation for such should be larger than for any other part of the country. He had no doubt that the amendment would be carried, judging by appearances; but he could not help expressing his decided opinion that it would be inflicting a great injustice upon a most important section of the community of Queensland. If the honourable member for Toowoomba had attempted a more extensive grouping of electorates he should have supported him, but he could not see that any good end would be attained by the proposed arrangement. As to the idea that the minority would secure representation in the electorate, it was a farce, for the "three-cornered system" had failed to accomplish that object. He presumed that the principle of the amendment might be applied to other electorates, but he was afraid that if this were attempted, some honourable members who were evidently determined to support the amendment would not be so ready to accept the principle "that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander."

Mr. BAILEY looked upon the whole debate as a kind of "shadow-fighting." In a Redistribution Bill for the whole country, the country members knew very well that it was not a question whether one member—more or less—should be given to Brisbane, but whether thirty constituencies should be represented by Brisbane men. He was satisfied that not more than twenty-five members would be from the country in the next Parliament. Let them look at the House as it was constituted a short time ago. A few moments ago there were thirty members in the House, and at least twenty of them were Brisbane men. They were merely fighting with shadows when they attempted to deprive the most populous district in the country of one representative. In fact, the whole thing was not worthy of the debate. He should vote for the Bill as it stood. If the House had already affirmed the principle on which the Bill was founded, they were almost bound to agree to it; and on that principle, the mean population basis, Brisbane had not been too liberally treated by the Government.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Douglas, Dickson, Griffith, Miles, Garrick, Hockings, Fraser, Grimes, Kingsford, Bailey, McLean, Fring, Foote, Beattie, Murphy, and Macdonald.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. McIlwraith, Walsh, Thompson, King, Palmer, Graham, Morehead, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Fox, Ivory, Bear, Perkins, W. Scott, Macrossan, Macfarlane (Rockhampton), Groom, Stevenson, J. Scott, and Bell.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

On the question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—

Mr. BEATTIE said he would move as an amendment on the amendment, that the word "four" be substituted for the word "three."

After some discussion as to the order of procedure,

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the objection taken to the amendment of the honourable member for Fortitude Valley showed clearly how the members of the other side were acting in this matter. It was evidently not their intention to help the Government to carry through the measure. They were endeavouring to take advantage of their position to force a division, and the Government, while disposed to treat the matter fairly, were not inclined to give the Opposition the advantage they sought. The members of the Opposition were determined to make this purely a party question, as they did on the previous night with the Brisbane Drainage Bill, with the view of blocking the work which the Government had placed before the House. The question was, whether Brisbane was entitled to four members, and he had heard nothing from the other side to show that the Government had given Brisbane a single member more than it was entitled to. He would here remark, in reference to what had fallen from the honourable member for Ravenswood, that that honourable gentleman had clearly shown that he had departed from his political principles. The Attorney-General had shown that the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba had also departed from his principles; that they were flying in the face of the principles they both enunciated in 1872, when another Bill was before the House. No remarks had been heard on that occasion such as those honourable members had made to-night. They contended on that occasion that population should be represented, and they contended on the Liberal side of the House, in opposition to the honourable member for Port Curtis, that representation should be given on the basis of population. Now they were eating the very words they uttered on that occasion, and endeavouring to cut down the representation of Brisbane, which, taken on any

basis that they pleased, either the adult male population or the mean population, was clearly entitled to the number of members that the Government had placed down in their Bill. It was said, that because Brisbane was the capital it was not entitled to representation, and arguments had been drawn from old countries, to support that position. He, however, failed to see any analogy between the cases of London and Brisbane; the settled population of the old country was in no way analogous to a new place like Brisbane, and the comparison would have been fairer if it had been drawn from some of the Australian colonies, and their capitals. The representation asked for Brisbane was not one whit higher than was asked for Sydney in the New South Wales Legislature. Then it was said that Brisbane was represented from the country. But in reply to that, it was enough to say that they were entitled to certain voting power in the House, and it was idle to tell them that there are certain members from country constituencies who would always be found to support the interests of Brisbane. Supposing matters came before the House which were in conflict with the interests of Brisbane, such as was the case last night, where the representatives of Brisbane required voting power, it was simply idle to say that some of the country districts would be found to assist them; therefore, it was equally idle to say that the members of those districts would represent the city of Brisbane in this House. The fact was clear that Brisbane was entitled to count votes in the House; and honourable members who had spoken could not surely remember the debate that took place on the Bill brought in when the honourable member for Port Curtis was at the head of the Government. He threatened to remove the capital to Gladstone. If the honourable member had had his way, where would the representatives of Brisbane have been then? He (the Minister for Lands) believed the honourable member for Dalby also said that the capital should be removed. Where were the representatives of Brisbane then, and what was their position? Were they not entitled to their fair share of representation when such a piece of intimidation was being advanced? Were they likely to consent to have the capital removed, or to leave the possibility of such a thing to a few constituencies who might occasionally come in to their support? There were other questions than electoral reform likely to engage the time of Parliament; among them the question of Financial Separation, which was endeavoured to be forced upon the House during last session. He would caution honourable members behind him to bear in mind that these questions would turn up and they should now act together. But, as he had said, there

were questions on which they might be brought into direct conflict with the country districts, and it would not be right on such occasions that the city of Brisbane should be put off by a representative of an outside constituency. Something had been attempted to be made out of the figures brought forward in support of the Bill. But the figures showed clearly enough that the city of Brisbane and the other constituency referred to—Fortitude Valley—were entitled to four members. But honourable members opposite seemed to want to cut down the number of representatives from four to three. What were the principal questions likely to come before this House and the country? First, there were land questions; and they knew how honourable members on the Opposition side worked together in those matters. There was no dividing them. They always worked shoulder to shoulder. They were always ready to hit upon some plans that would cut up a popular constituency; always telling about some "three-cornered movement," the object being that they should have the odd man; and the reason why they now wished to cut down the representation of Brisbane was, that they might strengthen their party—a party which represented the one great question which would always divide that (the Opposition) side from this, and would ever distinguish the Liberal from the other side of the House—namely, the land question. They sought to take one member from the popular constituency, in order that he might be drafted to the other side; but he (the Minister for Lands) warned honourable members generally to look out for that, and to see that they stood together. What he had described was the policy of the Opposition, viz., to divide the Ministerial supporters and split the party. Let them prevent the Opposition from cutting out a single electorate, and so prevent them, when they came to deal with the land question, from manipulating the land laws of the country.

Mr. McILWRAITH said they had been trying to get to business all the evening, but the Minister for Lands had risen to object to their cavilling at the amendment of the honourable member for Fortitude Valley before anyone had said a word against the Chairman's decision. The amendment entailed a complicated question; but, so far as he (Mr. McIlwraith) was concerned, he thought the opinion of the Chairman upon it was right. As soon as they had the opinion of the Chairman, they were prepared to take a decision. They were not cavilling about the amendment. They were prepared to take a division upon it now. But what position did the Minister for Lands take up? He got up and made a hot-headed, fiery speech, to consume time such as should have been

left to some subordinate member; and the honourable gentleman had degraded himself to that position for no purpose but to waste the time of the House. He said that we were forcing him to a disadvantageous position, and why? Because we wanted to come to a conclusion on the very question they had been invited by the Government to come to a decision upon—the provisions of the Electoral Bill. He was prepared to accept the Chairman's decision upon the matter, and if the Government used means to block them from coming to a decision now, they put themselves in a position which would necessitate the business of the colony being stopped. He thoroughly agreed with the Chairman's ruling on the matter which had been raised; and believed the amendment could be put in the shape the honourable member had put it, and that the Government had no excuse whatever for not going to a division.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was not anxious to go to a division to-night, and he did not see how the Opposition leader could expect him to do so, when the House had decided to strike out "Fortitude Valley," and leave it no longer a constituency of this country. Did the honourable gentleman think it would be judicious on his part to support going to a division without knowing what effect the decision arrived at would have upon his constituency, seeing that they were to be wiped out of the representation? He was not going to waste the time of the House. He had always looked upon the Opposition as being willing to act fairly towards every portion of the colony; but to-night he had to alter that opinion. When he saw what an extraordinary difference there was between some of the electorates in the Northern portions of the colony and the number constituting that of Fortitude Valley, he could see that an injustice had been done. The honourable member for Bowen had spoken against the proposal to give four members to North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, and what did he find? That while those electorates numbered a population of 21,000 people, and had something like 5,000 electors in the two constituencies, the constituency which the honourable member represented consisted of 700 electors only. But the population in the constituency which the honourable member now represented amounted altogether to something like a little over 4,000, just half what there was in Fortitude Valley; and yet he said Fortitude Valley ought to be struck off the face of the Electoral Act, and that Bowen ought to have its representative because it was a Northern constituency, and not properly represented. He (Mr. Beattie) held that he was justified in bringing this grievance before the House, and in showing the injustice that was intended to be done to North Brisbane and

Fortitude Valley by depriving them of one member. He had been in hopes that the Opposition would have been disposed to do justice; but after what had happened, he would be able to judge what kind of justice they would mete out to a constituency like his if they had the power. The population of his constituency was double, and he believed four times, as great as that of some of the Northern constituencies, and yet justice was refused to be done to it. He should therefore press his amendment.

Mr. FOOTE said he had refrained from speaking on the question all the evening, because he thought the less said the sooner they would come to a division. However, the merits of the Bill had been discussed, a great deal of extraneous matter had been introduced, and it appeared that the House had lost its temper. Under those circumstances, he thought it better that the Chairman should leave the chair and ask leave to sit again. He thought it was not wise to try to come to a conclusion on the matter to-night, and that it would be better to allow a few days to intervene, so that they could come back to the question in better spirits. He moved:—

That the Chairman leave the Chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and negatived on division:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Beattie, McLean, Kingsford, Grimes, Hockings, Foote, MacDonald, Fring, Murphy, and Fraser.

NOES, 24.

Messrs. Thompson; McIlwraith, Morehead, Palmer, Walsh, Douglas, Dickson, W. Scott, King, Graham, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Fox, Macfarlane (Rockhampton), Beor, Macrossan, Perkins, Groom, Ivory, Garrick, Stevenson, J. Scott, Bell, Griffith, and Miles.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Morehead, Palmer, McIlwraith, J. Scott, Stevenson, Walsh, Thompson, Graham, Bell, Groom, W. Scott, Macrossan, King, Beor, Fox, Perkins, Ivory, Macfarlane (Ipswich), and Macfarlane (Rockhampton).

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Miles, Douglas, Griffith, Dickson, Fraser, Garrick, Beattie, McLean, Macdonald, Fring, Foote, Hockings, Grimes, Kingsford, and Murphy.

Mr. Beattie's amendment was, therefore, lost.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said he would move, by way of amendment to clause 4, that in line twelve the words, "one member" be omitted with a view to inserting the words "two members" for Ipswich.

Mr. FOOTE said that his wish, and that of other honourable members in that locality, was to put Ipswich on an equality with Brisbane. It was not increased representation that was desired, as the same number of members would be returned. By the Bill before the House, the interest of Bremer would outweigh that of Bandanba, as Bandanba was an agricultural electorate and Bremer a suburban electorate, where tradespeople, artisans, and others resided. He believed it would be better for both districts that the Bremer should be joined to that of Ipswich; and he thought the honourable member for the Bremer himself was of the same opinion.

Mr. THOMPSON said the matter required explanation. He had taken exception, on the second reading, to Ipswich having one member and Bremer two. It would be better that Ipswich and the suburbs should return two members and the present electorate of Bandanba remain as Bandanba with one. He was quite willing to come into that view, that Ipswich should have two members, and Bremer (which was really Bandanba) keep one member. A very small portion of the Bremer district came into Bandanba, and the three members would be returned for the neighbourhood, comprising Ipswich, the suburbs, and the large district of Bandanba. He would support the amendment on the understanding that when they came to describe Ipswich, it should include the greater part of the Bremer.

Mr. McILWRAITH, while agreeing so far with the amendment proposed, thought that the two lines should be struck out together, because if they simply struck out "one member" for Ipswich, and substitute "two members," there might be a question when the alteration to the other line came to be discussed.

The PREMIER said that course would be more desirable.

Mr. PALMER said it was no doubt the proper way to strike out both lines, and substitute others, giving Ipswich two members, and leaving the Bremer with one. He thought the honourable member might be allowed to amend his own motion.

Mr. BEATTIE was not going to object, but he claimed the right to call the attention of the House to the fact that Bremer and Ipswich combined only numbered 2,700 electors, on the adult male population basis in the two districts, whilst some of the rejected constituencies had 100 more than the two together. He was not going to oppose the amendment, but if the argument held good in the case of Ipswich and Bremer, it surely held good in the case of the large towns of the colony.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) moved that lines 12 and 13 be omitted with a view to inserting the words, "Ipswich, two mem-

bers, Bandanba, one member." Honourable members would observe that no increase of members was asked, but only a transfer, and so far as the group was concerned, everything would be the same. His object was simply to put Ipswich in the same position as other towns of the colony. It would be observed that the towns of Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Toowoomba had each two members, whereas Ipswich had been left with only one.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted, stand part of the clause—put and negatived.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put and passed.

Question—That clause 4, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put.

Mr. FOOTE said he would move, as an amendment, that the words "Rosewood, one member," on the fourteenth line, should be struck out, with a view to inserting the words "West Moreton, two members." It was his intention to move, also, an amendment of the boundaries of the electorate as described in the Bill, and with that view he had got it printed. It ran as follows—

"Commencing at Victoria Tunnel and bounded thence by railway line to its intersection with Laidley Creek; thence by that creek downwards to its junction with Lockyer's Creek; thence by Lockyer's Creek downwards to its junction with Brisbane River; thence by Brisbane River downwards to the proposed north boundary of the Bremer electorate."

By the manner in which the Bill cut up the electorate, a large proportion of the population of his district was given to a district with a scattered population. He considered that a far better plan was to take a portion from Stanley and give "West Moreton" two members, and Stanley only one. He was giving the districts exactly the same representation as the Government proposed. He had also had the proposed alteration delineated on a map, and honourable members would see that the most natural boundaries had been selected; they could be easily known, and no difficulties would be presented in the collection of the electoral roll. With this short explanation, and the understanding that the Government intended to move the Chairman out of the chair, he would simply propose the amendment.

The PREMIER said the Government had found some difficulty in defining the boundaries of Rosewood and West Moreton. It was a difficult question to deal with, and they were quite willing to receive what light the honourable member could throw upon it. They imagined that they had provided a compact constituency. Possibly as an alternative scheme it might be advisable to combine Rosewood and Stanley and form one electorate out of them. He did not know, however, whether

this would suit the local requirements of the people. If the electorate was defined as proposed, they would hardly have that proportion of population in the West Moreton district required to entitle it to two members, and on the other hand Stanley would be above the average for one; if they increased the electorate of Rosewood or "West Moreton," as the honourable member proposed to call it, they would diminish the electorate of Stanley. However, he did not purpose discussing the question that evening; and as the description would be in the hands of honourable members, there would be time to consider the matter before it would come on for discussion next week. He would now move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. McILWRAITH hoped the Premier had arranged to show the proposed alterations on the maps.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that what they required were maps showing the electorates proposed by the Government, and the electorates proposed by the honourable member for West Moreton.

Mr. WALSH wished to know how the Premier could reconcile his statement that evening with his declaration during the debate on the second reading, that the Government would not allow any material alteration of the Bill? He could not understand why the Government should be so anxious to move the Chairman out of the chair. The members of the committee were perfectly prepared to proceed with the discussion of the measure. He objected to the adjournment at so early an hour, and to the Government probably lengthening the session by playing into the hands of two or three gentlemen who were anxious to get away by a certain train. The Government first handed over their Bill to the honourable member for West Moreton, so that he might amend it in a form to please his constituents, or to do work which they were unable to do, and then they brought forward a motion that the Chairman should leave the chair, to enable the same honourable member to get away by a certain train. They should stick to their Bill and not bring forward such a motion until they had made some progress. They had made none that evening, but had sustained two or three ignominious defeats. He believed they had no more intention of passing the Bill than he had of voting for it. The Bill was characteristic of the Government, and their management of it was characteristic of them.

Mr. MACROSSAN would suggest to the Government that they should obtain, for the information of honourable members, the populations of the proposed electorates, so that they might understand the amendment better.

The PREMIER said they had not the data to comply with the honourable member's request, but he would undertake to supply the House with the best information obtainable in connection with the proposed electorates between now and Tuesday next. He did not say that the Government accepted the amendment.

Mr. IVORY suggested that the amendments promised last night, doing away with the interregnum, should also be laid before the House on Tuesday. It was important that they should be in the hands of members some time before they were discussed.

The PREMIER said the amendments were now ready, and would be available for distribution to-morrow.

The CHAIRMAN then left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday.

The House adjourned at seventeen minutes after 10 o'clock.