

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 1878

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business with the increased number of members under Electoral Bill now under consideration?

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) replied—

It is not the intention of the Government to do so.

LAND RESUMPTION BILL.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Griffith) the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the taking of lands and materials required for the purpose of constructing roads and other public and private undertakings authorised by Parliament, and for other purposes, as recommended by Message No. 5 from His Excellency the Governor, of date 29th May, 1878.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in introducing the Bill, said he should take that opportunity of saying a few words as to the nature of it. The powers for taking land for the purposes mentioned in the Bill, and proposed to be asked for, were those contained in an Act of the Imperial Parliament, called "The Land Clauses Consolidation Act," which was in force in Great Britain, in Victoria, and most of the other colonies, and they were substantially enacted in our Railway Acts at the present time. It was proposed to apply those powers for the purpose of getting land for roads and railways, for securing land for the future construction of railways, sewers, State schools, and "for the construction or erection of our public or other works which the constructing authority is authorised by any Act of Parliament or otherwise to construct or erect." These powers were proposed to be conferred upon the following authorities:—The Governor in Council, any person authorised by the Governor in Council to take land on behalf of the Crown, any municipal corporation, and any person or corporation authorised by any special Act. In respect to the vexed question of the reservation in deeds of grant, it was proposed to declare—

"When the constructing authority is the Crown or any persons acting on behalf of the Crown the provisions of this Act shall apply notwithstanding that in the grant or demise of the land there may be contained a general reservation of so much land as may be required for the purpose of making roads or any like general reservation

"Provided that when in any such case the grant or demise contains a reservation of a specific area of land for the purposes for which the land is taken the provisions of this Act relating to compensation for land compulsorily taken or any other matter in connection with the taking thereof shall not apply except as to any area taken in excess of the area so specifically reserved.

"And provided further that the power to make and open roads through selections reserved

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 4 June, 1878.

Petitions.—Intoxicating Liquors Bill.—Question.—Land Resumption Bill.—Electoral Districts Bill.—committee.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. KIDGELL presented a petition from the South Gympie Progress Association, praying that the Government might take steps to prevent Chinese from mining on new goldfields, until, at least, three years from the discovery of the same, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. PERKINS presented a petition from E. W. Robinson, on behalf of the Toowoomba Gas and Coke Company, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to enable and empower the said company to manufacture gas and coke, and to supply the same to the inhabitants of Toowoomba and its suburbs, and moved that it be received.

Motion put and passed.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS BILL.

Mr. McLEAN presented a Bill to enable owners and occupiers of property in certain districts, townships, and cities to prevent the common sale of intoxicating liquors within such districts, townships, or cities, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday week.

QUESTION.

Mr. GRIMES asked the Colonial Secretary—

Is it the intention of the Government to propose to this House any amendment to the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, to proportionately increase the number of members necessary to form a quorum for despatch of

by "The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868" and "The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876" and any other Act containing like provisions may be exercised in the manner and to the extent thereby provided as fully as if this Act had not been passed. But the provisions of this Act shall apply as to all land taken in excess of the area by the said several Acts provided."

The remaining parts of the Bill contained details for resuming land. Instead, however, of referring cases to arbitration in the ordinary way, as provided in the Land Clauses Consolidation Act, in force in Great Britain, the provisions of the railway Act of 1872, introduced by the honourable member for Warrego, Mr. Walsh, appointing a public arbitrator, were proposed to be adopted. That system had been found to work satisfactorily, and it was proposed to appoint as many as might be necessary. He should afterwards move for the appointment of a select committee, to whom the Bill should be referred. He would now propose—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill to make better provision for the taking of lands and materials required for the purpose of constructing roads and other public and private undertakings authorised by Parliament and for other purposes, as recommended by message No. 5 from His Excellency the Governor, of date 29th May, 1878.

Question put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN then left the chair, and reported the resolution to the House.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the resolution was adopted, and the Bill founded thereon read a first time.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL— COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER left the chair, and the House resumed consideration of this Bill.

The PREMIER said it might be convenient that he should state what course the Government proposed to pursue in connection with the present position of the Electoral Districts Bill. The Bill had passed through committee without serious alteration, except in one or two points. A series of clauses had been added to it to meet a somewhat remote contingency, but still a contingency that might arise, and those clauses had been drafted to meet the views of those who thought it necessary that they should be incorporated in the Bill. With this exception, and that of one or two alterations in the distribution of the electorates, the Bill had passed through committee materially in the shape in which it was introduced. He now proposed to state the course the Government intended to adopt in connection with the schedules. In the first place, a new electorate had been added, that of Gregory, and the Government were prepared to accept it, and had provided the requisite description in

a schedule which would be circulated. The adoption of that new district followed upon a division in the committee, giving a marked indication of the desire of honourable members that the extensive district of the Mitchell should be divided. There was, perhaps, hardly sufficient justification for it on the population basis, but looking forward to what might, probably, be a brief period, the Government would be justified in allotting it a member, as decided by the committee on the motion of the honourable member for Fassifern. This would necessitate some readjustment of the old electorate of Mitchell, and it was proposed that the boundary of the new electorate should start at the junction of the Barcoo and the Thompson, and follow northerly nearly along the line of the 143rd parallel of longitude, so that it would be very nearly the same as the present pastoral district of North Gregory, the line diverging a little towards its southern extremity. Exception had been taken during the discussion in committee to the bracketing of the two districts of Taroom and Burnett, and there was no doubt that for some reasons it was an inconvenient junction. Government were prepared, therefore, on after consideration, to allow the Burnett district to remain pretty nearly as at present, and that Taroom should be connected with the district of Leichhardt, to be represented by two members. This would necessitate some readjustment of the latter electorate on its north-western boundary, and the Government proposed, in that respect, to abide by the present eastern boundary of the Mitchell district, instead of that proposed in the Bill. Those were the comparatively unimportant alterations which it was proposed should be made when the committee proceeded to discuss the schedules. He would now refer to the very important alteration made in the Bill on the motion of the honourable member for Toowoomba—namely, that the lines "North Brisbane, two members," and "Fortitude Valley, two members," be struck out, and the words "North Brisbane, three members" substituted, such district to include the areas of both. He had felt it his duty on the part of the Government to offer the most decided objection to that amendment, but it resulted in being carried, in spite of the resistance of the Government. Considering that the Bill, as it had passed through committee, was a most important Bill—securing, as he believed it did, representation in many districts at present unrepresented—believing it was of the utmost importance from all points of view that the Bill should be carried—believing that, if not carried now, the representative system of the colony would remain in an unsatisfactory condition for some years to come

—believing that in this respect the Bill would effect a decided advance and improvement upon the existing state of affairs—he would say, on the part of the Government, that he could not accept the Bill, unless the committee retraced their steps and reversed the decision arrived at on the motion of the honourable member for Toowoomba. He would state emphatically, on the part of the Government, that he could not accept that amendment—that he could not accept the Bill, beneficial as it would be in its results to the outside districts unless this serious injustice to a most important constituency were undone. While doing justice to those districts which were under-represented, they had no right to withdraw the proportion of representation to which this constituency was entitled. The effect of the resolution of the honourable member for Toowoomba would be to eliminate entirely the electorate of Fortitude Valley by bracketing it with North Brisbane. The two electorates were, and ought to remain, distinct; and it was the wish of the people inhabiting those metropolitan constituencies that they should be separately represented. The Government went quite far enough when they submitted the lower amount of proportional representation allotted to the city of Brisbane in the Bill, and they would not accept a further reduction. Whatever might be the consequences, he felt that he should not be justified in permitting the practical disfranchisement of an important constituency, even at the peril of not passing this Bill. While most anxious to do justice where justice was claimed, he felt that the Government would not be justified in withdrawing that proportion of representation granted to those constituencies in the Bill. The amendment was brought forward by certainly a supporter of the Government, professedly, but in this instance, acting on his independent judgment. He could, indeed, hardly look upon it as the act of an independent member, but of a member opposed in this respect to those principles of progress, and of proportionate representation which the Government had introduced into the Bill. He therefore must express his decided objection to adopt the amendment in any form. He must affirm on the part of the Government, that if they were to proceed with the Bill, it must be recommitted for the purpose of effecting the alteration to which he had referred. For this purpose, and in order to carry out the original idea of the Bill, he would move that schedule No. 1, as follows, stand schedule No. 1 of the Bill:—

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTH BRISBANE.

Commencing on the left bank of the Brisbane River and bounded thence on the north by Boundary street bearing west to Gregory terrace thence by that terrace and the road

extending along the south boundary of the new Grammar School Reserve to Petrie terrace thence by Petrie terrace to the north-west corner of North Brisbane portion 315 thence by the west boundary of that portion and a line south along the east boundary of the General Cemetery Reserve and a continuation to the north corner of suburban portion No. 9 North Brisbane thence by the north-east boundary of that portion to the Brisbane River and by that river downwards to the point of commencement.

Mr. McILWRAITH said this was the first time in his experience that he had seen a Premier take measures to block his own Bill. The committee decided the other night, by a majority, to substitute "North Brisbane, three members" for North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley, two members each. That being so, it was the duty of the Government, in obedience to the will of the committee, to have introduced a corresponding schedule, and then, if they had any reason to think the committee would retrace its steps in the matter, it was perfectly competent for them to recommit the Bill, and have the matter reconsidered. But the Premier, seemingly in his anxiety to throw over the Bill altogether, had adopted this complicated method of arriving at his object. He had, in fact, moved a schedule to which there was no corresponding electorate in the Bill. The only electorate mentioned there in this connection was that of North Brisbane, and surely the Premier did not mean that he was going to give three members to North Brisbane, as described in the schedule. There being no member provided for Fortitude Valley, the motion had no meaning. It was difficult for him to understand what it was that the Government considered of great importance in this Bill. The Premier had said that substantially it was now the same as before going into committee, whereas the Bill originally consisted of about a page and a-half, it now consisted, with the interlineations and erasures, of seven pages. If it was still the same Bill in substance, the Government had lamentably failed in expressing their ideas in the original Bill. The argument of the Premier, that the mere fact of taking one member from a group of twelve in a House of fifty-five, showed the light in which the Government regarded the measure. It seemed that the removal of a single member was sufficient to make a bad Bill of it, and that if the committee would not replace that member, they would not proceed with the Bill. The whole thing only showed, that as long as they got the city and suburbs well represented, the Government did not care a straw how the rest of the colony should be represented. In asking the committee to reconsider their decision, the Premier ought to have had some arguments to offer them, such as that Brisbane had not up to the present time been faithfully and well, and in accordance with its

population, represented in the House, or that legislation inimical to Brisbane had been enacted, because it had not sufficient voting power. Arguments such as those would have appealed to the reason of honourable members, and they might have been induced to reconsider their decision. But the only argument the Premier had used—and it had not the slightest weight with him—was, that the taking away a member from Brisbane was opposed to all the principles of progress. He could not admit that the principles of progress were inherent in the metropolitan members alone. Progressive principles ought rather to be found in the outside districts, where men had the spirit of enterprise to seek a livelihood in places where hardships and difficulties were to be met and overcome. That was, therefore, no argument why the committee should reverse the decision it had come to on this question. If the Premier had examined his own estimates, he would see that facts told the other way. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had done so, and the results of that examination were so interesting that he could not resist the temptation to lay some of them before the committee. They would appeal, he thought, in the most decided way to members representing country districts. He would take, as an example, the amount placed on the Estimates for the ensuing year; there was £150,000 set down for roads and bridges. He would like honourable members to understand how the Government, which professed to believe that Brisbane was under-represented, and could not possibly get on unless it received more representation, had allotted this sum. There were seven roads districts, viz., East Moreton, West Moreton, Darling Downs, Maranoa and Western district, Wide Bay and Burnett, Central, and Northern. It would be a fair comparison, he thought, to take the adult male population, and see how much was apportioned to each district, per head, on this basis. The result of his calculation was, that East Moreton received £4 16s. per head; West Moreton, £3 9s. 7d.; Darling Downs, £2 5s.; the Maranoa and Western districts, £1 10s. 2d.; Wide Bay and Burnett, £2 10s. 7d.; Central districts, £1 11s. 8d.; and Northern district, £2 3s. 2d. East Moreton got four times more per head than the lowest district on the list, and about 30 per cent. more than the next favoured district—West Moreton; yet this very East Moreton was the district which was to have additional representation, and which was believed to be unable to stand up for its rights. He had based the calculation on the Government figures of the population in the respective districts, but he knew that these figures were not correct, and that if correct statistics could be obtained, the result would

be still more telling in favour of the country districts. The Government would, no doubt, say that the calculation should be on the gross population basis. Well, he would take it that way. According to the total population basis, in which paupers, lunatics, women, and children were included, East Moreton was allotted £1 6s. 11d. per head; West Moreton, 18s. 9d.; Darling Downs, 15s. 10d.; Maranoa and the Western districts, 15s. 6d.; Wide Bay and Burnett, 14s. 11d.; Central district, 12s. 6d.; and Northern district, 10s. 9d. The nearer they came to the centre of Government the greater was the amount allotted; and the further they went from it the more was the amount diminished. West Moreton got 18s. 9d. per head. Darling Downs came next with 15s. 10d.; a little further still they came to Wide Bay and Burnett, which received 14s. 11d. per head; the Central district was diminished to 12s. 6d. per head; and the North, which was out of the world, only got 10s. 9d. There was not the slightest doubt that under the present system, which he was perfectly satisfied the Government were trying to perpetuate, notwithstanding their constant complaints about it, more money had been spent in Brisbane than there ought to have been. He must point out that in his calculation he was not taking the big votes, but only the votes for roads and bridges, and the result showed that the Brisbane districts had been far better represented than they ought to have been so far as money was concerned. The committee had passed an amendment that two electorates should be put into one, and should be given three members instead of four. What the Opposition asked was, that the Government should obey the will of the committee and bring in a schedule corresponding with it. If the Government wished to challenge the decision of the committee, they had a legitimate way of doing so. There would be no factious opposition offered to the recommittal of the Bill to reconsider that decision; but they entirely objected to the way Government now proposed to have the committee's decision reversed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member for Maranoa's objection was as to the manner in which Government proposed that the committee should reconsider its decision; but if they were to put in a new schedule now, corresponding with that decision, they should have to consider two matters instead of one when recommitting the Bill. If, however, the schedules remained, then the committee would have to reconsider one matter only, instead of two. The objection was really not worthy of consideration. The honourable member had endeavoured to base another argument upon some calculations which he had made regarding the provision in the next Estimates for roads and bridges

for the different districts; but to make the argument applicable, a great deal more was required to be proved than the honourable member had brought forward. He did not think, though, that the matter was one with which the committee had any concern now. If too much was proposed for any part of the colony, let the committee of Supply negative or reduce it. Honourable members must remember that whilst some parts of the colony were densely populated, and the roads ran between fences, there were others which were only sparsely populated, and where the whole districts could be used as roads. Was as much money to be spent in these as where the people and the traffic had to go between fences? The honourable member's figures proved the figures and nothing else. The honourable member had endeavoured to raise the issue that the Government wanted to increase the representation of Brisbane; but he was wrong. At present, Brisbane, composed of part of the two constituencies in question, returned three members out of forty-three, or one-fourteenth. It was proposed by the Government that these constituencies and a great part of another should be given four members out of fifty-six. Where was the increase? It was actually a decrease. On a strict population basis, Brisbane was under-represented when returning one-fourteenth of the House, and it was proposed now by the Opposition that the unfairness should be increased, although its population—particularly in Fortitude Valley—had increased more than any other part of the colony. If honourable members would confine themselves to the matter really before the committee, they would not be led astray by the specious arguments of the honourable the leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. R. PRING was exceedingly glad that the Government had shadowed forth a stand they intended to make on the motion before the committee, in reference to the passing of the first schedule. He reiterated his previous assertion, that it was a disgraceful proceeding on the part of the House to attempt to disfranchise North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley when the fourth clause was placed before them. There was no conceivable reason for the committee doing such an act of injustice. He had really expected to hear from the honourable the leader of the Opposition that evening a promise that the Opposition would give way and support a proposal to do justice in the matter; but he could see that their object was to get the two schedules boxed into one to suit the previous decision, and when the Bill came to be recommitted, then "good-bye" might be said to any alteration. The representation for North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley was diminished, instead of being increased. From the constitution of the

colony, Brisbane had three members, and the Valley one. The population had confessedly increased, but they now wanted to take away one member from the constituencies; and that was what they called a proper system of representation. The argument upon which Brisbane was to be deprived of one member was a fallacious one, that because there were six or seven electorates outside of the city, there would be a preponderating influence in favour of it. He said again, that if they would take the votes of the House they would find that the outside districts had different interests—sugar, pastoral, and agricultural—and did not always support the Government. He should be sorry to think that any honourable member so far forgot himself as to follow blindly the interests of Brisbane. He could not see that the figures quoted by the honourable member for Maranoa bore upon the issue before the committee. The honourable gentleman's other point was a matter of form undoubtedly. If the Bill was to be recommitted with a view to placing it in the state that it was originally introduced, then the schedules had better pass as they were drafted, for if a schedule to suit the amendment were now passed, and afterwards the Bill was restored to its original shape, it would have to be recommitted again. If the Opposition intended to fight out the question on the schedule, then they were adopting the proper course; but if they intended to allow the Bill to stand as originally prepared, why oppose the original schedules? His own opinion was that they intended to fight out the question to the death, and that Brisbane was to receive no more members than was accorded by the honourable member for Toowoomba's amendment. He did not exactly understand what the honourable member for Maranoa intended to deduce from his figures. He assumed that the amounts placed on the Estimates for roads and bridges would pass without reduction; but the Estimates were generally greatly altered. Then, on this unwarranted assumption, he based an argument that the people in the district in question got £2 odd per head from the votes for roads and bridges. Why should they not? They deserved £2 per head as much as the people of other places did £1 per head. It must also be remembered, as the Attorney-General had properly pointed out, that it was a different thing providing the means of communication in populous districts to what it was in the outside districts. He would also ask, who contributed the most of the revenue? The people in the populous districts of East Moreton and Brisbane contributed more to the revenue than the outside districts, and were, therefore, entitled to a larger proportion, or, at all events, to a proper share.

Mr. THOMPSON said it seemed that the Government intended to try if they could not reverse a vote already given by the committee. He quite agreed with the leader of the Opposition, that it was inconsistent with parliamentary proceedings for the Government to take such a course. Whether it was simply a matter of form or not, as the Attorney-General had argued, it evidently gave the Government another chance. He did not see why they should want this chance. If they had the numbers, they should reverse the previous decision in a proper way. All that the Opposition wanted was to have things done properly, and they maintained that it was inconsistent with parliamentary proceedings that the committee should stultify itself by reconsidering its previous decision at the present stage. It would be quite proper for the Government to attempt to reverse that decision by having a recommitment of the Bill; but to ask the committee to stultify itself was quite inexcusable. When they last discussed the matter, he understood that the Premier fully concurred with the views of the Opposition. He was not prepared to say that the Government proposal was entirely out of order, but it would be easy to show that it was contrary to the spirit of parliamentary usage, which emphatically declared that a previous vote could not be reversed in the same proceeding. No doubt the Government wished to throw out the Bill, but let them do so in a proper manner. He thought the tables of the honourable member for Maranoa were entitled to great weight. Honourable members came to the House to legislate, and to vote money for public works. The honourable member had shown that in one respect Brisbane got too good a share, although he had merely taken into account roads and bridges, and had left out public buildings and other large votes. Did Brisbane want as many members as any other part of the colony to secure all this? Besides which, Brisbane had the advantage of being the metropolis and the seat of the Government, Ministers being, therefore, always at hand to be interviewed by members. Personal pressure was now being continually brought to bear on them, and they were so constantly interviewed that, he believed, before long they would have to devote certain hours daily for the reception of deputations from the citizens of Brisbane. The poor people in the North, on the other hand, got so little attention that very often they were unable to get an answer to a letter till after several weeks' delay. All the arguments he had heard tended to strengthen the hands of the Opposition in this matter. He for one should not be a party to reversing what the committee had already decided.

Mr. GRIMES said he could not allow the figures which had been quoted by the

honourable the leader of the Opposition to go without some question. He had not taken the same amount of trouble to find out the exact proportions of the proposed expenditure to various localities, but he knew that some portions of the colony required more expenditure than others, and in some cases the votes for roads and bridges were swallowed up in other things. The votes for roads and bridges, he took it, were for the purpose of facilitating communication from one part of a district to another, and from one part of the colony to another. Taking that view, the amount of money which was expended in railways—being also money spent to facilitate communication—should be also taken into consideration. The interest of our loan amounted to about £420,000 per annum, and the amount expended upon roads and bridges was only from £150,000 to £200,000—not much more than one-third of the amount. The portions of the colony which had been mentioned by the honourable member for the Maranoa—Maranoa itself as well as Darling Downs, Toowoomba, and various other districts—received a far larger benefit from the expenditure on railways than the numerous districts round about Brisbane. He would ask, what benefit the Logan received from the expenditure upon railways—or what benefit Bulimba or East Moreton received? As far as the inhabitants of those districts were concerned, the advantages of the railways that had been constructed were simply *nil*. They had to contribute to the construction of lines which were used by, perhaps, a third of the inhabitants of the colony, and which did not pay working expenses and fair interest on their original outlay upon them. The argument of the honourable member for Maranoa was faulty in other respects. It might have been applicable had he proposed to reduce the number of members representing those parts which were supposed to have received an increased share of expenditure. The districts included within the municipality of Brisbane, and comprising Fortitude Valley, Wickham, and North Brisbane, obtained no special grants from the Treasury, but the Government gave a certain bonus in proportion to the amount of money collected from the rates. In this respect those districts were entitled to a full share of representation according to population. He was not prepared to support the Government in a measure that would reduce the number of members in proportion to the population. Every man, he considered, should have an equal right in the representation and legislation of the country. As he had to obey the laws, he ought therefore to be considered in the making of those laws, and unless he had a fair share in legislation, such could not be the case. The House might certainly have the power

of taking away what was an inherent right, but it could not in justice do so. The principle of representation, according to the basis of population set down, ought to have been maintained all through in the distribution made under the Bill. As had been remarked by the Attorney-General, the representation of the Brisbane electorates had been actually reduced by one member if the same number of members as had been before returned were apportioned to it in a House which had been increased by one-quarter. There was a further difficulty. This had not been applied to the whole of Brisbane, but only to North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley. The population of this district being 20,000, he found that if only three members were given to it, it would be equal to one member representing over 6,000 persons, whereas in other parts of the colony 2,000 persons was the maximum allowed. He was glad that the Premier had decided to make a stand and uphold the Bill as originally proposed. He (Mr. Grimes) would give it his hearty support, and assist in every way to prevent such a proposal as had been made from becoming the law of the land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Garrick) said he rather admired the adroitness with which the leader of the Opposition had placed some questions before the committee; but he sincerely trusted that honourable members on his side would not allow themselves to be drawn aside upon so small a matter as had been presented. He (Mr. McIlwraith) fancied that honourable members could be acted upon by this question of roads and bridges, and his idea was "Divide and conquer." His object was to divide them on the Government side of the House who had usually acted together, by a very selfish appeal, of how much or how little of the roads and bridges' votes had been apportioned to different districts. Were those the only questions which were to be decided by this House? The honourable member knew very well that there were other questions in respect to which this was a mere bagatelle. Nobody knew that better than himself; but he threw down the question of roads and bridges as a bone of contention. The honourable member knew, that although they themselves might be satisfied with the roads and bridges, what they wanted was the whole of the lands. He knew very well what honourable members on the other side wanted, and that they threw down this gauntlet about roads and bridges simply to divide honourable members on the Government side. What was such a small matter as compared with the great issues—the land question and others to be decided? They (the Opposition) had now got a member for the Western districts, who they knew as clearly as possible, would go in to support one interest, and one interest only. They

never found the honourable members for Warrego or Mitchell, by any accident, crossing to the other side of the House; and when they got the member for the new district he would be found fighting with them shoulder to shoulder. He (Mr. Garrick) hoped that honourable members on his side would not allow the honourable member for Maranoa to succeed in dividing them, unless some far more important issue was advanced. It was very adroitly put, no doubt, but he (Mr. Garrick) hoped that the schedule would be carried as now proposed.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he must congratulate the Minister for Lands on the way in which he had delivered his speech. Why did he refer to the land question? If they wanted to hear fossilised ideas about land laws, it would be from the honourable gentleman who had just spoken, and those who represented such ideas sat on the Government side of the House—the honourable Minister for Works for example. He warned the Minister for Lands that if he thought he was going to alter the land laws this year, or to dictate to Parliament about them, he was much mistaken.

Mr. WALSH said he thought it was an unworthy action on the part of the Minister for Lands to introduce extraneous matter into the debate, and to refer in the manner he had done to the knowledge he possessed about the land. The honourable gentleman held *in terrorem* over them the threat that he knew something about the lands which sooner or later he was going to divulge. From the knowledge he (Mr. Walsh) possessed upon the question, he would say that the honourable members on his side of the House would compare most favourably with honourable members on the Government side, and if the honourable gentleman wished to know where were the real dummies he should say in the towns and cities of the colony. They were the chief dummies in the colony. The Minister for Lands was always harping about dummies, but if he wanted to see where the maladministration of the lands was, he (Mr. Walsh) would sooner or later assist to show him. It was not the Crown tenant who paid a fair price for his land, but amongst those who administered the land, that the real delinquents were to be found. He protested against the Minister for Lands constantly getting up when he wanted to overawe members on the Opposition side of the House, or to dazzle or whitewash honourable members on the other side, and holding out threats about knowing something about the lands to induce honourable members to obstruct this or to vote for that. It was unworthy of his antecedents as a politician, and his position as an old resident of the colony. He (Mr. Walsh) regretted to have seen him do so too frequently during the session. The only con-

elusion he could come to in the matter was that evil communications had corrupted good manners. The leader of the Opposition had been accused of wishing to divide members sitting on the other side of the House, and the Minister for Lands had said that his (Mr. Mellwraith's) idea was to divide and conquer. He (Mr. Walsh) would tell him from his experience, that the idea on the other side was to conquer and divide; and he would much rather be subjected to the accusation of wishing to divide and conquer, than to conquer and then divide. He really pitied the poor city of Brisbane and its representatives. When the Government introduced a measure of this vast importance, simply because they could not get some petty electorate supplied with members in a particular way, and could not get one particular member out of this fifty-five allotted to Brisbane, members were told that the Bill was no good whatever. What a rotten Bill it must be, if it depended on one member—the representative of Fortitude Valley. That was all the Government had to say in defence. The Premier told them he was thoroughly satisfied with the Bill with the exception of the loss of one member, and that was a principle essentially necessary—the corner stone and foundation, body and soul of the Bill. How weak must the members representing the city of Brisbane feel themselves if all the justice of the Bill was said to depend on that one member. Such utterances were not fair to the city of Brisbane, which stood on a far better foundation. The inhabitants themselves were not crying out about this Bill, and all the efforts made by the Government had been unable to rouse the citizens to any appreciable extent. They were indifferent to it. He did not hesitate to say that, if they went the length and breadth of the city, they would find the inhabitants would rather have the mild opposition of honourable members sitting on his (Opposition) side than the warmest support from the other side. They knew that justice would be administered on his side. The Minister for Lands seemed to have got into a fog about the Warrego and Mitchell districts, and he (Mr. Walsh) doubted if he knew whether they were in the north, south, east, or west of the colony. He almost felt inclined to consider himself a representative of Brisbane in one sense, as he considered he had in his time done more good for the city than any other member of the House had ever done. What he had done, he had done from a sense of justice, fairly and honestly. At this moment, he believed, there was an electioneering cabal on the part of the Ministry, not to do what was absolutely necessary for the future advantage of Brisbane, but to commend themselves to the constituents

for their support. He had no doubt that the phalanx which sat behind the Premier had driven him into that state. It was a very improper way of proceeding with a Bill, and one for which there was no precedent. If the Government had a serious intention of carrying a schedule which was not in accordance with the part of the Bill which had been already passed, he thought the chairman would be perfectly right in refusing to put the motion.

Mr. BEATTIE had no intention of being backward in giving praise to any honourable member and he was sure that Brisbane would be very much obliged to the honourable member for Warrego. At the same time, as one of the representatives of Brisbane, he would tell him he was not obliged to him for calling his a petty electorate. The electorate in question was one of the largest in the colony, and had nearly 1,700 electors on its roll. He therefore hoped the honourable member would be satisfied that it was not a petty electorate. The honourable member said that there was a dispute at present between both sides of the House about a petty electorate, and that the time of the House should not be wasted upon it.

Mr. WALSH: I said it was a petty question; not a petty electorate.

Mr. BEATTIE was satisfied that the honourable member did not intend to traduce his electorate. He wished to point out that the honourable the leader of the Opposition, in the tables of figures he submitted to the House, grouped the various electorates together, and showed the amount which was proposed to be expended, on the male adult population, and the gross population basis. Now, he would like to know whether, in compiling those figures, the honourable member paid particular attention to the amount of money expended within the municipality out of the consolidated revenue of the colony. Was it a reason that this electorate should be disfranchised because it had more influence over the expenditure of money than any other part of the colony? That was the only reason that he had heard for depriving Brisbane of one of its representatives. He should like to know how much money was spent out of the Consolidated Revenue of the colony on roads and bridges within the city electorates. It was stated by one honourable member that a large sum could be made up out of the money voted for public buildings, but surely he was not going to charge the municipality of Brisbane with those buildings which were used for carrying on the business of the whole colony. The municipality derived no benefit from those buildings; but, on the contrary, instead of reducing the rates paid by the people living in it, they were increased, as it was property for which no rates were paid. He had been astonished

to hear such an argument, as he had been under the impression that the leader of the Opposition would have seen, since the vote was taken on the amendment of the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, that a great injustice had been done to a very large electorate, and he had hoped that the matter, with the honourable member's concurrence, would have been settled amicably. He was sure the honourable member would see that it was an injustice to a large and populous district to totally disfranchise it, and therefore he hoped that the Government would be able to carry the schedule as it stood.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he was not aware that the Opposition had as yet taken any steps to disfranchise Fortitude Valley. They had merely reduced the number of representatives for North Brisbane, and if the honourable member chose to call it Fortitude Valley, it was a matter of no importance to him; at any rate the Opposition had done nothing to disfranchise Fortitude Valley.

The Hon. R. PRING said the fact was, that the system pursued by the Opposition was not exactly disfranchising either Fortitude Valley or North Brisbane, but what had been done was this, that what under the grouping system would have been entitled to four members had had one member taken from it. For twenty years, what was now proposed to have only three members had had four members, and he would ask, on what reasonable ground of justice the committee could agree to such a thing?

Mr. IVORY wished to know when it was that North Brisbane had four members?

The Hon. R. PRING said that ever since he had known the colony, Brisbane had three members, and Fortitude Valley one.

Mr. BEATTIE wished to remind the committee that the proposed electorate of Fortitude Valley had increased in extent nearly one and a-half square miles from the old electorate, and contained the most thickly-populated part of the northern portion of the city. If honourable members would just look over the old electoral rolls of North Brisbane, Wickham, and Fortitude Valley, they would see that if the people of Fortitude Valley chose to combine, and to put forward three candidates of their own, they could swamp North Brisbane and Wickham, and leave them unrepresented. That would be a most undesirable state of things, as it would create sectional differences which he should be very sorry indeed to see introduced.

Mr. IVORY said the honourable member for Fortitude Valley was evidently on a different track to what he had been previously, as he now told them that if the people of Fortitude Valley combined they could swamp Wickham or North Brisbane; thus if another member was given to the group, it would simply

increase the power of the Valley. He was surprised at the honourable member using such an argument, but it was evident the honourable member did not understand the force it had against his own electorate when he made use of it. Whilst upon his feet he presumed he might make a few remarks in reply to the speech of the honourable Minister for Lands. First of all, he objected to the form in which the Government proposed to foist the boundaries of the electorate upon the committee, as they were utterly at variance with the views which had been expressed when the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba and Drayton was carried. He for one considered that the committee by passing the schedule as it was proposed in the Bill, would be literally stultifying themselves. What he should think was the proper course to pursue would be to pass the schedule in accordance with the amendment which had been made in the Bill, and then if on the recommendation of the Bill the Government were strong enough to alter the one, they would be strong enough to alter the other; but to ask honourable members to stultify themselves by passing the schedule as it now stood, was more than they could be expected to do. The Government had over and over again expressed a great anxiety to pass the Bill, but now they were raising every objection they could in the way of its becoming law, and the committee were told that if they refused to retrace their steps the Bill would be withdrawn. Then the honourable Minister for Lands made his stereotyped speech, which honourable members had heard so many times in that House. In fact, the honourable gentleman, since he had been Minister, appeared to be suffering from lands on the brain. He had always thought that one of the matters on which the Liberal party prided themselves so much, was, that they had settled the land question, yet the honourable gentleman got up and talked about the land question being the first question of all, and that it was well known what the Opposition meant to do with the lands if once they got into power. Why the thing was absurd, and coming from a gentleman who had only very recently assumed the reins of office, it was still more absurd. He understood that all those questions were settled, and he was confident they were never referred to by honourable members on his side of the committee; they were perfectly satisfied with things as they were, and he believed that if any attempt was made to disturb the existing state of affairs as regarded the public lands, it would come from honourable members on the Government side. The thing, as he said, was absurd, and the Ministry merely wanted it as a stalking-horse on which to go to the country; but they would fail, as the

country was pretty well satisfied with the present land laws. He had no doubt that the figures which had been compiled by the honourable member for Ravenswood and the honourable member for Maranoa were exceedingly annoying to the Minister for Lands, and that the honourable gentleman had attempted to raise a scare on the land question, as he was utterly incapable of refuting the arguments based upon the tables which had been put forward by the honourable members he had mentioned. Had the honourable gentleman tried to refute them he would have done more good for himself and his own party.

Mr. KINGSFORD said that the land question had only been casually mentioned by the honourable Minister for Lands, but it had the effect of making honourable members opposite very sore. However absurd the honourable Minister for Lands might have been in referring to the land question, he had shown some wisdom when he stated that, in his opinion, it was the intention of the honourable member for Maranoa to divide the party on the Government side of the committee, for he thought the speeches subsequently made by honourable members opposite tended to show that there was some such object; but he would tell the honourable member that it would require a master hand—something more than the honourable member for Maranoa could show—to divide the party. He should like to know what the Consolidated Revenue, or roads and bridges, or any other money matters, had to do with the question before them? The only question mentioned in the Bill was the basis upon which representation should be made, and that only ought to be discussed by the committee. They had gone out of their way altogether that evening by discussing matters foreign to the Bill, and he could assign no other object that the honourable member for Maranoa had in view when he made his lengthy speech about money spent on roads and bridges, than a wish to divide the Government supporters. Taking the principle on which the Bill was based, he maintained that to allow the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba and Drayton to be passed, as it was passed a few evenings ago, would be a gross and unparalleled injustice to the city of Brisbane. He submitted that Brisbane and its inhabitants were as much subjects of Her Majesty the Queen as those in any part of the colony, and such being the case, he maintained that what was good for the North was good for the South; that the same principle of representation should be maintained as regarded all, and that Brisbane had a right to the four members that were put down in the Bill, and nothing else would satisfy it. The committee might curtail the number, and the Bill might become law with only

three members for Brisbane, but the time would come when that would be set aside, so the combat would once again be waged which was so long fought between the commercial and squatting interests, and he had no doubt that Brisbane would come off as it had done before, the conquerers. It would be an unfortunate thing for such an event to happen; but, on the other hand, it could hardly be expected that the metropolis would submit to be shorn of 25 per cent. of its representation.

Mr. BAILEY said that if he had heard anything which was calculated to provoke the ire of the country members, it was the speech which had just been made by the honourable member for South Brisbane. As one member of the country districts which had suffered so much through the jealousy of Brisbane, he might mention that for four years he had tried to get a small trifle of justice to aid in the development of his district, but had been unable to do so through the jealousy of the metropolitan electorates, and yet they were now told by the honourable member of the power possessed by those electorates to override the whole country. He had supported the Government against the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba, not because of any feeling favourable to Brisbane, but because he wished to do justice to Fortitude Valley. He thought it was not right that an old and populous electorate should be deprived of its proper representation, and that was why he voted as he did, and not to give more representation to Brisbane, which was already over-represented. He should still hold to the opinion that two wrongs did not make one right, and that because Brisbane had been over-represented, and might be so in future, it was no reason why the electorate of Fortitude Valley should be made a scapegoat. It was an electorate peculiarly situated, as it had interests separate from those of Brisbane, and he could only say, that if it had been proposed that North Brisbane should have two members and Fortitude Valley one, he would have acceded to such a proposition with the greatest pleasure, but he could not accede to one which purposely destroyed an old and populous electorate.

Mr. McILWRAITH agreed with a great deal that had been said by the honourable member, but he would impress upon him that in the action they had taken the Opposition had not sought to disfranchise Fortitude Valley, but only to box it with North Brisbane. As he saw the Attorney-General was in his place, he would direct his attention to a statement that the honourable gentleman and the Premier had made over and over again in that House. They said that by taking one member from the metropolitan group it would take from it the proportion of representation it had in the

House at present, namely, eight members; but he would remind the honourable gentleman that it was proposed to increase the House from forty-three to fifty-five members, and it was a plain rule of proportion that as forty-three was to fifty-five so was eight members to the answer ten; so that actually the representation of the group was increased by one member, and the Government sought to increase it by two. He gave that in contradiction to a statement which had been repeatedly made, that they were taking one member from the metropolitan group. There was another statement which had been made by the honourable Attorney-General in reply to the strong arguments put forward by the honourable member for Port Curtis, that there was no comparison between the metropolis of this colony and London. It might be said, "You compare it with Sydney or Melbourne, and the position will be something analogous," but he had taken the trouble to find how they stood, and he had ascertained that it was as follows:—In the present Melbourne Assembly there were eighty-six members, and taking the basis of the Government, the representation for the Melbourne metropolitan constituencies would be twenty-one, whereas it was only seventeen. In the same way, in Sydney, where they would have ten, they had only eight; so that if they referred to the other colonies, it would be seen that the Government were asking for this metropolis a great deal more than was asked in them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member pointed out that the adult population basis, if applied to Victoria, would give the metropolitan constituencies then twenty-one members, whereas they had only seventeen, and that to Sydney it would give ten, whilst they only had eight. Now, Brisbane, taking the East Moreton group, would be entitled to fourteen, and yet the Government only proposed twelve, which was as nearly as possible the same proportion as in the other colonies. But the deficient two were taken entirely from the metropolis. The numbers were, in fact, exactly the same as in New South Wales, where they recently proposed to correct the anomaly. The proportion was as nearly as possible the same as in Victoria.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he was glad the honourable member had risen, because it gave him an opportunity of correcting a mis-statement repeatedly made in the House. That was, that the number of members for electorates in the other colonies was based on the gross population. He had heard that statement repeatedly made in the House—he was sure that the Premier had said so. But the question of gross population had never arisen in the other colonies, because it had been admitted in the late discussion in

Victoria, by both the leader of the Opposition and the members of the Government, that the basis taken was the number of voters, which was as nearly as possible that of the adult male population. And in New South Wales the basis was really the number of voters. What he said, therefore, was, that taking the adult male basis, in Victoria the metropolitan electorates would have twenty-one members instead of seventeen which they had now, and in Sydney they would have ten instead of eight.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had taken the trouble to make a few inquiries in connection with the representation of New South Wales, both as it now existed and as proposed by the Amended Electoral Act of 1878. He found that, as had been stated by the honourable member for Maranoa—and as he thought they all knew—the representation there was in reality based on the electoral roll and nothing else. He found that, taking one of the outside districts, it had three members representing the number of 1,146, and on coming to the towns, that the quota of electors required was 2,160—over 2,000 at any rate. He thought that was a convincing statement in favour of the argument of the honourable member for Maranoa. He had not had time to go fully into the figures, but if any honourable member would do so, they would prove incontestably that the representation proposed to be given to Brisbane and the suburbs of Brisbane, in the amendment as proposed by the Premier, was not such as was sustained in any other colony in Australia. It was an attempt to give a preponderating influence to the metropolitan electorate, which he was perfectly certain no wise legislature would ever give, because, as had been pointed out over and over again in the debate, and more especially by the honourable member for Port Curtis, Brisbane, if not represented at all directly, would still be represented in that House. He believed the intention of the Government was to imperil the Bill—to have it thrown out if they could—and he did not believe they were ever in earnest in introducing it. The honourable the Premier had told them the other day in a high-falutin' speech, that he would allow no interference with the Bill in committee—that he would allow no alterations to be made—but it had been interfered with and altered twenty times, and he believed it would be altered twenty times again. If the honourable gentleman had any sense of propriety and decency in regard to his position as Premier of the colony, after stating that he would allow no alterations to be made in the Bill, he ought to have abandoned it when two vital alterations were made. He ought then to have withdrawn it if he had any regard for himself, or the Ministry over which he presided. He (Mr. Morehead) was perfectly certain

the death-song of the Ministry had been sung by the honourable the Minister for Works at the opening of the bridge across the Teviot the other day. He did not know where the Teviot was in this colony; but he presumed it must be a place of some importance, or the Minister for Works would not have driven down there four-in hand to open it. He hoped, after the prophetic words of that honourable gentleman, that the Premier would not persist in his present course, because the Minister for Works had distinctly stated that they were an effete Ministry; that they were worn out; that they were no good. Of course honourable members knew that before; but the admission coming from one of their own number—from the great reformer himself, that they were no good; that they were worked out—was most extraordinary.

Mr. WALSH: When was this?

Mr. MOREHEAD said, two days ago. Was the honourable member for Warrego so ignorant of the history of the times that he did not know when that historical speech was made by the Minister for Works? After breaking a bottle of champagne over the bridge, "he sat down by the waters of Babylon and sung the death song of the Ministry," and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." He thought after that the Ministry ought to retire and take their Bill with them; that they should retire into the obscurity from which most of them had arisen, and give way to honourable members on that (the Opposition) side of the House. He had been amused by the statement of the honourable member for South Brisbane, that the leader of the Opposition was not a fit and proper person to succeed the present Ministry. If the honourable member for Maranoa was not fit to succeed them, who was? Was the honourable member for South Brisbane?

Mr. KINGSFORD said he rose for the purpose of giving a flat contradiction to the statement of the honourable member for Mitchell. He had made no such statement as had been attributed to him, nor had he imputed anything of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was sorry he had misunderstood the honourable gentleman, but he was certainly of opinion that he had said the honourable member for Maranoa was not fit to step into the place of those honourable gentlemen who now honoured the Treasury benches with their presence. The Government, after having announced that they would submit to no alterations in the Bill, had already allowed two vital alterations to be made, and they still crawled on with their Bill. They were content to go on with it, because he believed they knew an arrangement had been made that, no matter what would happen in that House, something else would happen elsewhere. He believed

that was the real position of the case, and he would again ask the Government, did they intend to force this proposal of the honourable the Premier's to-night? Did they think they were strong enough to force it in committee, and to undo what was done the other night? If they meant to act honestly by the Bill they would recommit it, and then the point in question could be taken on its merits, and not by a side-wind, as now attempted by the Premier.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honourable member for Maranoa had said that, under the adult male basis, the East Moreton constituencies would be entitled to eleven members, which they (the Opposition) proposed to give them; but he would point out that under that basis they were entitled to over thirteen. What the honourable gentleman was pleased to call the metropolitan electorates, North Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane, and Enoggera, were entitled on the adult male basis to over ten members, instead of the seven, which the honourable member proposed to give them.

Mr. McILWRAITH said what he had stated was this—that, taking the eight metropolitan electorates, if they increased that number in proportion as the new House of fifty-five was to forty-three, they would get ten members. That was contradicting the statement made by the Attorney-General, that they were actually giving them fewer members than they had before. Instead of that, they were giving them one more, and the Government wished to give them two more.

The PREMIER: The honourable gentleman has taken exception because I did not go into argument, but I think my duty has been rather to announce the determination that has been arrived at than to prolong argument. I decline to go into the comparisons made just now by the honourable member for Mitchell in reference to the neighbouring metropolis. We are sufficiently able to judge what is sufficient for ourselves, and I hoped that in the present position of the Bill, when the Government have stretched a point and done all they could to give that increased representation to the outside districts which I believe is necessary, we would have been fairly met. I say that even the increased representation which has been given is not in accordance with our figures; that we were not justified in giving that increase on the basis we had adopted. In order to give what we believe to be justice in an extreme case, we are prepared to recognise the territorial claims made from the extreme west. I say we have done more than our duty and have given members to electorates which fell below the standard of population, and I believe of influence, to entitle them to that representation. We proposed to give representation in several instances, such as the

district of Gregory, the old district of Port Curtis, the proposed new districts of Mackay and Bowen—in all these cases we have more than surpassed that limit which it would not have been wise for us to have laid down as a standard. And, having done all this, having succeeded in securing what we believed to be an effective measure of representation—having gone somewhat beyond what we deemed to be our duty to have done, I say it would come with good grace—with more than good grace—from honourable gentlemen opposite, to determine to carry out what we think is simple justice, by giving to an electorate or group of electorates that justice to which they are entitled. But, if you are not prepared to recognise the claims they have for simple justice, for indeed less than justice, then I say it is you who are obstructing the passage of this Bill, not we; for when the matter is now narrowed down to one electorate, and that electorate the most populous in the whole country, you refuse to give them even one-half of their fair quota of representation. A great deal has been said about the comparison between Brisbane, Melbourne, and other Australian capitals, but, as has been admitted by the honourable member for Port Curtis on several occasions, the cases are not parallel.

Mr. PALMER: I admit nothing; I have not spoken to-night.

The PREMIER: I refer to previous occasions when this question has been under discussion, and the honourable member knows that the cases are not parallel. Sydney and Melbourne are admittedly the outports of well-defined districts; they are commercially connected with the colonies of which they are the capitals in a way that this capital is not connected with Queensland, and if you mete out even justice in this particular you must apply the same principles of representation to Rockhampton, Townsville, and Maryborough as you do to Brisbane. They are all outlets of extensive and important back country. They are all in their way provincial capitals of the districts of which they are the centres, and in that respect there is no comparison whatever between the position of Brisbane and that of Sydney and Melbourne. But I will ask the honourable the leader of the Opposition if he is going to deny to this metropolitan group of electorates even the low proportion of representation which we demand for them? Here is a population of about 20,000 people; about one-tenth of the whole population, including Polynesians and Chinamen, and you propose in the present allocation to give them less than one-eighteenth of their share of representation. I say that is grossly unfair, and we are bound to endeavour, in justice to them, to place them in something like a fair position. And I would point out to honourable gen-

tlemen that if they succeed in having their way, they will do nothing more prejudicial or more likely to redound against their own interest than to make this a standing grievance against them—that here is an important portion of the population unfairly represented, and they refuse to grant them a fair amount of representation. Are they prepared to place themselves in that position? I hope they are not. I hope the Bill, having passed to this stage, will at any rate be placed in such a position as to enable it to become law. Reference has been made to the changes that have been made in the Bill in committee, but I maintain that they have been comparatively small, except in this one instance. When I addressed the House on the second reading of the Bill, I referred to the great changes which had been made in the Electoral Bill introduced in the neighbouring colony. I stated that when that Bill was under discussion, fifteen members were added to it, and that, in fact, its whole scope had been completely changed. I said I hoped nothing of the kind would be admitted in our case, and that if there was to be pronouncement of opinion on the Bill, let it be made on the second reading, and do not let it be mangled in committee, and be entirely altered in its scope, tendency, and policy. I do not think any Bill of this kind has passed so unscathed as this has through committee. The pages of amendments the honourable member has referred to as having been added to the Bill, what do they contain? They are merely intended to meet an extremely hypothetical case which will probably never come into existence. We have, in order to gratify what I may call the caprice of honourable gentlemen opposite, admitted those amendments framed by the ingenuity of my friend the Attorney-General, who is always ready to prepare ingenious amendments of that kind. We have admitted this merely as an extraordinary measure, and then we are told it has completely changed the Bill. I say it has nothing to do with the policy of the Bill—nothing whatever. The Bill remains now very much in its original state, except that another district has been added, and honourable gentlemen opposite have defrauded, wilfully defrauded, another electorate, and in that process of defrauding they have been supported by honourable members who ought to have supported—who ought to have been firm supporters of the Government. They have found allies, I regret to say, amongst our own ranks, and succeeded in catching a division in a House certainly not full, without due notice, and, as I believe, in opposition to the confirmed opinion of this House. I hope that it will prove to be such. I feel confident that it will, and I hope that the good sense of honourable gentlemen opposite will see that

they must not drive conclusions too far; and having gone so far, having brought the Bill to such a state that it will confer great benefits upon the country, I hope these benefits will not be denied merely from the freak of an independent member who has been backed up by the party opposed to us in politics.

Mr. WALSH said it seemed to him, the matter had now resolved itself into a question of privilege. The honourable the Premier had referred, in very severe terms, to one particular member, who seemed to have left his party and voted in opposition to the Government. He maintained that the honourable gentleman was bound to state who that honourable member was. Was it the honourable member for South Brisbane who had betrayed his party? He (Mr. Walsh) thought that honourable gentleman had very frequently done so, by sitting so quietly as he had done, for years almost, on that side of the House, without uttering a word, either to defend the vote he gave or the constituency he represented. Was it the honourable member for Bandamba the Premier had alluded to? He almost fancied he could see a blush on the honourable member's face. Was it the honourable the Minister for Works? Did he allude to the speech he made at the opening of the Teviot bridge? He was sorry he had not got the speech of that honourable gentleman, and was therefore not able to prove from it that it was the Minister for Works to whom the Premier had referred in such castigating terms. The honourable the Premier should make a full breast of it, and let the House and the country know who the honourable member was he alluded to, and what course he intended to take in regard to that honourable member. He contended that after the admission of the Minister for Works, the Premier had no business to address the House in the way he had done, or to bring in a Bill such as that at present before the House to be mangled by honourable members for the purpose of having it kicked out in some particular way, so that he might appeal *ad misericordiam* afterwards to the country on the subject.

Mr. THOMPSON said he was still doubtful whether they were in order—whether they were not bound to continue the Bill as it stood amended. At page 473 of "May" he found the following passage:—

"A new clause, however, will not be entertained if inconsistent with other clauses already agreed to by the committee; or if substantially the same as another clause previously negatived."

That referred apparently simply to a new clause, but if the rule was good in one case, he could not see why it should not be good in another. The reference to the passage cited from "May" was to be found

at page 103, vol. 114, of the Journals of the House of Commons, where it was reported, with respect to the passing of a Municipal Government Bill:—

"Clause (the 32nd and 33rd sections of the said Act of Parliament of the 5th and 6th years of the reign of King William the Fourth, chapter 76, are hereby repealed)—offered; but it appearing that this clause was inconsistent with clause No. 16, which the committee had already agreed should stand part of the Bill, the Chairman stated that it could not be received."

He could not tell whether that was a new clause, or one originally contained in the Bill, but he could not conceive of any reasoning which could make a new clause radically different from an old one. The committee could not decide one thing in one part of the Bill and another in another part. There were regular means by which mistakes could be rectified, and Bills when reconsidered must be reconsidered as a whole. The only fair and courteous way was, to carry out the amendment to its logical conclusion. Having affirmed a certain principle, the details of it should be allowed to be carried out, after which Government had ample powers of recommitting the Bill. That, he submitted, would be the proper course to pursue.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there was an essential distinction between the proposal of a new clause, inconsistent with one already passed, and the proposal that a part of the Bill already printed should stand part of it. The first schedule must be put, for it could not be got rid of otherwise.

Mr. THOMPSON: Yes, by moving that it be omitted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that amounted to the same thing. There was, therefore, no point of order in the case, nor could one possibly arise.

Mr. PRING said the honourable member for Bremer appeared to have entirely lost sight of the question, and he (Mr. Pring) agreed with the remarks of the Attorney-General. It was one thing to quote "May" and the Journals of the House of Commons when a Bill was passing through and clauses were being altered, and another thing to consider a schedule of a proposed Bill going through committee, which schedule was referred to in the Bill itself. Their exact course of procedure did not appear to have struck the honourable member for Bremer. It was always supposed that clause 5, providing that "the boundaries of the said several electoral districts shall be as described in the schedule to this Act," was passed subject to any amendment when the schedule was dealt with. In clause 4 it was proposed that North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley should be two electorates, each returning two members; but by the

amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba, they were amalgamated as "North Brisbane," and were to return three members. In the schedule they found separate boundaries for North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley. Unless these were to represent the triplicate, or three-cornered electorate of North Brisbane, they must be amended. He hardly conceived that these boundaries were the boundaries which the committee wished should be used for the triplicate electorate. Common sense would tell the proposer of the amendment that he should be prepared with amended boundaries for the new electorate. Then the same course would have to be taken. Schedules one and two would have to be omitted to make room for the new one. What objection could, therefore, be urged to the motion before the committee regarding schedule No. 1? Those who wanted it expunged with a view of having a new schedule of amended boundaries for the proposed new electorate could bring in the amended schedule when No. 1 had been expunged; but schedules 1 and 2 must first be got rid of. The order of arrangement proposed was perfectly correct. He would ask the House to consider—he would submit to both sides that the question was properly put. If schedule No. 1 stood part of the Bill, the House would know what to do. If No. 1 was expunged, then No. 2 must also be, and an amended schedule for the triplicate electorate must be introduced. There was no point of order, no question of clauses being inconsistent, or question of privilege involved in the motion.

Mr. PALMER said the honourable member for Brisbane had made two mistakes in the course of his rather long address to the committee. He first addressed the committee as the House; and then he called the Bill an Act, although the two were quite different. This was not an Act, but a Bill. It had been carried by a majority of the committee that, instead of North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley having two members each, the two should be joined and called North Brisbane, and should have three members. So far as the Bill was concerned, that question was disposed of. The question now resolved itself into whether the Government were justified, having been beaten in committee on the Bill, in attempting by a side-wind to repeal the decision of the committee. He had no hesitation in saying that they were not. If they had the courage of their principles let them recommit the Bill, or throw it up. Either let them now recommit the Bill or throw it up. He hoped that whatever opinions the committee held on the question before them, they would not let the Government drop the Bill by their own proceeding. There was no precedent for a Government, on a measure on which they almost staked

their existence, endeavouring to block the decision of the committee by bringing in the original schedule by a side-wind. He could not see the force of the speech of the member for Brisbane. The fifth clause provided, "That the boundaries of the said several electoral districts shall be as described in the said Act." The honourable member had confounded the Bill as an Act. He need hardly tell him that it was not an Act until it was passed by both Houses of Parliament. The duty of the Government was to stand or fall by their Bill, and not block it as they were trying to do now. They had already been thoroughly beaten on their pet measure. He could hardly say that the speech of the Premier that evening had filled him with astonishment, for nothing that he could do would astonish him. He had known him often to argue fairly round a circle, and then vote against his argument; but he had never heard anything like the speech of the honourable gentleman. He said they had done everything to get members to vote for the Bill; that they had done anything and everything in their power to suit the opinions and caprices of the members; and then he submitted that the Government had not failed. But had they not? The Premier said they had given away nothing, and that the Bill was in fact the original one. Let honourable members take up the original Bill, and see for themselves. He noticed that the Government had taken care not to distribute the original Bill that afternoon, but only the one that had been revised. No doubt, though, honourable members had the original Bill, and he should like them very much to refer to it to see whether it was the least like the revised Bill so far as it had gone through the committee. The committee had taken out the whole of what was called the production of the Attorney-General's putrescent or prurient brain—he (Mr. Palmer) did not catch which expression it was the Premier used.

The PREMIER: Ingenious.

Mr. PALMER said it was exceedingly ingenious. He had been accused of a little irreverence in comparing those defunct clauses with the Athanasian creed, but he would stick to the comparison. The Premier had said that this Bill differed very little from the original, but he (Mr. Palmer) hoped it might differ more before it went out of committee. He disliked the Bill from the first, and honourable members could not accuse him in any way of attempting to help to carry it; because he believed it was about the worst Bill ever introduced, even with the amendments added to it. He was very much struck with a part of the speech of the Premier this evening. The honourable gentleman had brought him into it, though he was as innocent as possible. He quoted him as having said

over and over again that there was no parallel between Brisbane and the metropolis of New South Wales or Victoria. He (Mr. Palmer) admitted having said that. He had said over and over again that those colonies were in such a position, that Sydney and Melbourne must be the capitals of them; but the Premier went on to draw a very unfair parallel afterwards, which must be refuted. The honourable gentleman said that Brisbane should be put on the same parallel with Maryborough, Rockhampton, Cooktown, and either Townsville or Bowen. That was an exceedingly unfair parallel to draw, because none of these had the advantage which Brisbane had, of being the centre of legislation.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And of the Civil Service.

Mr. PALMER said he was well aware of that, too, for of course where the capital was there would be a large Civil Service expenditure; and an enormous expenditure it was in Brisbane, as every member of the committee must confess. And when they came to consider that this Civil Service expenditure involved, if not a large majority, certainly a large proportion of the voting power, they would agree with him that they ought, as members for the colony—not for any individual district—to look with very great jealousy on the votes of the Civil Servants of the colony. He was exceedingly sorry that the honourable member for Burke was not in his place. He introduced a motion last session which he (Mr. Palmer) would cordially support, and which he believed the greater portion of the Civil Servants should support—a Bill which proposed that they should not have a vote. But the Premier in all his arguments seemed to forget that a large proportion of the voting power in the metropolitan districts lay with the Civil Servants; indeed, in some districts they could put in whomsoever they would; and he challenged disputation on the subject. There was another charge of the Premier, which he could not understand. The honourable gentleman alluded to the honourable member for Toowoomba in not very complimentary terms, though when the honourable member voted with him he lauded him up to the skies; the Premier accused the honourable member for catching a division. He (Mr. Palmer) would like to know what catching a division was in a House of thirty-five. The Government were beaten by nineteen to sixteen, and if that was catching a division he had no more to say about it. The strongest argument he had heard against the Bill was, that if the capital had but one member it would be thoroughly represented, and he would stick to that opinion. If Brisbane had not one solitary member in the House it would be well represented by members

generally. Members coming from every district in the colony would thoroughly represent it. He did not say represent it with the intelligence, talent, oratory, zeal and tear-me-down style of some of the members for Brisbane, but represent it as far as voting power went, as well as it was represented at the present moment. He never saw the Premier so wild as he was to-night, when speaking about this Bill. At one time he was afraid he would burst a blood-vessel, when he described the popular feeling there was about this Bill. Where was there any popular feeling? Where did they find the citizens of Brisbane expressing themselves displeased because they were cut down to three members? Where had been the large and excited meetings? Where had been a reflex of public opinion in the House? Where had been the processions parading the streets, and indignation gatherings, if the injustice described by the Premier had been done to Brisbane? He had been told that two miserable meetings—miserable in comparison to the population of the city and suburbs—had been held. At one meeting there were 200 people, who cared little about the subject upon which they were called together, and at the other there were sixty people who cared less. Was that the intelligence of the people of Brisbane? The intelligence, as a matter of fact, was entirely with the Opposition. The people of Brisbane knew very well that they were well represented. They did not care about having more members in the House to represent petty cliques and interests. The whole attitude of the city of Brisbane had, in short, shown that they cared nothing about the Bill; and the Premier had therefore introduced this argument on purpose to block his own Bill, of which he was evidently afraid. And with the tables which the honourable member the leader of the Opposition had prepared showing the amount of taxation which was to be imposed upon the colony for roads and bridges in the different districts, he was astonished at any member of the committee voting for an additional member for the city of Brisbane. The strongest argument against the speech of the Premier was that Brisbane had never risen in its might, or expressed any feelings upon the subject. A partial clique did not represent the inhabitants, and he believed so well of the inhabitants of Brisbane as to feel that if they had injustice done them, they would have come down with a petition miles long. But there had been no petition. There had been no petition even from Fortitude Valley.

Mr. BEATTIE: Yes.

Mr. PALMER: How many signatures?

Mr. BEATTIE: One.

Mr. PALMER said that was a pretty admission to make. He knew something

about these matters, and it had always been his experience that when the chairman's signature stood alone, it was because the promoters of the meeting were afraid of the names that would come after. He (Mr. Palmer) again repeated that the citizens of Brisbane did not care. He believed the Ministry, if they could carry this additional member for Brisbane, should do it in the proper way and recommend the Bill, but not try to carry it by a side-wind. If they thought they had a majority of the House to rescind the resolution of the committee, let them carry it by a majority in a constitutional manner. He was a bit of a boatman, and could tell the committee that these side-winds were very fatal to small craft. After the speech of the Minister for Works the other day, to which reference had been made, he should like to know what the Ministry had to say. The Hon. W. Miles was reported to have made a speech at a bridge jubilee—a kind of gathering which Ministers were very fond of attending. There was not a dirty little bridge opened either in East or West Moreton at which some member of the Ministry was not present. The honourable the Minister for Works at this meeting said:—

“He believed that the time of the present Government had come, and that they would have to make way for better men, and such a change was he believed necessary for the public good. The term of office of the present Ministry was drawing to a close; they had a good innings, and he would like now to see new men holding the reins of Government in order to see what they could do.”

The honourable gentleman made an allusion to “the gentlemen at the head of the Government.” Who was the head of the Government? The Minister for Lands was, perhaps. That honourable gentleman had been playing a very nice little game with the land down about Humpy Bong. He (Mr. Palmer) had heard a great deal about it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I invite you to say anything you like or can.

Mr. PALMER: I will in good time, and I hope the honourable member will give me a committee upon it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I defy you.

Mr. PALMER: Very good; I am not accustomed to being defied, however.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do defy you. I defy you on the spot.

Mr. PALMER: Is it not astonishing, Mr. Morgan, how these lawyers hang together?

Mr. PRING: Why don't you make your charge; and not talk nonsense?

Mr. PALMER: Well, Mr. Morgan, as I was saying, I know something about these lands down at Humpy Bong, and I shall, by-and-bye, probably get a committee to inquire into the business.

The MINISTER FOR LANES: I say I defy you.

Mr. PALMER said it always happened that when a man was hard hit he talked about defence. But what the honourable member for Brisbane had to do with it he could not imagine. This Electoral Districts Bill, however, was not to be treated with levity. But if the Minister set a bad example, he could not prevent members of the Opposition from having their laugh at it. He (Mr. Palmer) would now say what he said at the commencement—that if the Government were strong enough to defeat the Opposition, their proper way was to do it by recommitting the Bill, and putting in their two members for North Brisbane and two for Fortitude Valley, and not by a side-wind, stultifying the committee and rescinding their own action.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he could not help referring to a remark which had been made by the Premier in reference to the conduct of the honourable member for Toowoomba, and accusing the Opposition of having caught a division unfavourable to the Ministry. Now, there were thirty-six members who voted on that occasion, and he had in his hand the divisions of the House for the last four years, by which he found that during that time there was only one occasion when the number exceeded thirty-six, and that was last year, when thirty-seven members voted, and there was only one occasion when the number was thirty-six. So that that did not look like catching a division. Then to go back to the year 1876, to compare the numbers then with the division the other night, he found that during that year there were only five divisions—one where the number exceeded thirty-six and two where it was equal. Then, taking 1875, there were only two occasions on which a greater number of members voted than had voted the other evening. Those facts spoke for themselves, but the strongest argument shown by the figures he had in his hand was the potential power possessed by the members for the metropolitan district. And he would ask how did matters stand at present? The Opposition knew very well that if there was a house of forty-three members they could defeat the Government on almost every feature in the Bill, and throw out the Bill, in fact. The Government would never get a greater division on the Bill than they got the other night. With reference to the long and laboured arguments of the honourable member for North Brisbane, he had, he must say, been somewhat surprised at it. The honourable member had been perfectly right in defending the proceeding as a matter of form, but as a matter of practice, it was somewhat different, as the Government had always had the courtesy

to alter other clauses so as to fit with those in which amendments had been made. That, however, they had declined to do on the present occasion. He would take the argument put forward by the honourable member for Brisbane, and would show him that it would land the Government in difficulty. Supposing the schedule was allowed to go as it stood and it corresponded with the present electoral district of Brisbane, what would be the result? Why, that they would give Brisbane three members, and, in the meantime, the Bill itself having created a blank, the next schedule, which gave the boundaries of Fortitude Valley, would have to go. As there was no electoral district of Fortitude Valley, the schedule would have to be struck out. Now, although honourable members on the opposite side complained that Fortitude Valley was struck out by the amendment which had been passed, if the first schedule was passed as proposed, then they would be compelled to strike out the electorate of Fortitude Valley, and would thus do that which they were accusing the Opposition of wishing to do. All that was in the face of his assurance that the Opposition would offer no objection to the recommitment of the Bill so as to fight the battle over again, if the Government would only amend the schedule at present to suit the amendment made in the Bill. The conduct of the Government in the matter had been different to anything he had seen before, and was simply to catch a decision in a thin House.

The Hon. R. PRING said he was extremely obliged to the honourable member for endeavouring to set him right on a point on which he himself conceived he could never go wrong, as he knew what a point of order was before the honourable member ever saw that Chamber. He was going to set the honourable member right. First of all, the honourable member gave him credit on a point of form; but he would explain to him again that it must be recollected that the question now—namely, the first schedule, was to determine the fate of the Bill. The Government had pledged themselves to recommit the Bill, with the view of reinstating that portion of it which would give Fortitude Valley two members and North Brisbane two members. If the committee would not give that boon to those electorates which was demanded, then the Government would withdraw the Bill. The point now was the settlement of that question, and what, then, was the use of amending the schedules and then going back to recommit the Bill, one schedule of which would be wholly inconsistent by an act of the committee—inconsistent with the avowed statement of what it was going to do by-and-bye, by way of recommitment. The point resolved itself into this, that if the first schedule was passed, then the Bill would

go back for recommitment, and the Opposition must allow the amendment to be withdrawn.

Mr. WALSH thought the best course for the Government to pursue would be to move the Chairman out of the chair, report progress, and move to have the Bill recommitment. It was competent for a committee to correct its own errors, and if it had committed an error, the Bill should be recommitment to enable them to correct it. How many times, he would ask, had they been told in that Chamber when they had passed something they were sorry for, "Oh, we will get the Bill recommitment." He maintained that there was no other way in which the present Bill could be dealt with, and he believed that nobody knew that better than the Premier himself. He should like to ask the honourable gentleman what he proposed to do with the other portions of the schedule that must be omitted in connection with electorates which had been divided or altered—was he going to be as stubborn with the Bremer portion of the schedule as he was with the present? How was he going to do with regard to the Condamine?

The PREMIER: Negative it.

Mr. WALSH would ask what the honourable member would do with the Mitchell, which had been divided, or whether he was going to allow it to remain as it stood? He had heard honourable members talk about the schedules attached to the Bill, but there was only one schedule, the whole of which should have been put as it was. He was fortified in that opinion by what had been said by the Premier, and by the fifth clause, which said "that the boundaries of the said several electoral districts shall be as described in the schedule to this Act." Having passed that clause, they had no right to be called upon to discuss the first part of the schedule by itself. He repeated that the more he heard of the arguments used for the course they had been pursuing, the more he was satisfied that they were establishing—if they did establish it—a precedent for which they would all be sorry before long.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said on the second reading of the Bill he expressed himself to the effect that he thought Brisbane was over-represented, and he was still of the same opinion, although, at the same time, he believed Brisbane was entitled, according to population, to five and a-half or nearly six members. That showed him that the Government recognised the same principle that he then contended for—that the capital ought not to be represented in the same way as other portions of the colony, because while Brisbane and the Valley combined were entitled to nearly six members, the Government proposed to give them only four. In voting for the

amendment, giving these two electorates three members, it seemed to him that the Government and the Opposition almost agreed, with this exception:—That it was only a matter of degree. They recognised the principle that Brisbane was not to be represented in the same proportion as other places; but it seemed that the action of the committee had not given satisfaction to Brisbane and the Valley. He did not see any difficulty in coming to a division on the first schedule, because if it and the following schedule were passed they would simply have to recommit the Bill, and the Government would have it in their hands to say how many members Brisbane was to have and how many the Valley should have. They could pass the schedules and then decide how many members each of those electorates should have. He had not voted for the amendment with the intention of disfranchising the Valley, but he voted for it on the same principle that he voted for North Ipswich and South Ipswich being joined, namely, to give them two members. But seeing that Brisbane and the Valley did not wish to be joined, he did not see much harm in separating them as they were before, and then let the committee decide how many members each should have. It had been said that he was inconsistent in trying to give Ipswich two members, and at the same time trying to take one from the Valley, but he had no intention of depriving the Valley of a representative. He simply wished to give the metropolitan constituencies that representation which was just and fair. He was quite willing to vote for the schedule, but he would use his own freedom in doing what he considered to be right when the Bill was recommitted.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it almost seemed to him that the Government were doing all they could to throw out the Bill altogether. If the proposition of the honourable member who had last spoken was accepted, it would either force the House to do an amount of injustice he would not like to be a party to, or it would result in carrying the numbers exactly as they were proposed in the Government Bill. If he understood the honourable member at all, he said that if they passed the schedules as they stood now, they would afterwards give two members to Brisbane and one to Fortitude Valley; but he thought that would not be doing justice to Fortitude Valley. The Bill, as amended, was fair, and the course the Government should have adopted was to have prepared a schedule in accordance with the amendment in clause 4, amalgamating the two electorates, and then recommitted the Bill, and tried to divide the electorates again. That was the proper way to meet the matter, and their own supporters were now bringing them into difficulty in connection

with it. He could hardly suppose that the Government were manoeuvring to get the Bill thrown out; but he understood the Premier to say that if they could not get this member back for North Brisbane, he did not consider the Bill worth fighting for any longer, and he would give it up; but he thought he (the Premier) would have a good deal more reason to withdraw it when a division took place, and they would be forced to do injustice to Fortitude Valley. He thought the honourable gentleman must see from the indications on his own side of the House, that what he proposed was unjust; and if he persisted in the course he was pursuing he would adopt the very best means he could employ to throw out the Bill, which he (the Premier) himself had said was the most important Bill of the session.

Mr. KIDGELL said when he voted for the second reading of the Bill, he protested against what he conceived to be the undue representation of Brisbane, and as he still held the same views, he could not vote with the party with whom he usually voted on this occasion. The Bill, while it provided for additional representation, would doubtless have this effect: It would give additional metropolitan representation. He did not think there was a member of the House but who would readily admit that on the new members entering the Chamber, a large proportion would come from the city of Brisbane, and firmly believing that such would be the case, he felt it his duty to vote against the schedule now under consideration. He thought the information which had been conveyed to the House by the honourable the leader of the Opposition was another reason why he should vote against the Government on this occasion. A very cursory glance at the Estimates had convinced him that the district in which he (Mr. Kidgell) resided—the Wide Bay and Burnett district—was very inadequately treated on those Estimates. While large sums were set down for roads and bridges in other parts of the colony, even in parts where trunk lines were now running, this district, which at present did not possess railways, was treated very indifferently indeed. In voting against the Government he did not think he would be doing any injustice to the metropolis, because he believed that, even if its number of members was fewer than at present, it would still be fairly represented in that Chamber.

The PREMIER said he had not followed all the arguments that had been adduced, and he thought a great many arguments had been brought forward simply for the sake of talking. They had been told that it was not usual to get such a large division as that which carried the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba; but they had a large division on the second

reading, twenty-two to fourteen, thereby very decidedly affirming the principle of the Bill. He saw no reason why they should not come to a division to-night. He felt bound to say, in reference to what had fallen from the honourable gentleman in regard to his (the Premier's) argument, that while he felt justice was done throughout the colony by the form the Bill had now assumed, very great injustice had been done to one electorate, that of Fortitude Valley, an electorate that had had a separate existence ever since Queensland had been a separate colony, an electorate that, at the present time, did not wish to be absorbed into another and a larger electorate, an electorate that had given expression to that opinion through its members—and such being the case, while very anxious to secure justice throughout the colony, he felt desirous to avoid injustice to a most important and influential portion of the country. He said that serious injustice would be done by refusing to recognise the claims of that electorate. He had said nothing with regard to the electorate of North Brisbane. He had confined his remarks to Fortitude Valley, and he did think that it would be a matter for serious consideration, whether the Government could proceed with the Bill in the face of such decided injustice to any one electorate. He wished honourable members to understand that by their votes to-night, they would, to a very great extent, decide whether the Bill was to pass or not; and he said to those who really wished to secure the representation of the people, as a whole, throughout the colony, that if they voted on this occasion so as to practically disfranchise one district, they would imperil the Bill. He would tell his friend, the honourable member for Gympie, that whatever opinions he might have as to the representation of Brisbane, he was imperilling the position of other electorates who desired to be represented, and whose representation would be secured under this Bill, if he conceived it to be his duty, on a mere detail, to do a serious injustice to an important part of the community, and must take upon himself the possible responsibility of many outside districts foregoing that representation to which they were fairly entitled. Before coming to a decision, honourable members should fairly look that fact in the face. It was not only a question of Fortitude Valley, but the serious question whether he could admit such an injustice to be done to any community representing 10,000 souls, as that it should be completely wiped out, and have no separate existence. He must weigh that injustice against the justice which he believed was on the whole given under the provisions of the Bill. He was entitled to say this on the vote arrived at

on the second reading of the Bill. When had any measure been carried by such a majority? And yet by a combination of their opponents, by a solid vote of the Opposition in combination with certain other gentlemen who did not approve of certain details of the measure, they might be compelled possibly to relegate the whole treatment of this question for two or three years. He hoped honourable gentlemen would see the real responsibility of their decision. He should not be justified, without consultation with his colleagues, in saying what would be the final decision of the Government; but he would affirm most emphatically, that he could not on the present occasion proceed further if this motion were not carried, but must move the Chairman out of the chair for the further consideration of the subject. On the last division, the Government were taken unawares, but that was not the case now, and he hoped the committee would come to a vote as rapidly as possible.

Mr. PERKINS said the Premier evidently thought this would be almost his last opportunity of threatening honourable members who were not of his own way of thinking, and had determined to take advantage of it. He was glad the honourable member for Gympie had the courage of his opinions, and had stated plainly that he was in favour of the amendment carried by the honourable member for Toowoomba, and would vote against the motion of the Premier. No speeches that might be made here would alter a single vote one way or the other. Votes were secured by quite a different sort of machinery. Since coming into the Chamber, he had learnt that talking, reason, and remonstrance were of little weight, and that the name of "the people" was only used for purposes of imposition. Votes were secured by quite different means, as the division of to-night would probably show. The Premier had threatened honourable members with a day of retribution, and had ostracised the honourable member for Toowoomba from the Liberal party. That honourable member, he regretted to say, was labouring under a distressing illness, which incapacitated him from speaking to-night. When the Premier talked about ostracising a member from a party, he should have authority for doing so. What right had the Premier to talk of the Liberal party? Who made him the leader of the Liberal party? He (Mr. Perkins) had lately begun to inquire as to who constituted the Liberal party. If he (Mr. Perkins) was aimed at as a deserter of his party, the blow did not reach home, for—and not from any fault of the Premier's—he belonged to no party, although none of his place-hunters had served his chief half so loyally as he did last session. If this matter was of so much importance, why did not the Premier

announce his intention, when the amendment was carried, to have it rescinded? Nearly fourteen days had elapsed, and now they were told that if they persisted in their opposition they would imperil the representation of the country. He did not think the honourable gentleman believed his own assertion. The people of Brisbane were thoroughly satisfied with their position, as was evinced by the miserable public meetings which had been held to consider this question—at one meeting sixty, and at another 200 persons present. Intriguers had been at work among them, but they knew they were well represented, and minded their business. The country members looked after the interests of Brisbane; and last session when the position of the Government was imperilled, the absentees were generally the honourable member for the Valley, the honourable member for Cook, and other metropolitan members. And those were the gentlemen who always left the House as soon as their own particular business was transacted. He did not think the Premier was acting on his conscientious convictions in this matter, and was rather inclined to think he was seeking an opportunity to shelve the measure by appearing to yield to some outside pressure. The honourable gentleman had spoken about the small House in which the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba was carried. There were thirty-five members present, and he believed that at their sittings a less number were oftener present than an equal or higher number than this. The only fair course to be pursued by the Government was to recommit the Bill. The Minister for Lands had said that the land question was the motive which actuated the supporters of the amendment—that their object was to divide the Liberal party in order to attain their ends. He knew that there were many in the country who had the land-hunger, but he did not suppose that those who had this appetite, or those who supported the amendment from the Ministerial side of the House desired a change of Ministry. Speaking for himself, he had no such desire. At the same time, his experience of the Lands Office, of the working of the Act, and its administration, had convinced him that the Liberal party had played into the hands of the Conservative party. A more hesitating man, a worse Minister for Lands, and a greater enemy to the people could not be found than the Premier whilst he was at the head of the Lands Department. The motion of the Government looked very much like an attempt to have a new trial. What was Fortitude Valley that it should not be amalgamated with North Brisbane? He did not believe that they would have heard any expression of dissatisfaction from that quarter had it not been for five or

six persons who wanted to get into public life, and who had failed at almost everything else that they had undertaken. The only man with any interest at stake, so far as he knew, who had identified himself with the recent agitation was the honourable member for Fortitude Valley; and he did so, it was said, because it was doubtful whether he would ever be returned again for the electorate. He (Mr. Perkins) believed that the people of Fortitude Valley were perfectly satisfied with the decision of the committee, and were much better pleased to be able to vote for three members than two. He had not the slightest intention of doing an injustice to the Valley or Brisbane when giving his vote for the amendment. He was not going to make any apology for his vote; but the argument, that if Brisbane had no member at all, it and the Valley would still be fully taken care of, was ample and conclusive to him. Why should the ascendancy of the capital overshadow everything in the country? Why did not the Premier resist the proposal of the member for Fassifern, to carve a fresh electorate out of the Mitchell and give the Mitchell another member? Was he to understand that there was no bargain or understanding about that proposal? Time would no doubt reveal the Premier's reason for consenting to it. According to the distribution of the votes for roads and bridges on the next Estimates, East Moreton was to receive £4 16s. per head on the adult male population basis, and £1 6s. 11d. on the total basis; West Moreton, £3 9s. 7d. on the adult male basis, and 18s. 9d. on the total basis; whilst Darling Downs was to receive only £2 5s. on the adult male basis and 15s. 10d. on the total basis. Seeing that about three millions of public money had been spent in Brisbane and the neighbourhood since the colony was constituted, he could not see why the Downs should not be allotted as much as East and West Moreton. Without wishing to speak disparagingly of anyone, he must maintain that there was a floating population in and around Brisbane more than in any other town. Every adult in the metropolis should not therefore be counted as equal to the adult living on the Range, or west of it. He failed to see why East Moreton should be apportioned £4 16s. per head whilst the Downs only received £2 5s. This would be a sufficient reason to vote against the motion before the committee; but he did not object to it chiefly on that ground. He wished to warn the country members that if the Government made this attempt upon the country constituencies, who were the largest contributors to the revenue, what could they expect if they allowed the metropolis to get any ascendancy? Some honourable members asked who contributed the

revenue, meaning, he presumed, that Brisbane did so. What would Brisbane be without the back districts? Was it to be pretended for a moment that because there was a large population living in Brisbane they contributed unit per unit, taking the total population as a basis, as much as the men who went west, or had the enterprise to open up the country? He denied the assumption. He denied that the population of Brisbane—women and children—contributed equally as much to the revenue, *pro rata*, as the people in the country districts. He asserted that the people in the metropolis depended upon the country districts, and if these districts did not get their fair share of public expenditure, the reaction consequent upon it would fall on Brisbane. The Civil Servants kept their own store, and might be said to live upon themselves. They lived in the cheapest possible way, but he did not disapprove of that. Another element to be considered in discussing the Bill was, that the Parliament, the Government, and Government House were in Brisbane, and that a large number of Civil Servants resided there. If they went on increasing the number of Civil Servants, by adding every unfortunate incapable that they could catch about the streets with letters of introduction from men of station, and putting them in to do nothing, while deserving, honest, hard-working men could only get salaries one-half or one-third of that of the idlers; if they continued in that course, the day of reckoning was not far off when a Berry would turn up, and take the idle scamps that polluted the atmosphere with their presence, by the back of the neck and chuck them into the street. There were about fifty or sixty such persons about Brisbane at the present time, and no one knew it better than the Minister for Works and his colleagues. All his (Mr. Perkins') efforts had been unable to get a man appointed as gate-keeper on the railway. He had asked that some unfortunate who had been overtaken with calamity might get that humble post, but had been told that all appointments were filled up twelve months ahead. He considered that he was a real Liberal, while the Premier was only a sham Liberal, and, if for no other reason than his mode of doing business and administration of the Land Act, he was determined to vote against him on this measure.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that after what had fallen from the Premier, he wished to make a few remarks. He (the Premier) seemed to have held out a vague threat that if the Government were defeated on the vote they would move the Chairman out of the chair. In what position had the honourable gentleman placed himself? Simply this, that after introducing a Bill, which the Government said was a Bill to equalise

the representation of the colony—though he denied it did so—they said that on account of the mere fact that the metropolitan group had been reduced by one member, they would withdraw that Bill, and leave the outside districts in the peculiar state of representation which now existed. If any act could brand them more thoroughly than they had been branded as a Brisbane Ministry, that Act did it. The Bill was, he presumed, introduced on account of the action which he took last session in introducing a measure for the increased representation of the Kennedy and Cook. He then asked for an increase of one member to each of those districts, so as to give seven members to the North. No argument was then adduced on the Government benches, or from the benches behind the Government, arguing that the North was not entitled to seven members, yet they found that by this Bill the North was only to get eight members, although twelve additional members were to be given to the colony. That was reducing the representation of the North one member below what it should be. He had been content, however, to accept the Bill with its amendments; but in the face of his contentment, and simply because Brisbane was to be reduced to its proper degree of representation, the Premier held out the threat that he would withdraw the Bill and leave the northern portion of the colony in its present position of inadequate representation. Even with that threat, he was fully determined to vote against Brisbane receiving any increase. He was quite willing to take the responsibility, and he had the whole of the North, as far as it was possible to take an opinion, with him. The North approved of the action which had been taken by the committee. One of his colleagues, who was absent to-night on account of sickness, would have voted, had he been present, to reduce the representation of Brisbane to what it at present was; and any member of a Northern constituency who voted otherwise upon this question would be acting against the interests and wishes of his constituents. If all the members representing outside districts had been present to-night there would be an even larger majority against any increase in the representation of Brisbane. If the Government withdrew the Bill, they would be in the same position as when they withdrew the Financial Separation Bill. That Bill was introduced with the ostensible purpose of doing justice to the outside districts, but when the Government found that they were able to carry it, they withdrew it because they had never intended it should be carried. If the Government withdrew this Bill, they would be in the same position of never having intended to do fair justice to the outside districts. They were determined that if the outside

districts got increased representation the inside districts should be proportionately represented, so that the North would be reduced to the same position it held before. He maintained that the North, and one or two other electorates elsewhere, were entitled to more representation than the Bill gave them; and if the Ministry withdrew the Bill they must do so on their own responsibility and take the consequences. The action of the committee on this question had been endorsed not only by the people of the North—as far as he was able to ascertain from the Press—and outside Brisbane, but also to a very large extent by the people of Brisbane themselves. There was a very small section of the people of Brisbane who disagreed with the action of the committee or agreed with the action of the Ministry.

MR. FRASER said that the honourable member who last addressed the House made a great deal of the fact that though he was dissatisfied with the Bill, he was willing to accept it; but there were others who were equally dissatisfied with it on the other side, and with equally good grounds, and who were also willing to accept it. He maintained that the number of members given to Brisbane and Fortitude Valley fell far short of what they were entitled to upon any consideration whatever. They had heard it repeated for the hundredth time that the metropolis should not be represented to the same extent as other constituencies, but no reason or argument except one had been advanced or substantiated. That argument was, that it followed because it happened that several Brisbane gentlemen represented outlying constituencies, therefore Brisbane was represented by them. If that be the case, he ventured to say that Brisbane might well exclaim "Save me from my friends." Besides, it was not fair to assume that if the present Bill became law, that a great number of the representatives of outside districts would come from Brisbane. That had yet to be proved, and any argument based on the statement fell to the ground. As an elector of Brisbane, he objected to the amalgamation proposed. Assuming the position that the honourable member for Fortitude Valley had taken up with regard to his electorate to be correct, it would swamp the other electorate at the poll. A good deal had been said, or, rather, hinted, about the remarks made by the Premier, and supposed to be directed to the honourable member for Toowoomba. The honourable member was not present himself to hear what was said, and he (Mr. Fraser) therefore thought it fair both to that honourable member and to the Colonial Secretary to say that he (the Colonial Secretary) simply alluded to the honourable member for Toowoomba as an inde-

pendent member. The only argument which had been adduced against giving increased representation to the metropolis was, that its power and influence would be averse to the best interests of other portions of the colony; but he would like to call the attention of the honourable member for Toowoomba to circumstances which had taken place in the days gone by, and to ask him what section of the House or of the representation of the colony assisted him in his battles in those days, and who were his friends and most substantial supporters. Were those battles adverse to the interests of the colony? He was strongly of opinion they were not. He ventured to say—not by way of a threat, but as a suggestion—that it did not require a double proportion of the prophetic spirit to see that there was a day not far distant when similar battles might have to be fought again in the interest of the colony and of the Darling Downs. When that day arrived, the honourable member would once more look to the metropolitan members for support, and he would then find whether it was wise or not to have endeavoured to diminish the voting power of those constituencies. He (Mr. Fraser) was much surprised to hear the honourable member for Gympie raise an objection to increasing the representation of the metropolis, for if there was one member of the House who ought to remember the services of the metropolitan members, it was that honourable member. He (Mr. Fraser) might tell him that, had it not been for the aid and support of the metropolitan members, the Maryborough and Gympie railway would never have been initiated. Justice had been done to the outlying districts through the services of the metropolitan members, and to reduce the representation of the metropolis now would be doing a great injustice. It had been said that they were not being deprived of a member; but it must be borne in mind that the general increase of members amounted to something like twenty-five per cent., and if the representation of these electorates were reduced, as proposed, twenty-five per cent., the representation of these electorates was really reduced fifty per cent., as compared with other electorates. It had been said that if the committee carried the schedule as it now stood, it would be stultifying itself. In the case of any particular member who had voted for the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba and then voted for the schedule, it might be so; but it could not be said that any honourable member who was absent at that division, or who voted against the honourable member for Toowoomba, and now voted for the schedule, would be stultifying himself.

Mr. BAILEY said the honourable member for Bandanba was, no doubt, the extra member for Brisbane, who had been lost for some time. The objection he (Mr. Bailey) had to the Bill was, that it disfranchised Fortitude Valley. If the schedule were amended so that Brisbane could return two members and Fortitude Valley one member, he would agree to it. The point he objected to was the bunching of two electorates totally distinct, and the practical disfranchisement of Fortitude Valley. If the Opposition and the Government agreed to some such compromise as he had suggested, it would save a great deal of discussion.

Mr. KIDGELL said the Premier was not consistent when he stated this was a mere detail of the Bill, while, in the same breath, he asked the committee not to commit the serious injustice of disfranchising Fortitude Valley. If it was a mere detail, there was no need for the supporters of the Ministry making a party question of it; but if he believed for a moment that any action of his would lead to the disfranchisement of Fortitude Valley, he should hesitate. On the whole, he thought he was justified in voting against the party with which he generally voted, and to which he was attached. He was proud to belong to that party, but did not think he was bound to vote as if it were a party question upon a matter which had been by the Premier described as a mere detail of the Bill.

Mr. PRING suggested that the schedule should be passed to-night, the Bill re-committed, and the sense of the House taken whether there should be two members for Fortitude Valley, and two for North Brisbane, but on the understanding that the electorates were separated.

Mr. THOMPSON was understood to say that there had been no intimation from the Ministry that they would accept any compromise.

Mr. BEOR said there had been two main questions — the one whether Fortitude Valley should be wiped out, and that was the strongest objection to the course that the Opposition had taken. And another objection was, that Fortitude Valley would swamp the whole of the rest of the electorates. There were several ways out of the difficulty, without taking the course asked by the Ministry. One simple way would be to allow each elector to vote for only one of the three members. Another simple way would be the compromise suggested by the honourable member for Wide Bay of keeping Fortitude Valley distinct, and giving it one member. It certainly did surprise him to hear the Premier in his last address but one use as an argument that for the second reading of the Bill there had been 22 to 14 votes, while upon the honourable member for Toowoomba's

amendment there had been 19 to 16. He (Mr. Beor) could not see that that was a reason for voting on the side of the Ministry, or would warrant the Premier in throwing over the Bill if the amendment were rejected. The true state of the case was, that the House had shown by a majority of 22 to 14 that it approved of the main principles of the Bill; but by a subsequent majority it had shown that in one small detail the House was against the Ministry. Yet, because the committee had expressed disapproval of that one small detail, the Ministry said it had a right to throw over the Bill. Throughout the debate members who had spoken in favour of the Bill as it stood, had been able to find no other argument than this:—"Look at our population: we are entitled to the largest number of members because we have the greatest proportion of population." Supposing they threw aside all other considerations but absolute population, no doubt this was right. But if the question were considered fairly outside of Brisbane views altogether, it must have suggested itself that there were a thousand considerations in favour of allotting a larger proportion of members in country districts, than to a large town district like Brisbane. The people in country districts had more difficulty in voting when the expanse of country allotted to each representative was considered. But far from and beyond everything else, as it appeared to him, was this: That the Government was carried on in that very place and amongst those very people to whom it was proposed to give such a large proportion of representation. Nobody listening to the speeches from the other side of the House could have failed to notice that Brisbane was represented by a much larger number of members than the members by whom it was nominally represented; and they unconsciously, he believed, represented Brisbane to an unfair degree as compared with the country districts. He thought the discussions that had taken place on this Bill proved conclusively that the present Ministry was a thoroughly Brisbane Ministry. Honourable members had had some startling and trenchant figures placed before them by the honourable member for Maranoa to-night, and he would relate an incident to show to what an extent the Ministry that now occupied the Government benches was purely and simply a Brisbane Ministry. During the recess, two Brisbane Ministers made a tour to the northern part of the colony, and upon that tour a portion of the electorate to which he (Mr. Beor) belonged prepared a memorial to place before those Ministers, pointing out some of the most pressing necessities of the district, and also showing that that portion of the district contributed a far larger proportion to the

revenue than the proportion of expenditure which was made there. The Government lately did that portion of his constituents the honour to reply to that memorial, and could the committee imagine what it was? Of course honourable members were aware that the government of the Northern territory, so far as it was carried on in the North at all, was carried on from the constituency which he represented, as the centre, and the officers conducting the Government were located there. The reply was, that the district should bear in mind that the amount expended in salaries and rents of offices and buildings in that part of the colony made up the expenditure to the amount of revenue derived from it. Fancy such an argument being applied to Brisbane! That was an illustration of the different way in which the Government regarded the northern part of the colony as compared with the southern portion, and yet the same Government had repeated, over and over again, *ad nauseam*—until the House was sick of it—that their whole and sole desire was to do full justice to every part of the colony. That was a proof of it. He supposed any other northern member could get up and cap that over and over again, and he only mentioned it as one illustration of the way in which the Government treated, had treated, and was prepared to treat the northern part of the colony.

MR. GRIMES said, since the speech of the honourable member for Maranoa, the question appeared to have resolved itself into one of struggle for public expenditure in the various portions of the colony represented by members. It seemed to him to be lowering the tone and character of that House to deal with the subject in that way. He must say that he did not coincide with the views of the honourable member who had just sat down, and it appeared most astonishing that those members who were taking the most prominent part in endeavouring to prevent Brisbane from having due weight in the councils of the nation were themselves Brisbane men.

MR. MACROSSAN said, if the honourable member referred to him, he begged emphatically to deny that he was a Brisbane man. He was a Northern man to all intents and purposes. Every interest he held in the colony was in the North.

MR. GRIMES said the honourable member was a resident of Brisbane, and to that extent he was a Brisbane man. He questioned very much whether other honourable members who were striving to do injustice to Brisbane could not be called Brisbane men. At any rate he (Mr. Grimes) could not be considered a Brisbane man, for he did not hold anything like so much property in Brisbane as some honourable members who had spoken against what

were supposed to be Brisbane interests. The honourable member for Aubigny had referred to his remarks, and with reference to the advantage enjoyed by residents in the Western portions of the colony, he would point out that produce could be conveyed, and was conveyed, by the railway from Toowoomba to Brisbane at a less rate than the settlers in the constituency he represented not distant more than ten miles could get it conveyed to Brisbane. That conclusively proved that expenditure had been made somewhere, and the Western districts were benefited by it. He held that it was most unfair to endeavour to denude Brisbane of its fair share of representation, and he was glad the honourable the Premier had said that if the Bill was not amended so far as to give four members to this constituency, he would consider the matter. He (Mr. Grimes) believed that was the proper position for the Government to take. They were bound to see justice done to the whole of the colony, and when injustice was attempted to be done, they should say that they would have none of it.

MR. GROOM said he would not like the question to go to a division without saying a few words upon it, although he was not in a very fit state to do so. He should, however, take advantage of this opportunity in consequence of having heard one of the three speeches which had been delivered by the Premier to-night. He had heard that that honourable gentleman had delivered two speeches before dinner, in which he (Mr. Groom) was referred to in terms not very complimentary, and in which he was pleased to say that he (Mr. Groom) was an enemy to progress. How the honourable gentleman arrived at that conclusion he did not know. He thought, having been a member of that House for the last sixteen years, and having consistently supported the Liberal party—not, perhaps, as it was now constituted, but as it once was—a party of honest and good intentions, and very different from what it was now—he had consistently and honestly supported that party at pecuniary sacrifice to himself; and how he (the Premier) could accuse him of being an enemy to progress, he did not know. If the honourable gentleman wanted to know, he (Mr. Groom) could tell him, that since his accession to power in this colony, as Minister for Lands of the present administration, he had been a decided enemy to progress in every possible respect. If the honourable gentleman wished to have facts, he (Mr. Groom) would give them for the benefit of the public. He was sorry the Minister for Lands, who got into such a towering rage a short time ago, was not present also. He thought the Premier was the last man in the House who should talk about independence, for he knew no member of the House who

was so vulnerable in that respect as himself, because, from the time he (the Premier) took a seat in that House, up to the present time, he had literally been a professional politician, and his hands had never been out of the public Treasury; and how he could come there and lecture members with regard to independence in the conscientious discharge of their duties, he (Mr. Groom) could not imagine. In 1868, when the honourable gentleman was Agent-General in England, the Legislature passed a Land Act, in which the poorer classes had an opportunity of selecting 160 acres, and if their means allowed it, 7,650 acres—there being a perfect graduating scale. In 1872, the honourable member for the Bremer introduced what was known as the Homestead Area Act, under which the working classes again had an opportunity of increasing their selections from 160 to 320 acres; and he made this assertion, that every particle of the lands thrown open as homestead areas on the Darling Downs was selected, settled upon by one of the very best classes of settlers the colony could have. But what did the honourable gentleman himself do when he came to be leader of the Liberal party, as he was pleased to call himself? He immediately said to the working classes, "320 acres of the Darling Downs land is too much for you; 80 acres is sufficient wherever I choose to pick it." Then he came down with his Railway Reserves Act, which was one of the most mischievous Acts that House ever passed, and which he (Mr. Groom) was glad to say he never assented to. It was as great a failure as any measure ever introduced into that House, because it would never construct a railway. A loan was bound to be asked for, and no one knew that better than the Premier himself. Instead of allowing the settlers on the Darling Downs to get possession of the best portion of the land, the honourable gentleman had reserved it entirely to be sold to the large capitalists. While telling the small man that eighty acres were enough for him, he had enabled capitalists to buy territories as large as an English county. And yet the Premier called that Liberal land legislation! The people on the Darling Downs were tired of hearing the name of the Liberal party; it stank in their nostrils, and its disorganisation had been brought about by the honourable gentleman himself. The Premier never consulted his party in the preparation of this Bill, and that was why he declined to speak on its second reading. A statement had appeared in a Brisbane paper supposed to be peculiarly in possession of the secrets of the Premier, that that honourable gentleman at the next election, was going to contest Toowoomba. He did not attach much importance to it; but it was a peculiar

circumstance that certain parties had been wired to at the same time to ascertain the voting power of Toowoomba. He thought this Redistribution Bill had been specially framed to bring about his defeat, for he had brought into that electorate that disturbing element to which the honourable member for Mitchell once referred in the House, introducing 300 or 400 voters who might bring about his defeat, and the return of two men who would support the Premier more consistently than he had done. An alteration had also been made in Aubigny, because Mr. Angus Mackay was defeated by the present honourable member for that electorate. The Premier had called him an enemy to progress because he had exercised an undoubted privilege, and if he had ostracised him from the Liberal party because of the amendment he introduced and carried, why, he was quite willing to stand the consequences. He had consulted some of his best and warmest supporters on this matter, and they had been so entirely in his favour that they would have signified the same by a public meeting had they not been prevented by himself and the honourable member for Aubigny. All over the Darling Downs the same opinion prevailed, and the Premier, in throwing the responsibility for the withdrawal of the Bill on those members who voted against his present motion, had taken up an issue which showed that he considered not the interests of the colony as a whole, but of Brisbane and Brisbane alone. He was quite prepared to accept the responsibility of his amendment, and he had come down to-night, at great personal inconvenience, to give his vote again as he gave it before. No threat held out by the Premier could induce him to deviate from the line of action he had marked out for himself on this question, and he would again repeat that he moved his amendment entirely on his own responsibility, and without consultation with any other person, and to continue the assertion in spite of his denial was unfair, unjust, and contrary to parliamentary usage. Had the Premier known how to lead his party, he would have consulted them as to the details of this Bill, in which case, probably, no amendment at all would have been moved. They were asked to swallow anything the Government chose to offer for their acceptance. They were going back to the old Bismarck system of Hemmant and Macalister, and if to oppose such a system was to be ostracised from the Liberal party, he was quite prepared to be ostracised. He was inclined to ask, with the honourable member for Aubigny, what had become of the Liberal party? Perhaps some of them might be found at the Paris Exhibition, for, as he had said once before, and fully believed, many of the leaders of

that party had feathered their nests. He denied the right of the honourable gentleman to call himself the leader of the Liberal party, unless he was prepared to treat it as it ought to be treated. Having served an apprenticeship of sixteen years, he might be supposed to know something about these matters, and he might say that the only really good leaders of parties the colony had ever had were Mr. R. G. W. Herbert and the present honourable member for Port Curtis. Under all other leaders there had been nothing but constant disorganisation. But all this was beside the question, and he should not have referred to it had not the honourable gentleman charged him with being an enemy to progress, because, in the interests of his constituents, to say the least, he had moved a certain amendment. Even if the Bill were thrown out there would not be much weeping and wailing in the country, except among a few aspiring politicians and office-seekers, who would be kept out in the cold for a few more years. The Premier had made a point of the fact that the second reading of the Bill was carried by a large majority; but it did not follow that because a second reading was carried by a large majority, honourable members were to be debarred the right of shaping its details in committee. Indeed, the honourable gentleman had in times past been a most ardent advocate for such a course of action. He held that Brisbane was well enough represented with eleven members, and if he could have got support he would have gone still further and reduced the number to ten, which was quite enough for the metropolitan group.

The PREMIER said he did not propose to follow the honourable gentleman at great length, but the honourable member for Toowoomba had said a few things which deserved notice at his hands. He did not quarrel with the honourable member for being an independent member, nor for supporting gentlemen on the opposite side. To speak of the Liberal party was a question of definition, and he happened, from no special merits of his own, to be placed at the head of a supposed Liberal Government. He did not pretend to be autocratic, nor did he aspire to be a small colonial Bismarck. The honourable gentleman gave as specimens of what a good party leader ought to be the names of Mr. Herbert and the honourable member for Port Curtis, and had held them up as patterns. He was not going to question their opinion. They represented the Conservative party for the time being.

Mr. PALMER: The Liberal party.

The PREMIER said the question of liberalism was a matter of dispute, and he did not lay claim to have exclusive possession of it. Those gentlemen were the honourable member's gods,

and if he thought fit to bow down and worship them, it could not be helped. He had never asked the honourable member to vote for him. On the contrary, he had asked him to be true to his principles; but the honourable member was far from being so, and deliberately voted with the Government on political questions. This was certainly a peculiar indication of independence in politics. He (the Premier) had been an independent politician—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Never.

The PREMIER said many honourable members knew him longer than the honourable member. He had been, and should again be, if necessary, an independent member supporting Liberal principles. He was far from disputing the honourable member for Toowoomba's claim to independence. The honourable member had read him a lecture about his administration of the Lands department; but he was conscious of having done his duty whilst he held the office, and he believed the same feeling was entertained by many men whom the honourable member professed to represent in the House. He had consulted the general good in his administration—of rich and poor alike.

Mr. GROOM: For the rich you have.

The PREMIER said he had not. He had dealt out even-handed justice to all. He had never listened, as the honourable member always did, to tittle-tattle and little yarns, which could not be proved when they came to be tried by the test of truth—which were found to be unsubstantial and unreal when so tried. He wished to be courteous to him, and to say nothing which reflected upon him or his position in the House; but he could tell the honourable gentleman that when he stated that he (Mr. Douglas) had been in correspondence with any one in Toowoomba, that he had been wire-pulling, he simply made one of those unsubstantial statements which they were so much accustomed to hear from him. There was not a word of truth in the statement. He had never communicated with any man in Toowoomba in connection with elections, and had never used any influence upon any elector in Toowoomba. Yet the committee were told that because it happened that a certain area was proposed to be allotted to Toowoomba, which might contain inhabitants opposed to the honourable member, therefore he had endeavoured to compass the honourable member's ruin. There was not a shadow or scintilla of truth in the assertion. He would not stoop or demean himself so far as to attempt anything so unfair. He had no desire to contest the honourable member's electorate, having no wish to find a better constituency than he now represented; but the honourable gentleman had no right to make use of his position to spread abroad these unsubstantial rumours. Then the hon-

ourable gentleman charged the leaders of the Liberal party, whom he always attacked, with having feathered their nests. Did he mean that they had availed themselves of their positions to reap advantages in an unfaithful and untrustworthy manner? His statement could mean nothing else. Did he mean that the (Mr. Douglas) had availed himself of his position to acquire undue advantages? He could tell him that he had worked himself up to his present position, and had only attained it after giving the country years of voluntary unpaid service, and the emoluments of office he received were merely the honourable, he might almost say honorary, rewards to which he was entitled by virtue of his position. It was most unworthy of the honourable member to attribute what was tantamount to corrupt motives to public men. If he (Mr. Douglas) was corrupt, he was not worthy to occupy his present position. The honourable gentleman knew that he had never degraded himself to take advantage of his position, but simply because he was receiving, possibly, the rewards of office, he was told by him that he was feathering his own nest. He hoped the honourable member would avow his position and follow the leader of the Opposition, but he should not cast such statements in his teeth. He was at the head of the Government by the confidence of the people and his colleagues, and, if he was unworthy, why did not the honourable member take the best means to eject him from office? He had accused him of mal-administration of the Lands Office, and had imputed to him a desire to revise his electorate of Toowoomba, so as to compass his rejection and oust him from his position. He hoped he had not spoken too warmly, but the honourable gentleman had made these accusations against him.

Mr. GROOM: Why did you make accusations against me?

The PREMIER said he never had. Simply because he had asked the honourable member to follow out his opinions logically, and go over to the other side, he was told by him that he was not fit for his position as head of the Government. He was quite prepared, and so were his colleagues, to give up the possession of office to better and abler men; but when that time came it would be shown that he retired from office with an unstained reputation, and without having feathered his nest.

Mr. McLLWRAITH said he had come prepared to take the first schedule, and having heard all the arguments that he thought could be urged for, and against, he had been perfectly prepared to take a division at an earlier hour of the evening. The Premier had, however, stopped the division by making a speech which started honourable members speaking on all kinds of questions. He would ask the honourable the

Premier just to consider what the opinion of a dispassionate person would be on listening to such a speech as he had made during the last ten minutes. It had nothing to do with anything that had been said that evening, but with something that was said by the honourable member for Toowoomba about a fortnight ago, and then replied to by one of the Premier's colleagues. The question at issue had been argued dispassionately from his side of the committee, and he did not see why honourable members should be subjected to the disgraceful scene which had just been witnessed. All the Premier's talking for the last ten minutes had not the slightest reference to the motion before the committee.

Mr. PALMER asked whether any mortal man, or member, had ever to endure a speech such as the Premier had just delivered? Of what was he accused? Such a speech he (Mr. Palmer) had never heard made since he was born, and the impression it made on his mind was, that the Premier was thoroughly guilty of everything that had been said of him. He would like to know of what the Premier had been charged, that he should have to defend himself in the style he had done; and what on earth had it all to do with the electorate of North Brisbane and Fortitude Valley. It was now one minute past ten o'clock, and he had generally found that legislation after ten o'clock did not come to much. He would, therefore, move as an amendment that there be two members for the electorate of North Brisbane, and one for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. WALSH had not intended to address the committee again, but he felt he would not be doing his duty if he did not protest against what had recently taken place being tolerated. No honourable member could pretend to have any liberty if the names which had been applied to the honourable member for Toowoomba were to be used by a Premier; and honourable members on the other side would occupy the most ignominious position of any body of senators in the world. He would rather leave the House instantly than submit to one-tenth part of the threats and terrorism that had been exhibited towards the honourable member for Toowoomba. Where was their freedom of discussion or action as independent members of the House if such threats or terrorism were to be tolerated? He did not care how the honourable member and the Premier might quarrel and discover each other's weaknesses, but he protested against the Premier addressing himself in such a way as to make all his followers appear as absolute cowards. If such language were to be addressed by the Premier to one of his most faithful followers, who had the courage to point out the visible mistakes of his leader, he (Mr. Walsh) would be

ashamed to occupy such a supporter's seat in the House. It was honourable members like those of Aubigny and Toowoomba, who gave a general support to the Government, but were not afraid to open their mouths, that were the valuable supporters of the Ministry; and not those who disregarded the wishes of their constituents and gave their votes like slaves. He (Mr. Walsh) would be very sorry to be a colleague of the Premier, if that was the way he talked to a supporter. The delay which had occurred in the passage of the Bill was entirely due to the way in which the Premier had conducted it so far. Had he shown anything of the ordinary ability that a statesman should show, this Bill would now have been sent up for the third reading. Owing to the incompetence, the infirmity of temper, and the tyranny which reigned in the bosom of the Premier, it was very evident that he was incapable of conducting it, and hence the delay. At an early stage he (Mr. Walsh) had stated that the Government had no intention of passing the Bill, but only meant it for electioneering purposes. That had come true; but the Government had made such a blunder in the way they had conducted it that they had lost all the *clé*, and if they did use it as an electioneering question now, it would tell against them through the length and breadth of the land. Even in Brisbane it would be brought up in judgment against them. He was of opinion that it was incompetent for the Chairman to put the first section of the schedule, and if he did so, he (Mr. Walsh) should have no hesitation in taking the ruling of the Speaker.

The CHAIRMAN said he himself had thought that it could not be so put; but seeing that it had been before the committee for the last six hours, and some fifty or sixty speeches had been made upon it, he would rule that it could be put.

Mr. WALSH said he had not taken any formal objection yet, but when he did do so, he hoped it would be remembered that the reason which had been given for allowing the question to be so put was, that some fifty or sixty speeches had been made upon it.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he understood the ruling to be that the Chairman could put the schedule, and that he also expressed as a reason why he could do so that there had been so many speeches made upon it.

The CHAIRMAN repeated that the question had been discussed for the last six hours, and he could not rule that he could not put it after having put it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that because the matter had been before the committee for a number of hours without the point being insisted upon, was a very absurd position to take.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that though the schedule might have been before them for six hours, the question might yet be raised at the very last moment. With all deference to the opinion of the Chairman, he should move that the honourable gentleman do leave the chair and report the point to the Speaker.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the object of these objections had been pretty plain all the evening. But, returning to the question, the Opposition wanted to omit this schedule of the Bill. How were they to do even this but by putting the motion? All the Chairman had to decide now was, whether he could put the question consistently with the rules of the House; and until the question was put, the committee could not go any further. The point of order had nothing to do with how honourable members should vote upon it. No one could dictate to honourable members how they should vote.

Mr. THOMPSON said it would be seen that in its present form the schedule was totally inconsistent with the contents of the Bill, because it did not comprise the electorate for which three votes were to be given. The better plan would be to postpone this schedule until the House met again.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said they could not recommit the Bill until they had dealt with this question. The honourable member for Maranoa had agreed that the motion could be put at an earlier period of the evening.

Mr. WALSH suggested that a better plan would be for the Government to withdraw the motion, so that when the Bill was returned to the House they could move its recommittal, in order to put the schedule in its proper form. Were that done, it would expedite the passage of the Bill.

The PREMIER said he could not consent to that. The schedule met them there, as it was drafted by the Government; and under no consideration could they accept the amendment carried by the honourable member for Drayton and Toowoomba. If the honourable member wished to move an amendment to the schedule as it stood, well and good.

Mr. JOHN SCOTT thought the proper way would be for the honourable member in charge of the Bill to move the whole schedule, and then to move an amendment in the first part, to bring it into conformity with the amendments that had been made in the Bill.

Mr. IVORY thought they would facilitate the passage of the Bill if the Government had accepted the proposal of the honourable member for Warrego, and withdrawn these schedules. They would have been far further ahead than at the present moment; for, notwithstanding anything they could do in committee, they would

still have to go through the process of re-committing the Bill. Even if the Government carried their schedule, they would have to reconsider it to bring the Bill in accord with the schedule. But to go on as now, they would be duplicating work upon themselves *ad infinitum*, and the thing was ridiculous.

Question—That I do leave the chair and report the point of order to the Speaker—put and negatived.

Mr. WALSH said he should not divide the House on the matter, but would again advise the Government, if they desired to pass the Bill at all, and in a proper form, to withdraw the motion and enable the suggestions of honourable members on his side of the House to be met.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he quite agreed with the honourable member for Warrego, and thought it was no wonder that after the wild and wonderful speech of the Premier, honourable members on both sides should feel a little angry on the subject. What right had he (the Premier) to address the honourable member for Toowoomba in the way he had done? He had simply called a member of that House a liar. He had wrapped it up in verbose and fine language, but when it was boiled down, that was what he had called the honourable member for Toowoomba, and for what reason? Because that honourable member had chosen to differ from him (the Premier), to strike out a line for himself, and to say "I shall not be led by the leader of the great Liberal party when I know he is wrong." That was the offence of the honourable member for Toowoomba, and that was the reason why so much abuse had been heaped upon him by the Premier. He thought it was quite time they adjourned, and he hoped the Premier would see his way to move the Chairman out of the chair, for he would not move much further with his Bill to-night.

Question—That schedule No. 1 stand schedule No. 1 of the Bill—put, and the committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Douglas, Garrick, Dickson, Miles, Griffith, Pring, McLean, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Foote, Beattie, Tyrel, MacDonald, Pesse, Murphy, Bailey, Grimes, Fraser, Hockings and Kingsford.

NOES, 18.

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PREMIER said he proposed taking the second schedule to-night.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: No, no.

The PREMIER: Do I understand that the honourable member for Maranoa does not wish to proceed any further?

Mr. McILWRAITH said he had even stronger objections to the second schedule than he had to the first, and it was unreasonable to propose to proceed with it to-night.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman then left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 11 o'clock.