Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 AUGUST 1880

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 11 *August*, 1880.

Petition.—Questions.—Government Business.—Formal Business. — Petition. — Suspension of Standing Orders.—Motion for Adjournment.—Pacific Islands Labourers Bill—second reading.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PETITION.

Mr. MILES presented a petition from Edward Malone, of Swan Creek, near Warwick, praying for relief in consequence of alleged losses.

Petition read and received.

QUESTIONS.

The HON. J. DOUGLAS asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Has the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero" reported the Captain for sailing his ship without side-lights, the said ship having emigrants on board?
2. Did the Surgeon-Superintendent, in consequence, refuse to sign the ship's papers?
3. Was a telegram sent by any member of the Government to the Surgeon-Superintendent, requesting him to sign the papers?
4. Did the Surgeon-Superintendent comply with this request? And
5. Was payment made?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) replied—

1. The Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero" mentioned, in his report of the voyage, that the Captain of that vessel frequently sailed his ship without side-lights.
2. The Surgeon-Superintendent is not required to sign any ship's papers.
3. No.
5. Payment of the second moiety of the passage-money has been made.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) it was resolved—

That on Thursday next Government Business take precedence of General Business.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

On the motion of Mr. ARCHER, it was resolved—

1. That the Bill to enable the Trustees of the Lands comprised in Deeds of Grant numbers 5,046 and 27,595, being the Racecourse Reserve, and Portion 249, parish of Rockhampton, county of Livingstone, to mortgage or lease the same, and sell or exchange certain portions thereof, and for other purposes, be referred for the consideration and report of a Select Committee.

2. That such Committee consist of the following members, viz.:—Messrs. Kingsford, Macfarlane, Feez, Stevens, and the Mover.

On the motion of the Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH, leave was granted to introduce a Bill to Amend the Law relating to the Alienation of Crown Lands on Goldfields.

PETITION.

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from certain Residents of South Brisbane, presenting resolutions passed at a public meeting, and praying for consideration.

Petition received.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of resolutions of Ways and Means being reported forthwith, and of a Bill being passed through all its stages in one day.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had objected to this being taken as a formal motion, because he did not understand to what it referred. The usual course was to make a motion of this kind on the day on which it was considered necessary to suspend the Standing Orders. There was, however, no question of suspending the Standing Orders to-day; and although the Financial Statement was to be made to-morrow, the Premier could hardly expect the House to pass through a Bill in all its stages until the Financial Statement had been discussed. The Opposition had no intention of doing anything beyond the usual course; but this motion seemed to him to be unnecessary, unless it was intended to suspend the Standing Orders to-day.

The PREMIER said the suspension of the Standing Orders was meant for to-morrow, and the two motions on the paper were intended to be taken conjointly. He had moved that Government business take precedence, and he now moved that the Standing Orders should be suspended. He had not the slightest intention of forcing the Bill through against the wishes of the House, but he wished to have the power, in case the House, after hearing the Financial Statement, might, of their own accord, consider that the best thing to do would be to pass the Bill through in all its stages.

Mr. DICKSON said that unless the Bill referred to was a Supply or Appropriation Bill, for which there could be no necessity till the end of the present month, there could be no need of passing a Bill dealing with resolutions arrived at in Committee of Ways and Means through all its stages in one day. The Treasurer had power to collect revenue under proposed tariff changes, and to hold such moneys until the proposed alterations were ratified by the House, passing subsequently a Bill to give effect to the resolutions; but it was quite unprecedented to insist on such a Bill passing through all its stages immediately on the Treasurer having disclosed his tariff resolutions, and before they were fully discussed.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. KATES moved the adjournment of the House to draw attention to an interesting little bill which he held in his hand, and which he had taken from a newspaper. It was an account from the hon. member for Bulimba, (Mr. Swanwick) for drafting certain Bills, and it amounted to £162 15s. The charge for the Marine Bill of 1880 was £31 10s.; for the Water Police Bill, £10 10s; for the Mercantile Act Amendment Bill, £10 10s.; for the Shipping and Seamen's Bill, £21; for the United Municipalities Bill, £5 5s.; and for the Distillation Bill, £84. He (Mr. Kates) should like to know by whose recommendation this money had been paid. It was rather unfair to allow members of the legal profession on the other side of the House to have all the crumbs and plums, whilst members of the profession on the Opposition side of the House, who were just as competent to draft Bills as the hon. member for Bulimba, were quite overlooked. It might also be said that the item of £84 for a Distillation Bill was altogether too high. The reason why he rose to move the adjournment was to find out, if possible, whether there was anyone to check those bills, or whether Mr. Swanwick had a right to charge such a sum as £84. On a future occasion he might charge £184. He (Mr. Kates) looked upon the sum of £162 15s. as too much for the drafting of Bills, some of which they had not even seen yet. The other charges, made by Mr. Cooper—another hon. member supporting the Government—were no doubt more reasonable. Mr. Cooper charged £5 5s. for the drafting of the Goldfields Homestead Act Amendment Bill; £5 5s. for the Mines Regulation Bill, and £15 15s. for the Post Card and Postal Note Bill—in all £26 5s. What he wanted to know was, why hon. members of the Government side got all those fine pickings. If this system of feeing legal members is to be maintained, why did not the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) or the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Paterson) get some of them? Perhaps the Premier would be able to give them some information on that point, and tell them whether it was on his authority that £84 was paid to Mr. Swanwick for drafting the Distillation Bill?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that, so far as he was concerned, he did not want any pickings.

Mr. AMHURST said no doubt hon. members and the leader of the Opposition would bear him out in the statement that last session a motion was introduced in relation to payment of fees to barristers. The question was whether members sitting in the House—barristers—should be allowed to take fees for doing Government business.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Such a question has never been brought before the House.

Mr. AMHURST said he believed it had, and that all the legal members, including himself and the leader of the Opposition, voted together on the other side. He hoped hon. members would now think of the vote they gave on that occasion. For himself he certainly would give the same vote again. The matter simply amounted to this—that they must either have a parliamentary draftsman, or else continue in the same way as heretofore. The drafting under the present system did not exceed £200 a-year. A parliamentary draftsman would cost the country a great deal more than that, for he would have to give up going on circuit. It was therefore for the House to decide whether they should have a parliamentary draftsman, or whether they should pay fees to those who were willing to do the work as at present.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he recollected well the resolution being brought on, and thought it was moved by himself. However, whether it

was moved by him or not he supported it, and it resulted in all the lawyers and *quasi* lawyers in the House voting on the one side. It was all very well for hon. members opposite to get virtuously indignant over the matter, but they knew perfectly well that their side would do the same thing when they got the chance. The fact was that there were many hungry lawyers in the House, men looking for plunder, political vultures looking for carrion, and he supposed the present Ministry fed its legal supporters in the same way that every Government did, and if the member for North Brisbane got into power he would have to feed his supporters. The fact was so, and it was utterly useless for hon. members getting up as the member for Darling Downs had done, and complaining about the crumbs that had been given to some of the Ministerial supporters. Possibly the hon. member would get some of the crumbs himself when his party got into power; his time would no doubt come. As to the remarks that had been made regarding the amount of fees paid to the member for Bulimba for drafting Bills, he could point out an hon. member on the Opposition side who had made twenty times more than Mr. Swanwick, and in a much more peculiar way. It might be stated thus:—A certain member of the Government advised that a certain course of action should be taken; it was taken, and he was employed professionally by the Government and received some thousands of pounds in fees, and the judgments given in the cases were afterwards upset at home. Either that hon. member gave the advice knowing that it would induce litigation, or, knowing that the contention was a wrong one, he advised litigation; but, in any case, he profited more than the member for Bulimba had done by drafting Bills. If he (Mr. Morehead) were in the position of the member for Bulimba he should be tempted to reply as Lord Clive did when he was accused of having taken plunder—"I am astonished at my own moderation." And he was perfectly certain that when the member for North Brisbane got into power he would not get off as leniently as the present Ministry had done. He totally disapproved of the principle, believing that it was wrong, and that no member of the House should receive any fees whatever from any Government that might be in power; but the fact remained that it had been done in the past and would be done again. The division on the resolution to which he had referred showed that a majority of the House was in favour of continuing a state of affairs which he considered was a corrupt system, and should not be suffered. A large legal majority voted for it, and as long as they remained in the House the system would be perpetuated. Until the atmosphere was purified by the removal of lawyers from the House, or a stringent measure was passed utterly prohibiting any member to accept fees from the Government, the objectionable state of affairs under discussion would go on.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the question raised by the hon. member for Darling Downs was quite different to the one raised last year by the member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas). The hon. member for Maryborough moved, on June 26—

"That in pursuance of the 6th section of the Constitution Act and the 5th and 6th sections of the Legislative Assembly Act, no members of the House other than the officers of the same and those holding Ministerial office should receive any payment on behalf of the Executive Government."

Thereupon, the present Colonial Secretary moved that the question be amended by the insertion, after the word "office," of the words—

"And members of the legal profession holding briefs for the Crown."

The amendment was negatived. The original question was not put, but the previous question was moved, and on the division the member for Mackay voted on the same side that he (Mr. Griffith) did. The question brought up to-day was quite different to the one raised by the member for Maryborough. On that occasion it was pointed out that, although the general principle might be perfectly right that members of the House should not receive payment from the Crown, yet it frequently happened that leading members of the Bar had seats in the House, and the Government might be deprived of their services in heavy cases, and the colony might sustain a heavy loss in consequence. At that time there was a heavy lawsuit pending, and it would not have been in the interest of the Government to have been deprived of the services of the member for Moreton, who was one of the leading counsel in the case. This view of the matter prevented the House from forbidding the employment by the Government, when their services were required, of lawyers who were members of the House. It would be observed that the only exception proposed by the Colonial Secretary was one in favour of barristers holding briefs for the Crown. It was not suggested that members of the House should act as parliamentary draftsmen, and it was no use the member for Mitchell attempting to divert the attention of hon. members from the real question by referring to the dummied land cases, and by asserting that he (Mr. Griffith) had received thousands of pounds in fees. If the hon. member would take the trouble to recollect, the fees that he (Mr. Griffith) received did not amount to two figures in hundreds. However, that question had been fought over and over again, and it was quite beside the present question whether he gave good advice or not, or any advice at all. The question now before hon. members was that members of the House had been paid fees for services rendered in connection with business which must come before them in the performance of their parliamentary duties. He had been a member of the House for eight years, and he asserted that it was the first time during that period that fees had been paid to members of the House for doing parliamentary work. Whether it was ever done before he entered the House he did not know, but during the last eight years the rule had been strictly observed that no member should receive any fee whatever for any services in connection with parliamentary work. He had occasion to remember this rule, because during his first year in Parliament he was asked by a member of the then Government (Mr. Walsh) to assist him in drafting the Railway Bill of 1872. He willingly agreed to do so, and devoted some considerable time to the task. Mr. Walsh asked him to take a fee for his services, but it occurred to him at once that it would be an exceedingly improper thing to do, and he replied that he would not listen to the proposition. In the following year he was asked to assist some department of the Government in connection with the Customs Bill, and, the measure not being of a political nature, he agreed to do so, and devoted considerable time and attention to the work. He was again pressed to receive a fee, but it seemed to him so entirely inconsistent with the position of a member of Parliament that he refused. A moderate fee for the work that he did on that occasion would have been 150 guineas. In 1874 he was asked by the Macalister Government to draw up a Bill, and he began to think that possibly his own judgment as to the receiving of fees might be wrong; and, to make perfectly sure, he consulted Sir William Manning, telling him what his views were, and inquiring whether it was consistent with the position of a member of Parliament to take fees for parliamentary drafting. Sir William replied

that he thought it was not; and, from that time to the present, no fees, with the exception of those to which the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had called attention, had been paid to any member in either House for drafting Bills. He would read from "May" what he conceived bore upon the subject, and thought always guided members:—

"On the 2nd May, 1695, it was resolved that the offer of any money or other advantage to any member of Parliament for the promoting of any matter whatsoever depending or to be transacted in Parliament, is a high crime and misdemeanour, and tends to the subversion of the English Constitution.

"And, in the spirit of this resolution, the offer of a bribe in order to influence a member in the proceedings of the House has been treated as a breach of privilege, being an insult not only to the member himself but to the House.

"On the 18th March, 1694-5, Mr. Bird was reprimanded for offering a bribe to Mr. Musgrave, a member and gentleman of the long robe, in the form of a guinea fee for preparing a 'petition to the House.'"

From the time that his attention had been called to this he had not been able to distinguish between giving a member of Parliament a guinea fee for preparing a petition and a fee for preparing a Bill. "May" went on to say:—

"So also the acceptance of a bribe by a member has ever by the law of Parliament been a grave offence which has been visited with the severest punishments. In 1677 Mr. Ashburnam was expelled for receiving £500 from the French merchants for business done in the House. In 1694 Sir John Trevor was declared guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour in having while Speaker of the House received a gratuity of 1,000 guineas from the City of London after passing the Orphans' Bill, and was expelled. In 1695, Mr. Grey, secretary to the Treasury, was committed to the Tower for taking a bribe of 200 guineas; and in the same year Mr. Hungerford was expelled as guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour in receiving 20 guineas for his favour and service as Chairman of the Committee on the Orphans' Bill. Nor has the law of Parliament been confined to the repression of direct pecuniary corruption. To guard against indirect influence it has further restrained the acceptance of fees by its members for professional services connected with proceedings in Parliament. And on the 22nd June, 1858, the House of Commons resolved that it is contrary to the usage and derogatory to the dignity of the House that any of its members should bring forward, promote, or advocate in this House any proceedings or measure in which he may have acted or been concerned for or in consideration of any pecuniary reward or fee."

The result was that according to the practice of the Imperial Parliament, which was only that of common honesty, members who were employed and received money in connection with a Bill had no right to speak or vote upon the measure. A member could not be supposed to be a disinterested judge under such circumstances; and every member ought to be in the position of an impartial judge to determine every matter, whatever it might be, which came before him in the House. He was glad that the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had brought the matter forward, because it deserved consideration, and was very different from the subject discussed last year. He would certainly hope that the precedent set this year, for the first time as far as he knew, would not be followed. He was sorry to see that one or two hon. members on the Ministerial side treated the matter lightly, and as being merely the giving of pickings by the Government to members on their own side. It was a matter in regard to which Government could not with propriety give pickings to anyone. When he was Attorney-General he knew that he should have been glad at times to have employed the services of members on his own side or on the other in the drafting of Bills, but he considered himself debarred by the fact that it was contrary to what was the rule not only in Great Britain but the other British colonies. Large fees had been paid in Victoria for the drafting of Bills, but on all occasions he believed they had been paid to members of the legal profession who were not members of Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the member for North Brisbane had drawn a lawyer across the trail of the question raised by the member for Darling Downs, and had treated the House to a great deal of the history of the British Parliament, with which they had nothing to do. The hon. member had misstated the case. The question raised by the member for Darling Downs was not whether it was proper to pay fees to members of the House for their services in drafting Bills, but whether it was fair to give them all to members on the Government side, and not allow members on the other side to have any pickings. That was the question that was raised, and the hon. member went so far as to ask why fees were not given to the member for Rockhampton (Mr. Paterson) and the member for Enoggera (Mr. Footledge). He had no doubt that the strings were, as usual, pulled by the member for North Brisbane. The hon. member did not like to bring the question before the House himself, so he put up a "pawn" to do so, but forgot to instruct him as to what he should say. The question put by the hon. member (Mr. Kates) was that it was hard that members on the Opposition side did not have what he called pickings, as well as members on the Government side. To answer the question as put, he should think that the Government who gave members of the Opposition the drafting of their Bills would be little better than "ninny-hammers," which was a polite name for fools. The question brought forward by the leader of the Opposition was different altogether to the one put by the member for Darling Downs. It was whether legal or any other members of Parliament should receive fees for services rendered to the Crown; and, to consider it, there was not the slightest necessity to go back to the precedents of the Imperial Parliaments. If the hon. member would confine himself to a little common-sense and to the practice of this House—which was a sufficiently good guide in ordinary cases—it would be much better and simpler. The motion brought forward by the hon. member for Maryborough last year had set the matter completely at rest until such time as the House should come to a different decision. The hon. member then moved—

"That in pursuance of the 6th section of the Constitution Act, and of the 5th and 6th sections of the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, no members of this House, other than the officers of the same and those holding Ministerial office, should receive any payment for services performed on behalf of the Executive Government."

He (Mr. Palmer) moved—

"That the question be amended by the insertion, after the word 'office,' of the following words, viz.:—'And members of the legal profession holding briefs for the Crown.'"

The division on the question "that the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted"—which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) had not favoured the House with—was as followed:—

"Ayes, 14, viz.:—Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Price, Hamilton, Stevens, Beor, O'Sullivan, H. W. Palmer, Swanwick, Baynes, Walsh, and Cooper. Noes, 27, viz.:—Messrs. Griffith, Dickson, Rea, McLean, Douglas, Weld-Blundell, Stubley, Kingsford, Norton, Scott, Stevenson, Hill, Morehead, Low, Lalor, Hendren, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Beattie, Simpson, Bailey, Groom, Archer, Mackay, Macfarlane (Leichhardt), Horwitz, Meston, and Grimes."

Mr. Archer then moved the previous question. The House divided on the main question, and hon. members would observe where the lawyers were found in the division, which was as followed:—

"Ayes, 19, viz.:—Messrs. Dickson, Rea, McLean, Douglas, Meston, Bailey, Beattie, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Grimes, Hill, Low, Morehead, Lalor, Stevenson, Kings-

ford, Groom, Horwitz, Stubley, and Simpson. Noes, 25, viz. :—Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, A. H. Palmer, Perkins, McIlwraith, Price, Macrossan, O'Sullivan, H. W. Palmer, Weld-Blundell, Stevens, Norton, Scott, Walsh, Cooper, Beor, Amhurst, Hendren, Mackay, Archer, Macfarlane (Leichhardt), Swanwick, Baynes, Rutledge, and Hamilton."

There were seven lawyers in the House, and they all voted against the motion. If that resolution had been carried he (Mr. Palmer) would have conceded everything the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) had contended for; but as the hon. gentleman himself had assisted to defeat it, he submitted the hon. gentleman was completely out of court. With that resolution of the House staring them in the face the Government were quite justified in employing the legal members in the House either for drafting Bills or holding briefs for the Crown, and any Government who, under the circumstances, did not avail themselves of the best available talent on their own side of the House would place themselves in a ridiculous position. Over and over again the Government had been told that their Bills last session were badly drawn; they had tried the lawyers this time with the result that the Bills were better drawn than they had previously been by Ministers of the Crown. The observation of the hon. member for Darling Downs—"What an enormous outlay for drafting a Distillation Bill!"—might be taken in conjunction with the assertion of the hon. member for North Brisbane, that he would have considered 150 guineas—or double the amount paid for drafting the Distillation Bill—the fair price to charge for drafting such a Bill as the Navigation Bill. The Government, therefore, paying the price charged by the gentleman who drafted their Bill and not making any special bargain, had saved about half the amount which Mr. Griffith would have charged. He did not know why this question had been brought up, but no doubt there was some object in it.

Mr. MOREHEAD : They want to get a share of the plunder.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Government would see they did not get any share of the plunder, and he was quite certain when the Opposition got into power the present Government party would not get any. Offering bonuses to an Opposition was a thing to which he would never consent.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he considered there was good justification for what had been said, and that it was very desirable that attention should be drawn to these corrupt practices which unfortunately prevailed. That they had a corrupt tendency could not be doubted, and he was astonished that the Colonial Secretary himself should give countenance to them. The hon. gentleman once had a better mind, and he had shown on some great public questions recently that he was prepared to be converted. For instance, on the Polynesian question, what a humble convert he had become! He (Mr. Douglas) had therefore hoped that in connection with the privileges of Parliament the hon. gentleman would have retained the mind he formerly held, and adhered to the spirit of the resolution he succeeded in carrying, by which certain members of the Legislature—he was not quite sure whether they were members of this House—were deprived of some fees as members of a board. The hon. gentleman was so indignant at the idea of hon. members receiving fees that he not only succeeded in obtaining a pledge from the Government for the time being that the practice should not be continued, but he also succeeded in carrying—or assisting another hon. member to carry—a resolution to that effect. It would have been far better had the hon. gentleman exerted himself to prevent the practices now under consideration, which partook of the character of corruption, and were calculated to militate against the independence of the gentleman referred to. In the debate on his (Mr. Douglas') motion last session, the hon. member for Blackall, who moved the previous question, said :—

"No doubt any Government, or any honest Government, would give the preference to the legal talent outside the House"——

He hoped the hon. member was still of that opinion—

"if it could be got equally good ; and, under the circumstances, it would be hardly advisable to pass the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough just now."

The hon. member was no doubt one of those who were now undergoing the process of conversion, and he should be glad to hear a distinct announcement of the hon. member's opinion of the tendency of these practices. He looked forward to see some independent gentleman — some member not strongly influenced by party politics—come forward and assert his opinion on the subject ; and he hoped to see before long something less humiliating than these examples of the decadence of our moral standard. The hon. member for the Mitchell could give valuable assistance if he chose ; he had expressed an opinion on the subject, but to-night he had rather gone back. The hon. member seemed to be of opinion that this was not a good thing, but it was one which might be expected from the present Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD : No.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he could not exactly remember the hon. member's words. He trusted the hon. member would bring his own party to book, and contrive to impart to them something like an idea of what was reputable, honourable, and decent amongst men and amongst politicians. The hon. member had his own standard, which was a higher one than that of the present Government ; and, if he considered it necessary to retain them in office, he should not allow them to suppose that he approved of these small dirty actions.

The HON. G. THORN said he was not present when the hon. member (Mr. Kates) brought forward his motion, but he must protest against any member of the House, whether legal or not, receiving fees. He would advise the Colonial Secretary to act fairly, and allow members on this (Opposition) side to have as much to do in that way as members on the Government side. The present practice savoured too much of keeping in check, and of giving all the loaves and fishes to one side. He held that members on the Opposition side were just as much entitled to be employed as members on the Ministerial side, and members outside the pale of the legal profession as those within it. Why should members of the legal profession have all these prescriptive rights, and be treated differently to other members? In minor matters, such as drafting Bills, lay members were quite as capable as legal members, and he should endeavour to secure for them similar rights. The present course of action taken by the Government was greatly to be deprecated. He was not aware that he, when head of the Government, ever did such things. He had an abhorrence of paying any member of the legal profession, even when on his own side. He had never tried to keep straight with the members of the profession, and he hoped the present Government would follow in his wake. With the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough he thoroughly agreed. The hon. member for Blackall, who had formerly expressed opinions on this subject, must see that the Government had not acted in a straightforward manner, and he (Mr. Thorn) wondered the hon. gentleman did not point that

out to them. They had a great dread, he believed, of the hon. member, and no doubt if the hon. member sat on the Opposition side he would have even greater power of keeping the Government in the paths of rectitude. He did not admit the principle of these payments, and if the fees had not already been paid he was prepared to sit night after night to protest against the payment of them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he could see no difference whatever in principle between members of the House taking fees for conducting cases in court and taking them for drafting Bills. As he had already stated, he believed it would be infinitely better, other things being equal, to dispense with the assistance of members of that House in doing the work of the Government. Last session, however, the House had decided that unless such members were employed the Government might possibly be deprived of the most useful talent for the purpose, and until the Bar became very much bigger than it was at present might have to fall back upon inferior talent, which would be very undesirable. The objection which could be urged against both practices was that the fees might assume the form of bribes. In the case of a fee for drafting a Bill the payment might assume the form of a bribe to secure support in the passing of that particular Bill; but equally it might be said that in the other case the fee was a bribe for some other purpose. As open to the suspicion of being bribes these fees were both equally objectionable, and therefore the two cases stood on the same footing. Both were objectionable if they could be done away with without greater evils resulting to the State. With regard to confining the payment of fees to one side of the House, that was not done last session, as members on that side received larger fees than those on the Government side. Unless the payment of fees was considered and regulated, the practice would become to a certain extent degrading.

Mr. ARCHER said he had, on a former occasion, called attention to the undesirability of hon. members speaking when they had not heard the debate from the beginning. They had now another instance in the case of the hon. member for Northern Downs, who, not being aware of the high moral tone adopted by the hon. member for North Brisbane, descended to the argument that his side of the House did not get a fair share of the loaves and fishes. The hon. gentleman had dropped the original contention altogether, and complained that members on that side of the House were not engaged in the work. That was rather a mean plea to set up. He (Mr. Archer) was of opinion that it was a bad practice in every way, and he hoped the Government would employ members of the House as little as possible in anything it had to do. At the same time, it was necessary that they should employ the best men they could find.

Mr. MILES said he regretted that the question had been brought forward, because they might always depend upon the Press thoroughly ventilating such a question as that, and he had already seen it mentioned in nearly every paper he had taken up. What did they find? They actually found hon. members getting up and complaining that there was not a fair distribution of the loaves and fishes—that the Opposition side got nothing. What would the public outside think of it? They did not complain because a great wrong had been committed, but that they had not got a share of what was going. He hoped that no member of the Opposition would ever dirty his fingers with such fees while he held a position as a member of the House. The burden of the diatribe of the hon. member (Mr. Kates) was that the money had not been fairly distributed; and the hon. member (Mr. Thorn) followed to a similar effect. It would have been far better if the matter had never been brought forward in the House, for the Press would have done all that was necessary in giving publicity to the facts complained of, and pointed out how members on the Government side were subsidised with Government money. An impression would now go abroad, not that they were objecting to illegal acts, but that they were quarrelling because the Opposition did not get its share of the plunder.

Mr. GROOM said no doubt the question of the payment of members in the way mentioned by the hon. member (Mr. Kates) was a very important one, but he must take exception to the way in which it had been brought forward. He had not the remotest idea, nor, he believed, had any other hon. member, that the question would be raised this afternoon. All who were conversant with English history could easily recall instances where both Liberal and Conservative Governments, when important and delicate work was to be done, had selected the best public men they could find to do it. He was surprised to hear the leader of the Opposition speak of the question as bribes offered to members of Parliament. When great public duties had to be done to call fair remuneration a bribe was ridiculous. Many years ago, Mr. Gladstone, while a member of the Imperial Parliament, was sent as Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, and the first Governor of Queensland was his private Secretary. Mr. Russell Gurney, also a member of Parliament, was sent out as Commissioner to inquire into the Jamaica riots; and only a few weeks ago Mr. Gladstone sent a late colleague, and a member of Parliament, Mr. Goschen, as Ambassador to Turkey. Those men, he presumed, were all paid for their services, notwithstanding that they were members of Parliament. There were times in the history of all countries when it was necessary for Governments to select distinguished public men to discharge important public functions. There might be something in what had been said about paying members to draft Bills, who afterwards attended there to vote for them. The question of payment of members was one which ought to be well ventilated, but he did not believe in its being brought forward in this manner—in the shape of a complaint that the Opposition had not got its share of the loaves and fishes. There had only been one occasion on which he had received a penny for doing public work, and then he did not ask for it; and since then he had done similar work gratuitously. In accordance with that principle he voted for the hon. member (Mr. Douglas') motion last session. Whichever way the question was decided by a resolution of the House he should cheerfully adhere to it.

Mr. KATES said he wished to correct a statement made by the Colonial Secretary. That hon. gentleman said he had been prompted by the leader of the Opposition to bring the matter forward. Nothing of the kind was the case. His attention was called to the subject this morning, and he at once made up his mind to bring it before the House. He believed it was highly improper for any hon. member to receive money from the Crown, and that the moment he received it it was his duty to resign.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LABOURERS BILL—SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on this Bill,

Mr. McLEAN said he thought the hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) did the best thing under

the circumstances, last night, in withdrawing his motion that the Bill be read a second time that day six months—not that he was in favour of the Bill, or of any legislation in connection with the question, but from the position they found themselves in with regard to the Kidnapping Act. The leader of the Opposition had shown distinctly that if they were to repeal the Act regulating Polynesian labour the colony would very soon be inundated with Polynesians on whose labour no restrictions could be placed. He had long held distinct views as to the employment of Polynesians in the colony. Many complaints had been made that the colony was not getting the proper class of immigrants —men likely to settle on the land; but it was well known at home that agricultural labourers emigrating to Queensland would be immediately brought into competition with that cheap class of labour. The hon. member (Mr. Amhurst) said that no one with any common-sense would employ kanakas as ploughmen—that they were only employed in trashing cane, and in the sugar-house, and other work of that kind. He himself had witnessed kanakas being employed as ploughmen at Mackay, the very district which the hon. member represented; and the idea struck him on seeing it that it was of little use offering inducements to agricultural labourers in the mother-country to come out to Queensland if kanakas were allowed to compete with them on their own ground. It was a class of labour that ought not to be encouraged. He believed the sugar industry would be quite as successful without the employment of coloured labour as with it—in fact, there was sufficient evidence already that the most successful sugar-planters were those who had gone into the business with a small capital on their own ground, had done most of the work themselves aided by their families, and had employed no coloured labour whatever. They were told, last night, about the farmers of the Clarence River drawing big cheques for their cane, and those men certainly did not employ coloured labour. The hon. member (Mr. Amhurst) had cited an instance where the central factory system had been a failure, at some place in the West Indies. The company had invested £500,000 in a central sugar factory, and the first year it paid a dividend of 4 per cent., and since then nothing at all. The hon. member had overlooked a very important feature in connection with that case. The persons who kept the factory running were of an entirely different race from those settled in New South Wales, and the negro, as was well known, did not possess the same energy, the same spirit of perseverance, that the white labourer possessed. If the central factory system was a failure in the West Indies it could only be attributed to the fact that those who were employed in the cultivation of the cane were not the proper persons to be so employed. Hon. members on the other side stated that sugar-growing in New South Wales was a failure. It might be a failure this year, but not on account of the combination of capital and labour in connection with the central factory system and the small cultivators, but in consequence solely of the very heavy frosts which had been experienced both here and in southern Queensland during the present winter. To show that the central factory system was not a failure in New South Wales, he might mention that the same company had just erected a factory on the Tweed River as large as any of those on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers; and that showed conclusively that the capitalists were satisfied with their investment. Sugar-growing would never be a grand success in Queensland until they had a similar combination of capital and labour. During the last fourteen years he had lived in one of the great sugar-growing districts of the colony, and had seen many persons engage in that industry with the idea that it would be impossible to make it pay unless they employed kanakas. Comparatively few of those men were now left in the district; the majority of them had been ruined. He did not believe—and many planters had said the same thing to him—that kanaka labour was cheap labour. The only plea that could be urged in its favour was, that it was certain labour; that it could be depended upon at the time when there was the greatest necessity for employing a large number of hands. With reference to the remark of the hon. member (Mr. Hill) that kanakas were not so subject to malarious fevers as white men, he could only conclude that the hon. member had had very little experience of kanakas. He could assure him that if he asked any planter, no matter where, whether there was more sickness among his kanakas or his white labourers, he would at once reply amongst the kanakas. That was a fact. On all plantations there was continually a number of kanakas laid up with sickness, while the same very seldom happened to white men. There was evidence on the table of the House to show that the mortality among the kanakas was very great, and if they could trace the mortality amongst white labourers employed on canefields it would be found to be out of all proportion smaller. Wherever a white man settled he was at home, but the kanaka was subject to periodical fits of depression —of home-sickness—which engendered disease. Not long since there was an agitation in his district for a hospital to be provided specially for kanakas. The amount of sickness amongst them was so great, and planters were put to so much expense for doctors' fees, that they agitated to have a kanaka hospital established in the district. The question that had been raised by the leader of the Opposition with reference to what was to be done with the islanders after their terms of service had expired was a very important one; and while he did not in the slightest degree believe in black labour, yet he would support the second reading of the Bill because he considered they should restrict and legislate upon it as far as possible. That some control should be placed over the men after their term of service had expired must be evident to every member of the House. They were engaged for three years, and as soon as that term was up they were at liberty, and what the result of that was they had ample evidence in Brisbane, Maryborough, and Mackay, and in every large town near which sugar-planting was carried on. As soon as their time was up the islanders would not go home, but were brought into competition with white men, greatly to the detriment of the colony. It did not matter which way one went, whether along the North Quay, along Breakfast Creek Road, or to any of the suburbs of the town, large numbers of these black men would be found strolling about: in his opinion they ought to be under control. The Bill would not be perfect until it legislated for their restraint after the time of the expiration of the original terms of their service in the colony. He was not, however, one of those who believed that that class of labour should be confined exclusively to sugar-planting. That was not desirable at all; but if the labour was employed it should be employed for other things as well. He would support the entire prohibition of the admission of kanakas into the colony, if necessary; but he would not stand there and argue that they should be confined to one class of labour. No doubt, there was a great deal of force in the statement that the mortality among kanakas was greater inland than on the coast districts, for the greater proportion of them were accustomed to live along the sea-coast, and when taken into the interior they suffered from home-

sickness and from other diseases. He had watched the effect of kanaka labour as closely as anyone in the House. He had heard what was said about the cheapness of the labour and so forth, and also all the objections that had been urged against the Bill, and he repeated that he considered it a most undesirable form of labour; but, seeing that it would come and they could not prevent it, the best thing they could do was to restrict it as much as possible.

Mr. BAYNES said he disagreed with the hon. member for the Logan, that they should legislate at all for the measure. The wisest thing they could do would be to expunge all the Acts from the statute-books relating to the importation of what he considered to be a questionable class of labour. They all knew for a fact that a great deal of a superior class of labour had been drifting away into adjoining colonies, such as New Zealand and New South Wales, and he did not believe in kanakas as a substitute. As to the system of encouraging slavery, he did not see that they were doing that at all; but, on the contrary, that the more they legislated in this regard, the nearer they would come to a condition of slavery existing in the colony. The hon. member for the Logan had fallen into a great error when he maintained that they could say to any man, white or black, that he could not go here or there. If such a provision were passed, that was where the slavery would come in. If at the end of their indentures they said to the labourers, "You must go to a certain island," then they certainly put a stop to their freedom, and made them men of bondage. They knew what the feeling had been in England in most of the agricultural districts; it was that in this colony there was a class of slavery, and this feeling had prevented a superior class of immigrants from coming out, as they were not willing to put themselves in competition with common blackfellows. That such a feeling existed he knew from remarks that had reached him personally when he was in the British Islands. When he was there he did what was the duty of all good colonists to do, and exerted himself to get as many of the best class of immigrants to come over as he could. He might assert that much without wishing to appear vain. He had brought himself into communication with Mr. Daintree, who was at that time the Agent-General, and had made many inquiries about immigration. It was every colonist's duty to get such a description of immigrants, and, in fact, they could not get too many of them. There might be seasons of drought and other drawbacks, but still their prosperity depended to a very large extent upon a good system and class of immigration. The Bill before the House might be said to be a piece of class legislation if it were merely in favour of sugar-growers; and the hon. the Colonial Secretary would agree with him that it was most unfair to bring forward that kind of legislation in any shape or form. There would be a regular howl right through the country if a measure were brought forward to encourage the production of cheap wool; and if it were legal to legislate for cheap sugar, surely it would be equally legal to legislate for cheap wool. Many of their industries were fostered to a great extent: for instance, there was tin mining, an industry almost in its infancy. Many persons in the northern parts knew that these islanders were almost amphibious, and would be able to do much more in regard to sluicing operations than white men. Why, then, should they not allow capitalists who would bring their money into the country to develop the mines by means of kanaka labour? He did not say it should be so, for, as he had stated, he did not advocate that kind of labour at all; but what was fish for one should not be fowl for the other. Moreover, he objected to an interference with a man's liberty, and if the free kanakas were prohibited from doing this, or going there, it would be an interference. He had seen them working as ploughmen and bullock-drivers, and that frequently without the necessary amount of clothing ordered by the law, but simply with a linen cloth, a state of things which was not creditable for such a country as this. As for the mileage within which kanakas could be employed, it was unfair that a man should be allowed to employ them within thirty miles of the coast, while perhaps another who lived thirty-five or forty miles inland, and who might have just as good land for tropical agriculture, would be denied the privilege. It was perfectly absurd to have such a limitation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not in the Bill now.

Mr. BAYNES said he was simply speaking of the absurdity of the thing, and he must again remind hon. members that it was a piece of class legislation; on that he took his stand, and he was much surprised on reading the speech of the hon. member for North Brisbane to find that he did not take the same view of it. He would not be at all surprised if they had a message direct from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, telling them that they had done an illegal act. He did not wish to set his opinion against that of the lawyers, but he considered that the less legislation they had on the subject the better it would be for the country.

Mr. NORTON said that the question before the House was, whether the Bill should be read a second time or not. He regarded it as a matter of great importance, so long as they continued to import islanders into the colony merely as an absolute necessity. The restrictions proposed were of a very stringent nature, and the whole of them were drawn up in favour of the islanders and against the employers. The islanders had been treated, in many instances, with great neglect by their employers; he might even use stronger language, and say that in some instances they had been treated almost with brutality by those whose duty it was to consider their interests and comforts whilst in their employ. A great deal had been said about interference with the liberty of the subject, and it was not right that it should be interfered with more than was absolutely necessary; but it had been very frequently shown that the liberty of the subject was interfered with, not merely by such measures as this, but by others. They might remember that if no law of this nature were passed the liberty of the subject might be interfered with by the employers, who would have great power over the men, and would use it in many instances to the detriment of the islanders. In all countries where a class of weaker people were brought into contact with a stronger class, it was shown that where no law interfered great advantage had been taken of them, and that was sufficient to show that where no law existed the liberty of the subject was quite as likely to be interfered with as otherwise. No doubt there was a very strong feeling against the employment of black labour in competition with white, and that feeling deserved a certain amount of consideration from the House. According to the Bill under discussion, where the islanders were employed they were, so far as practicable, to be prevented from coming into competition with white labour. The late restriction preventing their employment beyond a distance of thirty miles from the coast was, in his opinion, unfair and unreasonable, and although it might have obtained its object to a great extent it failed

to a greater. It did not prevent the competition of black with white labour, for, although it prevented the kanakas being used as shepherds, they could be employed by storekeepers and other persons in town for purposes for which white men were usually employed, and for which it was much more desirable that white men should be employed than black. For himself, he could say that he had never employed a kanaka in any shape or form; he hoped he never would do so, and he was sure that he should not, except under extraordinary circumstances, have reason to change his mind. At the same time, the sugar industry was so great and so important to Queensland that they ought to acknowledge the claims of those who had invested their capital in it; and although it might appear that the white man could do the work as well as the black, yet if the black man were stopped the sugar industry would receive a great blow and many persons would withdraw from it as soon as possible;—they would leave the colony and invest their money in some other way. The question as to whether cheap sugar was a good thing for the colony had been referred to by the hon. member for the Burnett, and he (Mr. Norton) considered that it was one of very great importance. It was an article that could not be dispensed with, and it was a matter of great importance to every man whether he had to pay 3d. or 6d. per lb. for it. The effect of the production of sugar to the extent to which it had been produced in the colony had been to reduce the price to almost one-half what it was before. So far as he had been concerned in buying sugar for the station, he had paid very much lower rates since the sugar industry was established than before; and as the establishment of the industry affected one man so it affected every man. Although, personally, he was opposed to the employment of black labour, they ought to take into consideration not merely those interested in the production of sugar, but others who also derived very great advantages from the industry being carried on; and under those circumstances he should vote for the second reading. If the matter before the House were whether islanders should be introduced or not, he should go against their introduction; but as they had been introduced, and as so much depended upon them being still introduced, he had no hesitation in voting for the Bill, although it was a kind of labour to which he was entirely opposed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said the Bill had been well debated, and there had been much good feeling on both sides. There was a remark made by the hon. member for Rosewood which he would notice. Before, however, approaching the subject under discussion he desired to express his satisfaction at the candid and spirited way in which the Colonial Secretary acknowledged his share in the employment of Polynesian labourers. Had it not been for the action of the Colonial Secretary the question might possibly have lain dormant for another session or two, and he thought his hon. colleague, in calling public attention to the matter, desired to set it at rest once for all. Hon. members would agree that his (Mr. Perkins') position in the question was unfettered in any way. He held no opinions on the subject which he did not hold before he entered the House, and he must say that the statement of his hon. colleague (Mr. Palmer) had given him considerable liberty in speaking on the question. He had listened with very great attention to the different speeches; and putting them all together he thought there was very little difference of opinion on both sides. The differences had been narrowed down, first, as to the desirability of introducing kanakas; and, second, as to their restriction when they came. There seemed to be a general expression of opinion that the Polynesian islander's labour should be devoted entirely to tropical or semi-tropical agriculture, so that they need only define what that was. He hoped it would be defined by statute and not left to be defined in regulations. If they could define that term, the present or any succeeding Ministry would have very little difficulty in carrying out the Act. Those who had been most clamorous in attempting to arouse the community by talking of the respect they had for the white man and for the horny-handed son of toil were, it seemed to him, the persons who derived most benefit from the importation of kanakas. The evil of importing them in the first instance was not so great, for then they worked in gangs in sugar-growing or other pursuits. It was when the kanaka's time was up and he was let loose upon society in towns that the evil was felt: it was then and then only that he interfered with the white man. He wished to direct attention to that point. He would ask hon. members to look around them in their travels and ask themselves what class of persons employed Polynesians when they were at liberty or had served their time. Were they sugar-growers? Were they manufacturers? Were they employers of labour to any considerable extent? He thought the answer could be readily found; and the answer would be in the negative. They were employed as nursemaids, dry-nurses—and perhaps as wet-nurses—as kitchen-maids, laundresses, cooks, and coachmen; they wore gloves and black hats. He would not individualise the persons who indulged in the luxury of employing Polynesians in that way at the expense of the sugar-planter or those who had the enterprise to import them, because they were well known to hon. members. He desired, however, that the working-men and the public should not be deluded or gulled any longer by listening to those persons who attempted to make them believe they had such respect for them and took such deep interest in their welfare. Looking round the country, especially in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, it must strike anyone with astonishment—especially on a Sunday morning—to see such a number of kanakas congregated in different parts of the streets and the suburbs. He had made it his business to inquire where they found rest and shelter and food, and had found out that several hon. members of the House indulged in that cheap sort of labour; and that these Polynesians were employed chiefly by them and by their friends outside—evangelical and otherwise, who were always raising a howl in the cause of the white man and his welfare, and pretending to take a deep interest in him. Those were the persons who induced the kanaka to stay in the colony after serving his time on the plantation. He never had anything to do with them, and had never employed one of them, and did not intend to do so. But there was another remarkable feature in connection with the debate, which was this: hon. members were very glib in giving their opinions and making comparisons as to what a white man was capable of doing and what a black man was capable of doing. Without wishing to be at all offensive to any hon. member, he would like to know what experience some of them had? Had they ever done much labour? Did they possess any experience? He thought before men gave an opinion they should have some experience on the matter, and he would like those hon. members who were so very loose in their remarks and so very communicative in the House to tell them where they got their experience. He believed some of them had no experience; and it was a misfortune for members of the Legislature to stand up and invite the House and the country to believe that British labour was suitable,

or more suitable, for trashing cane than black labour. He heard it for the first time in the present debate, and he heard it with shame. But he knew to the contrary, and he knew that those who made the assertion did not believe it themselves. He could not wish a greater calamity to overtake his greatest enemy, whoever he might be, than to be sent to a sugar plantation to trash cane. If he stood the work for one or even two years, the third year would find him in another place where he would be heard no more of. Such labour was designed for the black man who was born in a tropical climate and was accustomed to it. He hoped whenever he saw white men employed on a sugar farm that they would be employed in a higher and nobler occupation than that of trashing. It was not to-day or yesterday, or in anticipation of the present measure, that he had given his mind to the subject; and from his information he could state that, so far from the kanaka elbowing out the white man, he was the means of giving him employment. He had satisfied himself as a certainty that to every three or four black men employed on a plantation there must of necessity be one white man employed; and when they bore in mind that the land now under cultivation for growing sugar, if stocked with sheep or cattle, would be giving employment to only a few stockmen or shepherds, they would see here was no loss, but a great gain, in the employment of kanakas. There was one particular plantation in the neighbourhood of Maryborough—Yengarie—where 120 men were employed when the work was in full swing. He had no doubt about the measure being a good one, though perhaps it would be altered in committee for the better. But apart altogether from being a member of the Government, he would take care, if he could get any assistance from either side of the House, that restrictions should be placed upon the movements of those kanakas whose terms had expired, and provide either for their exportation to their islands again, or else define the industries in which they might be employed. He should use his endeavours to prevent their being any longer employed as washerwomen, housemaids, laundresses, and nursemaids, about the town, and he would prevent their outraging society as at present—though he did not believe they were worse than the native blacks. But since hon. gentlemen on the opposite side had raised such a howl, and had tried to buy so much cheap popularity, he would make one to take care that the duties, the destiny, and the labours of those kanakas were clearly set down in the Bill. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) complained of the way the kanakas had been treated. He might state that where houses had been built for them they had refused to occupy them, preferring to live in huts of their own construction. On many plantations houses had been built, even in the shape in which they built their houses on the islands, though of course much larger, and containing bunks and other comforts; but where every effort had been made to cater for their comfort—where fireplaces and other conveniences to which they had been unaccustomed had been provided, the kanakas betook themselves to their own huts made of grass or sedge, into which they crawled and occupied without the comfort of a fire. That was not a peculiar case, but was common to all the kanakas who came into the colony. The only debateable matter left to consider was whether sugar-growing would pay without kanaka labour, and in favour of the assertion that it would there were the hon. member for Rosewood and the hon. member for Enoggera, who stated that sugar-growing was a pronounced success on the Clarence River. The hon. member for Rosewood gave the *modus operandi*, and said that sugar was there grown in small patches of 20, 30, or 40 acres. He did not for one moment doubt the statements of those hon. gentlemen, but the success of sugar-growing on the Clarence was an accident. He did not wish to show any want of patriotism, but would say that sugar-growing south of Brisbane was a very precarious occupation, as most of those who had indulged in it had found to their cost. If, as he said before, the cultivation of sugar on the Clarence had been a success it was an accident. Most of the farms in that district had been cultivated for maize before sugar-growing was begun. However it might be on the Clarence, he refused to believe that sugar could be successfully grown along the coast of Queensland with white labour only. The hon. member for Rosewood was pleased to say that he had been interviewed by a number of well-to-do farmers on the Clarence, numbering some sixty or seventy, who said they were desirous of leaving the place, or sending out their sons to form a new hive, and their only difficulty was as to whether they could get land on liberal terms in Queensland. He should have thought the hon. gentleman, who was no doubt well acquainted with the land laws of Queensland, could have told the farmers the terms under which they could have land. The statement of the hon. member was this: if the Queensland Government gave liberal terms about land the Clarence River could send out a hive of settlers. He (Mr. Perkins) need not tell hon. members that land was open to selection at 10s. per acre with ten years to pay: and if the Clarence River people wanted more liberal terms, or could get more liberal terms, he would recommend them to take them. He thought the hon. member might have given them the necessary information; but the hon. member did not state whether they wanted to be paid for coming, or whether they wanted bonuses or something else. However, if the land was not worth 10s. an acre, selectors had better let it alone, especially if they wanted it for sugar-growing. He hoped the hon. member would be patriotic enough to communicate the terms on which those farmers could select land in Queensland. But it was beside the question altogether whether sugar could be grown more successfully on the Clarence than in northern Queensland. They could only hope that those growers on the Clarence would continue to be successful. They all knew there were certain drawbacks in connection with the industry. Nature was a sure tax-gatherer, and was sure to interfere at some period or other, and the Clarence and Tweed River settlers would no doubt discover that, though it was not for him (Mr. Perkins) to define the ravages that might overtake their crops—they were quite enough without publishing them and trying to frighten everyone with them. If he (Mr. Perkins) were about to invest capital in sugar-growing he would seek some field other than the Clarence, the Richmond, or the Tweed; he would go where cane flourished and was free from all those attacks of one class and another which it was subject to: he would go where sugar-growing was not such a precarious occupation as it was south of Maryborough. He did not think he need say anything as to what place was suitable or not, as each member was free to follow his own inclination and choose what locality he liked. They must all look for disappointment at first, though possibly they would gain success in the end. He would repeat that it was a lamentable thing to have to listen in that House to hon. members who, one would think, were speaking seriously, and who were supposed to be speaking what they believed to be the truth—to have to listen to those hon. members drawing comparisons between the white man and the kanaka. It was

one of the misfortunes, or fortunes, of the colony that kanakas had been introduced. He himself, looking at the question all round, did not think it was a misfortune, as he found that in other parts of the world sugar had to be produced by cheap labour, and that the operations in connection with that production were of such a character that that class of labour must be procured. If they wanted to increase their national wealth they must not do anything to trample upon their industries. He knew himself that the sugar industry in Queensland was as great as any, but the moment there was a good season the planters were pounced upon and were told that black labour must be abolished. It was known, however, that wherever there were tropical products there must be black labour employed, and he for one would never be a party to trample out any industry which he believed to be for the benefit of the colony. When the Bill was in committee he should do his best to assist in making it as perfect as possible, and in taking care that everything was made so plain that whoever might be Colonial Secretary should not stand the risk of being placed in the position of being accused of breaking the law in his administration of the Act. He would also do all in his power to assist in so arranging matters that the question would be once and for all set at rest.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was glad to think that on this very important subject they had now arrived at something like an approach to unanimity. It was not so long ago when a discussion on the same question led to a great deal of ill-feeling and angry talking, and therefore he was happy to see that there was now to a great extent unanimity of feeling on both sides of the House, and that they would be able to arrive at a decision. He liked the Bill as far as it went. It was the result of a great many years' experience of the working of the system, and it certainly did a great deal to define and keep within what he hoped would be proper limits the system of black labour. He was pleased to see that under the Bill they would arrive at some definite idea of the limit to be imposed on the employment of this labour, as it was stated that it was to be confined to semi-tropical cultivation. It was, he hoped, the first step to put the system in a better position than it had hitherto occupied. The employment of black labour was one of those things which must be limited and closely restricted. It was perfectly ridiculous to think of applying to the semi-barbarians who came from the South Sea Islands the same rules as to the civilized working classes of the nineteenth century. Those men must be taken care of the same as children, and therefore it was necessary to regulate and define everything in connection with them. If they were tolerated at all they must be placed under the paternal care and protection of the Government. The evils that were allied to the system were bad enough; but if something was not done they would be worse than under the system even as it now existed. He wished to call attention to the fact that the Polynesian labour in this colony was connected with terrible mortality. The proportion of mortality amongst them was very great indeed, and one of the objects of the Bill should be to bring that mortality down to something like reasonable limits. If the existing mortality which at present prevailed among Polynesians could not be reduced, then the system ought to be abolished altogether; for it was inhuman and incompatible with the conditions under which men lived in civilised countries. He therefore looked upon the Bill as a step in the right direction in limiting, as he hoped it would, the very great evils that had existed. He wished to draw the attention of hon. members to the working of the Act during the last few years in connection with this form of labour, and to the great mortality that had taken place. He would venture to say that that mortality was worse than under the worst form of slavery. He ventured to say that in no country where persons were employed in the cultivation of sugar did mortality prevail to so great an extent as amongst the kanakas in this colony. Certainly it was not so great in Cuba, and certainly not in Brazil. He contended that the slaves in Brazil and Cuba were far better cared for so far as their lives were concerned, and that there was less mortality among the slaves in those places than there was among the kanaka population in Queensland. He found, on referring to the Registrar-General's Report, that in the year 1875 the percentage of deaths of Polynesians was 85·11 per thousand; in 1876 the percentage was 63·6; in 1877 it was somewhat less, being 51·11, or 302 deaths out of 5,874; in 1878 it rose again to 85·18; and in 1879, according to the last report, it stood at 55·78. Let hon. members compare that with the normal mortality per thousand of the whole population. According to the Registrar-General, during the present year it was 14·64 per thousand, as against a percentage of 85 per thousand of Polynesians, such as it was in the two years 1875 and 1878.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That mortality arose from measles.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that the mortality he quoted was normal, and not abnormal. In one of the two years he spoke of, no doubt, there were epidemics—outbreaks of dysentery and measles, but there was no such outbreak in 1878, and yet the rate of mortality in that year rose higher than in 1875. No doubt the normal mortality of the whole population had been higher than it was this year; indeed, he believed that one year it rose up to 20 per thousand, and in England he understood it was about that; but the Registrar-General pointed out that the normal mortality amongst people of the ages of the islanders—for they were nearly all young men—would, in England, be about 9 per thousand; yet, as he (Mr. Douglas) had shown, it had amounted to as much as 85 per thousand. He observed that on one plantation alone in the Maryborough district, where about 320 boys were employed for three years, the number of deaths during that period amounted to 112. On another plantation in the same district, where 89 boys were employed, there were 15 deaths in one year. On the same plantation, in another year, when 121 boys were employed, there were 21 deaths. Let hon. members think what that was—it meant a rate of 160 per thousand! Why, that was greater than the number of lives that were sacrificed between nations when they went to war together! He would undertake to say that the actual number of men killed during the Franco-German war did not amount to that percentage of the number of men brought into the field. He could only hope that the legislation to which they were going to give effect would stop such a state of things as that. If it did not they could not allow such a system to be continued, as it was inconsistent with humanity and civilisation, and at whatever cost it must be done away with. His hope was that the Bill would do something to ameliorate the condition of that people, and they should at any rate do their best and see what they could do to lessen the number of deaths. No doubt the origin of that great mortality was traceable to a great extent to the weak lives that were brought to the colony—to the half-starved young persons who had not attained their manhood and who were brought here. That

state of things had been going on for some time, and the law had not been sufficiently powerful to prevent it. He was happy to say that the Bill before hon. members proposed to put a check on that, as there were some important provisions that would prevent youths under a certain age being brought, and would also secure those that were brought being in sound health. He had heard that one proposition was that the health officer at the port of arrival should certify that the natives were in sound health before they were allowed to land. That would be a good precaution, as it was within his knowledge that many natives had arrived and on arrival had been put to work on plantations when in bad health, and had thus contributed to swell up the large mortality he had quoted. He thought that anyone who had read the report of Dr. Thompson and Dr. Wray on the great mortality in the district of Maryborough must at once admit that remedies must be applied to check such a state of things; and that there were very great evils which, if they could not be remedied, were inconsistent with humanity. Those gentlemen had pointed that out, and the conclusion he (Mr. Douglas) had arrived at was this, that on some plantations visited by the doctors the islanders were very well looked after, and that there the mortality was at a minimum, whilst there were other plantations on which a large number were kept where the boys were not so well attended to and where the mortality rose higher. He believed from what he had heard and read that on large plantations the islanders were not so likely to be well cared for as where the plantations were smaller. The Bill was good in another respect, inasmuch as it proposed to provide hospital accommodation for these people, and to tax the employers for that purpose. He had endeavoured in his administration of the Act to induce the planters in the Maryborough district to undertake that work themselves, and had promised, on the part of the Government, that if they would undertake to establish hospitals in the midst of the plantation, the Government would assist them with money. However, no action was taken by the planters, and the result was that an epidemic broke out by which a large number of islanders were taken off. Islanders themselves had a great dread of hospitals—they had a superstitious dread of going to any place where they knew that a man had died; but one thing was certain—namely, that nothing but the closest care and attention would arrest disease when it once seized those people. He hoped the Bill would have the effect of diminishing some of the evils he had referred to, but he did not think it went far enough with regard to the employment of islanders whose term of service had expired, and it would be necessary to make some provision for them. In connection with the excessive mortality, it would be no bad thing if licenses were refused to those employers of islanders, in cases where the mortality had risen above what might be fairly considered an average proportion. He observed that the Police Magistrate at Maryborough had really recommended something of this kind. With regard to some inquiries that he was directed to make, he said that inquiries were useless, but an intimation from the Government that until the death-rate had been reduced to a reasonable limit, and kept so, no further islanders would be allowed to be indented to a firm, would check the evil. That was a very good suggestion—it was one that to some extent he had acted upon himself when Colonial Secretary. Finding that some employers of South Sea Islanders had disregarded the regulations, he refused in one or two instances to issue fresh licenses; and that would check any abuse of power by employers. He hoped that the tendency of the Bill then under consideration would be to diminish that mortality. It would be necessary to impose a good many restrictions and limitations which ought to have that effect. But probably the best check would be a knowledge of the fact that unless employers looked after the islanders those who were known to neglect their interests would not be allowed to introduce any more. With regard to the employment of those whose time was expired, he observed that some new clauses had been circulated this morning, suggestions, as he understood, which the Speaker proposed to move in committee. He could only say that he agreed generally with the import of these proposed clauses, but probably it would be just as well to leave out of the question those islanders who were at present here and who were indented. Certainly, with regard to any islanders introduced under the Bill, it would be very desirable to take security that they were re-indented to their previous employers, as was done in the case of coolies employed in the West Indies and Mauritius. In both of those cases provision was made under the existing laws for the re-indenture of East Indian coolies after their first time of indenture had expired. Coolies were generally indented for, he believed, five years, and he saw no reason why islanders should not be indented for the same time time. They were indented in Fiji for five years; also in the Mauritius and West Indies. He saw no objection, therefore, to an alteration in this respect. At the expiry of that time it was quite clear that some provision ought to be made, either for a re-indenture of the islanders on certain specific terms to their employers, or to other employers approved by the Colonial Secretary. It would be no hardship to require islanders to be re-indented, or else to come under the provision of some such clauses as those proposed by the Speaker. There were two or three matters in the Bill that required attention, and one was a matter referred to by Drs. Thompson and Wray, which ought to be attended to in the Bill. They pointed out that in some cases the hours of labour were unusually long. Drs. Thompson and Wray said in their report—

"The hours of labour vary somewhat on different plantations, but averages about ten hours daily—namely, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour, 12 to 1, for dinner. Sometimes a couple of hours during summer was given for dinner, but work had to be done either earlier or later to make up for it. On one plantation during summer the hours were from 6 a.m. to 6·45 p.m., with only three-quarters of an hour for dinner."

Drs. Thompson and Wray recommended that the hours should be limited to eight in summer-time and nine in winter-time. That might very well be embodied in the Bill itself, and he might observe that the Bill provided for the payment of wages only at the end of each year. It was a recommendation of a select committee that was appointed to inquire into the matter, that the wages should be paid half-yearly in the presence of an inspector or police magistrate. It would be well to embody that provision. It was not at all desirable that the wages should be retained to the end. He would much rather see them paid periodically—even quarterly; but he would point out that it was a direct recommendation of the committee that the payments should be made half-yearly. They might even improve upon that and make them quarterly. Then with regard to the proportion of women, there was no provision made for that in the Act, and yet it was a specific recommendation on the part of the select committee who sat in 1876 that a larger proportion of women should be introduced, and that had been backed up by a recommendation from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies—that a larger proportion of women should be intro-

duced. In that respect it would be wise for them to assimilate to the provisions of the Acts under which coolies were introduced from India to the British possessions in the West Indies. There were other matters in Drs. Thompson and Wray's report which, he thought, would well bear consideration, with a view to embodying them in the actual clauses of the Bill. They suggested that there should be a properly qualified medical man appointed to attend to the Polynesians and devote his whole time to them. Wherever it was possible, and when inspectors were appointed, they should, no doubt, be medical men. He wished to point out to hon. members that it was quite clear that if the present system was to continue to exist it must be thoroughly superintended. It must be thoroughly protected, and all the *minutiæ* of the details necessary to preserve the rights and lives of these people must be attended to. They could not drift on in the way they had in the past. The system must be amended and put on a good footing, or else it must come to an end —there could be no two ways about it. At present it was a much cheaper system, and a very much less protected system, than the coolie system as applied to the Mauritius and the West Indies; and if they were not prepared to work on something like parallel lines they should have to do away with it. If it was necessary that planters should have coloured labour, recourse must be had to some other labour—to the introduction of coolies, after the manner of the West Indies, where the system was strictly regulated and administered; but of course that labour would be much more expensive. He would therefore point out that unless the planters and the Government combined in the administration of the Bill when it came into force, and the system was brought within the limits of humanity, something would have to be substituted. The interest of the planters was evidently to make the system much better, and if the Government wished it to exist at all, then they would have to apply more stringent and careful inspection than had been in the past. If there was any defect in the measure it was in not being minute enough in the details. This possibly might be remedied by the rules and regulations which might be passed under the Bill. He was glad to see that the Government had taken power to frame rules and regulations, for without it the Bill would be incomplete, as it was absolutely necessary that the Government for the time being should possess ample power to regulate the *minutiæ* of the details whenever it might be necessary. The system could not be left to itself, but must be carefully watched, and must be administered by a man who was to be thoroughly trusted. It would be an advantage to have a medical man as inspector, wherever it was possible, and he could not conceive of a better man to place at the head of the establishment of inspectors than Dr. Thompson. If they gave a man a salary of £1,000 a-year, holding him strictly responsible for the proper discharge of the duties of superintending and controlling the system, it would not be too much. They must have a high-class man—one who could be trusted to direct those under him, in order to secure the immunity from the dreadful mortality, and the dreadful, disgraceful transactions which had taken place. They would want a competent man who would fear no one in the discharge of his duties, and who could be trusted to tell the Government for the time being the truth. He must be appointed at the head of the inspectional establishment, and must have a will of his own, and not shrink from telling the truth when necessary; and by appointing such a man they would be establishing real confidence on the part of the public in the administration of the law. He was contending for the truth being ascertained Parliament wanted the truth, and he believed would have it, and they could not rest content with merely imagining that they had it. He could point to dozens of reports in which the truth was not told. He did not say the truth had been kept back intentionally, but there were plenty of men who looked at the question through the spectacles of the employers of Polynesians, and did not care to ascertain the truth. Unless they got men who would do the work of inspection properly—who would not shrink from getting at the truth and reporting it—the public conscience would not be satisfied. He was pleading, at anyrate, for an attempt to make this possible, and he was doing so in the interests of those who now employed coloured labour. He did not wish to disturb those interests, believing that they had attained a magnitude and importance which deserved the consideration of the House. Whether it was desirable that the sugar industry should be built up in this way was another thing; but the interests existed, and he should be sorry to disturb them it if could be avoided. In order, however, that they should exist in safety, and to preserve the reputation of the country at large, they must know what was done, know what to do, know that the evils were diminished, and that the whole system was placed upon a foundation of something like their common humanity. He should heartily support the Bill in the belief that it was a step in that direction. It did not go far enough, and would not be efficient unless it was administered by men who would honestly attempt to bring into effect the principles he had described. No Bill, however precise its provisions might be, would be complete unless it was carefully and honestly administered, and he hoped that this measure would find a careful and honest administrator under whoever filled the position of Colonial Secretary.

Mr. STEVENSON said he should address the House from a very different standpoint to that adopted by the last speaker, for he did not pretend to be a supporter of the Bill. The arguments that had been brought forward ostensibly in support of the measure had really led in a different direction. The question naturally suggested itself, why was the Bill now introduced? Was it in the interests of the Polynesian labourer, or of the working men of the country and the colony generally, or was it brought forward in the interests of a few agitators, publicans, and storekeepers in certain townships who had raised an excitement on the question? He must come to the conclusion that the Government had been forced into bringing in the Bill for some such reason as he had mentioned, and, as far as he could see, all that could be said in favour of it was that the Colonial Secretary, who introduced it, did not believe in it. He believed in the details to which the member for Maryborough had alluded, so far as guarding and protecting the islanders was concerned, but he entirely disagreed with the main principle of the Bill. He noticed that the Colonial Secretary had admitted that he did not believe in the seventh clause, which in his (Mr. Stevenson's) opinion embodied the main principle of the measure—in fact, it was the Bill itself. He had no doubt that the Colonial Secretary had to defer to a certain extent to the opinion of his colleagues, and had been forced to bring forward the measure, and therefore he should much rather have seen a member of the Ministry who was a believer in the Bill introduce it. He had been rather amused at the arguments which had been adduced in favour of the measure, the main principle of which was that employers in the outside districts should be debarred from hiring Polynesians, and that sugar-planters should be privileged to employ

them. The whole argument of the hon. member for Maryborough was to the effect that sugar-planters ought not to be allowed to employ islanders because they did not treat them properly. The hon. member had shown that the mortality was very high; and it was certainly quite beyond what he (Mr. Stevenson) thought it was. On the question of the employment of kanakas he could speak from experience, for he believed in kanakas and was a large employer. He would state facts. For the last five or six years he had employed something like 30 or 40 kanakas, and at the present time he had nearly 30 kanakas in his service, and during the last three years only one death had occurred amongst his "boys"—which was a very different report to what the member for Maryborough had given of the district that he represented. The islanders in the outside districts were in a far more healthy state than those in the coast districts, and far more care was taken of them; but there were not many in the outside districts. He did not believe there were more than 100 employed in his district, and one-third of this number were in his service. He might as well now contradict a statement that the member for Moreton had made some weeks back. He had noticed in reading *Hansard* that the hon. member had put it that the Colonial Secretary had allowed him to employ a large number of kanakas because he was a great supporter of the hon. gentleman. He had never asked the hon. gentleman about the matter, and it was by the merest fluke that he ascertained that he could be granted a license to employ kanakas. He was glad to take advantage of the chance to get the number that he had in his service, but there was no collusion between the Colonial Secretary and himself in the matter, and it was not from the hon. gentleman that he learnt that he could employ this labour. In considering the question, the idea suggested itself why did they encourage immigration—what did they import people for? Was it not to get the best labour? Of course every man tried to get the cheapest labour that he could, but he had never regarded kanaka as cheap labour or had employed it on that account. He did not believe that it was cheap, but he believed it was good, which was more than the most of the white labour was. He was sorry to say it, knowing that it would be regarded with disfavour. The member for Gregory had said that the white man who could not compete with a South Sea Islander was a very mean man. He had a very great respect for the good working man, and when he got one he liked to keep him, but he had not the same opinion of the British workman that some people had. There were plenty of islanders who could compete with the class of white men coming to the colony at the present time; and the system of immigration in force was rotten to the core—immigrants being brought out from London, Dublin, and other places, at a cost of something like £20 a-head, who were entirely unfitted for the class of work they got in the colony. He did not wish to say anything harsh about the Britishers, but he was sure that a great many who came out here at the country's expense were not fitted for the work which they were supposed to be imported to do. They went about from station to station asking for work, but not wishing to get it, and only looking to be fed as they went from place to place killing time. A great many of them were no doubt the scum of the earth, brought out to fill up ships, and they were not only brought out at the expense of the country, but a further expenditure was needed as regarded the ends of justice to keep those people in their places. There was no denying the fact that they were gathered from the lowest class at home, and that a great many, when they could not get work, went loafing about and became simply a lot of thieves and loafers, the country having to bear the cost of looking after them. He denied entirely that kanaka labour was exceptionally cheap labour. So far as their yearly wages went the labour appeared at first sight cheap, but from six to twelve months was required to break the islander properly in to his work. To show that cheapness was not regarded by employers, he might state that he had himself engaged a number of islanders for six months, after their term of three years had expired, at £1 a week, when he could have engaged white men to do the same work for £40 to £45 a year. The merchant in Brisbane who had paid the kanakas for those services in addition to the £18 could testify to that fact. He quite agreed with the Colonial Secretary that the House had no right to dictate to any man where he should go, or to any employer what men he should employ. Personally, he (Mr. Stevenson) believed he had a perfect right to employ whom he chose, and he believed that if this Bill passed he should be able to engage Polynesians as he had done hitherto; and he should take care to do so if it suited him. Whilst entirely disagreeing with the principles of the Bill, he recognised that it would be perfectly futile to attempt to oppose it. It had apparently been demanded by a few publicans and storekeepers, and the Government had weakly and childishly yielded to the demand; but he did not believe it had been called for by the voice of the country. As the representatives of the people had, however, made up their minds that the Bill was wanted, it would be useless to oppose it. It was nothing but a piece of class legislation, and the arguments of hon. members who had spoken went to show that the very part of the present Act which had been repealed was the part which should have been kept in force, the whole force of the objection having been centred in the excessive mortality in the coast districts. The hon. member for Maryborough had tried to make out that it was in the outside districts that the islanders got fever, but the returns which he (Mr. Stevenson) had obtained, at a time when some agitation was taking place on the subject, showed that the mortality in the outside districts was very small as compared with that in the inside districts. Not that he would wish to deprive the sugar-planters of this kind of labour—he believed in allowing each man to employ what labour he liked, nor did he believe that the kanaka himself suffered by the employment—in the outside districts he became more healthy and was in most cases glad to come back; and he had no doubt the same was the case in some degree in the inside districts. As the hon. member for Mackay had shown, the employment of kanakas increased the demand for white labour—they did not take the place of the white man. Shepherding in the outside districts, as the hon. member for the Gregory had pointed out, was not an occupation for a white man, but it was the one occupation for which more than any other the South Sea Islander was fitted—he was perfectly happy and contented, and the life seemed to suit him far better than it did the white man. White labour could not now be obtained for that kind of work, and he (Mr. Stevenson) would not think of attempting to carry on the work of an unfenced station if he had to depend upon white labour. He had experienced difficulty in getting the last supply of kanakas, and he did not expect to get any more; so that the alternative to be faced by himself and other employers similarly circumstanced was to fence their runs and thereby do away with white labour altogether.

Mr. MILES: Hear, hear.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member who called "Hear, hear" had been dubbed by the *Week* the pioneer squatter; but he did not know

for what reason, unless it was for pioneering on other people's runs. He believed the people who were calling for this legislation were making a great mistake, because they were lessening the demand for white labour. He had a great respect for good working men, and was sorry to see they were so few and far between; and for that reason he regretted that employers should be compelled by class legislation to dispense with the really good British working men who were here now. He had no sympathy with the Bill, and should vote against it, the only satisfactory circumstance in connection with it being that the Colonial Secretary himself did not believe in its main principles.

Mr. BAILEY said there was no doubt that the Polynesian question was a much-vexed one, and that it would be a more vexed one in the future. The introduction of alien labour into any colony was a future danger to the prosperity of that colony, however beneficial it might be at first. However useful as an expedient, however necessary to those who used it, there was not the slightest doubt in the minds of a great many people that its introduction on a large scale would be productive of very great danger to the settled industries of the colony. Hon. members were in this position, that whilst on principle they might object to the introduction of an alien race into the colony, yet as a matter of expediency they were not prepared to sacrifice the vested interests which already existed in the great sugar industry. If they found gentlemen engaged in that industry declaring that without that labour they could not carry on their plantations, and the industry would die out, it was their duty, at any rate, not to press their principles to the very uttermost, but to make the labour as beneficial as possible while restricting it within proper limits. Much had been said during the debate by theorists which to practical men must seem rather absurd. One hon. member spoke about farmers of forty or fifty acres of land walking off with cheques for £700 or £800, and who did not employ kanakas. That hon. gentleman was not aware of the fact that one white man was only able to cultivate six acres of cane, that it would take two years before he would get his first crop, and that he might only get two crops in three years. When those things were remembered the large profits shown on paper would very rapidly disappear, and the hon. gentleman would find his millionaire farmer luxuriating on about £50 a-year. There were no such large and extravagant profits to be made by farming as hon. members, who were also members of the Bar, seemed to think. It was not true, also, that kanakas were, as a rule, ill-treated. There was a report on the table to the effect that they were in a certain place; but anyone with a practical knowledge of the system of employing kanakas, and who knew how they were treated, would deem it absurd to expect that two gentlemen who paid a hurried visit to a plantation, totally ignorant of the manners, customs, and language of kanakas, and almost without seeing a white man, should come away and say that certain grievances existed which had caused a certain mortality. When that report came to be examined on better evidence, it would be found to be based on very slight foundations indeed—to be, in fact, totally unreliable. Earnest as those gentlemen might have been, and wishful to perform their duty, it could not be denied that they came to their conclusion upon very poor evidence indeed. There were abuses in connection with all kinds of labour—with white as well as with coloured labour—in the Government service as well as on sugar plantations; but he had yet to learn that those abuses had been of the nature set forth in the report on the table. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, because it imposed certain restrictions on coloured labour which were much wanted. There was, however, one amendment that might be proposed which would settle the great Polynesian question at once and for ever, and that was by the insertion of a clause limiting their employment to a certain number of years. The time must soon come when the question must be finally settled to the satisfaction of the country—whether an alien neighbour should be imported into the colony, and whether the State should assist in his introduction.

Mr. SIMPSON said he did not intend to say very much on the subject, but he should support the Bill because he thought it was better than the one at present on the statute-books. As, no doubt the Bill, with some amendments, would become the law of the land, it was of little use expressing a wish that no legislation should take place on the subject. He still adhered to his opinion that the introduction of the islanders was very little, if at all, removed from simple slavery. Holding that view, he felt that to do anything to protect them was advisable, but, personally, he would much sooner see them prevented from coming to the colony at all. That, however, was an impossibility, for the majority of hon. members seemed to think that the islanders should not be excluded from the sugar plantations. He was sorry to hear some of the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Stevenson), who candidly gave his reasons for objecting to the Bill. The hon. member pointed out one very good reason—namely, that his islanders, at the end of their three years' service—at a wage of £6 each per annum—were so good that he immediately paid them £1 a week for their services. It was very easy to see why the hon. member argued in favour of the introduction of Polynesians. If they were worth £1 a week to him at the end of three years, how much did the hon. member make out of them during that period when he was only paying them £6 a-year? He believed that coloured labour—when they considered how the men had to be properly housed, fed, and clad—was not cheap labour; and that unless people were guilty of something very nearly approaching to slave-driving they could not get anything like the same amount of work out of them as they could out of good European workmen. No doubt they could drive a flock of sheep as well as a European, but he was referring now to their employment generally. They had never been accustomed to work, and it was hardly to be expected that they could compete fairly with Europeans at any kind of manual labour. He had had no experience with regard to sugar-growing, and Polynesians might or might not be indispensable for the successful pursuit of that industry; but he should be sorry to believe that that industry could only be sustained by a species of slavery—for he could call it nothing else. In the Bill there was not sufficient provision for the feeding of those men. They ought to have the same scale of dietary as a white man, and then they would do very well. In this climate they required a full supply of animal food, and they ought to have as much of it as was supplied to a European. The mortality among the islanders had been very great, and that was one of the chief blots on the system. He did not agree with what the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) said with regard to the payment of wages. It was one of the good points of the measure that wages, whatever they might amount to, should only be paid at the end of the term of service. They would then receive some benefit from the money, but if the money was paid quarterly or half-yearly it was simply wasted. They did not know how to take care of money, and at the end of their term of service they would have simply squandered their three years' wages. While supporting the Bill, he should be glad to see an amendment introduced fixing the date

at which the Bill would lapse and the introduction of the islanders cease.

Mr. GROOM said it was quite evident from the tone of the debate that both sides were anxious that the discussion should close. He was not desirous of prolonging it to any lengthened period, but he must say that he really admired the openness and candour of the hon. member (Mr. Stevenson). It was pleasant to see an hon. gentleman having the courage of his opinions coming into an assembly of this kind and making the manly and straightforward statement he had done. He gave the hon. member every credit for the way in which he had spoken, although he entirely dissented from the opinions enunciated. As a defence of the employment of kanaka labour the honourable member was entitled to every credit. There was one remark, however, to which he must take exception, in behalf of a class of immigrants introduced into the colony during the last fifteen or eighteen months—and generally admitted to be a very superior class indeed. They were not free immigrants, but by the assistance of friends in the colony they had come out under the assisted immigration clause; and then they went to different parts of the colony and obtained employment.

Mr. STEVENSON said he spoke of immigrants who cost the country £20 a-head, and not of assisted immigrants.

Mr. GROOM said he did not think the hon. member qualified his remarks.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did. He expressly mentioned the cost.

Mr. GROOM said that in that case he would not refer to the matter further than to say that the class of immigrants who had come to the colony within the last eighteen months had really been a credit to the colony, and he wished they had many more of them here. As far as the Bill was concerned, he did not intend to recapitulate the arguments that had been advanced for and against it. He believed it to be an improvement on the existing Bill, and as such he should give the Colonial Secretary his cordial support in carrying it into law. He was unable to be present last night, but he had read carefully the speech delivered by the hon. gentleman in introducing it, and was much pleased to see that he was not prepared to insist upon his own individual opinion, as against that of his colleagues and the public at large, on this question. He believed the Bill to be a considerable improvement on past legislation, and as such he should endeavour to assist the hon. gentleman in passing it with the amendments which had been indicated. One remark had been made by the member for Wide Bay to which he took decided objection. He spoke in disparaging terms, for what purpose he (Mr. Groom) knew not, of the report made by Drs. Thompson and Wray with regard to the mortality on the Maryborough plantations. He had had some experience of Dr. Thompson in connection with an important inquiry held in Toowoomba, and he would say that a more indefatigable gentleman in the performance of his public duties he had never met with, nor one who showed more persistency in the pursuit of his inquiries. He believed that that gentleman was superintendent of the Brisbane Hospital, and he (Mr. Groom) was quite sure that he would no more attach his name to a document he did not believe in than he would think of committing suicide. He (Mr. Groom) believed what Dr. Thompson put his name to, and the members of the House and the public might rest assured that what he said was perfectly correct. He made these remarks from a personal acquaintance with Dr. Thompson, as he knew him to be one who was thoroughly versed in the science to which he was a devoted adherent. Dr. Thompson did everything in his power to satisfy the Government which employed him, and to give the country the fullest information he could obtain. He felt it was due to Dr. Thompson that he should make this statement, and he therefore regretted exceedingly to hear the hon. member for Wide Bay endeavour to throw a doubt upon the accuracy of the report furnished to the House; as it was quite certain that if Dr. Thompson had not known that the report was true he would never have put his name to it. As far as his own district was concerned the kanaka question was not of immediate interest. There were perhaps five or six of them, perhaps more, and as far as mortality was concerned, he was sorry to say that in the Goondiwindi district, at least, very few of those that went up ever came down again. Beyond the Darling Downs they got into an inhospitable district that seemed very unsuitable to the kanaka constitution and they died off in great numbers, and as the Bill was intended to stop them going in that direction he should support it.

Mr. LOW said that he took exception to the last remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba. He believed that there was only one station in the large Goondiwindi district where kanakas were employed, and that was Callandoon; and he was satisfied, from what he knew of the owner and superintendent of that station, that of all places in the colony kanakas would be well treated there; and as far as Callandoon was concerned he would not believe anything of the kind described. He had heard it said upon reliable authority, at Callandoon, that kanakas were a very good class indeed, and that one of them was worth three white men any day, not only in shepherding, but at fencing or anything almost they could be set to, and they had always been rewarded according to their merits. He had never employed any himself, and he was sorry to say that he found the white workmen very much the contrary of what they had been described by some hon. members; so much so that if this Bill did not pass he should feel strongly inclined to go in for kanakas himself. According to the information he had from the superintendent of Callandoon, he believed he could do as much with ten kanakas as with thirty white men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not intend to prolong the debate, seeing that most members on both sides of the House were agreed to support the Bill; but there had been some objections raised on both sides of the House with a view to prohibiting the importation of these islanders altogether. He was willing to admit the force of the arguments used by several members, that they had a perfect right to employ whatever labour they liked, and he himself thought that if they followed out the real principles of right and wrong, and carried them to an extreme meting out of justice to every man, they could not impose any restrictions on the employment of labour; but, in his opinion, this was a question to which those principles did not apply. To him it was simply a question of protection and expediency: a desire to protect the European labourer from an undue competition with an inferior race, just as some countries in the world wished to protect their industrial classes from being flooded with the manufactures of other countries which were produced at a cheaper rate. Looking at it in that light there could be no objection to the Bill on the ground that it did not go far enough for the purpose. But as to saying that they ought to prohibit the importation of kanakas altogether, if they for one moment put themselves in the place of those gentlemen in different parts of the colony who had invested ten, twenty, forty,

or fifty thousand pounds, trusting in the good faith of the colony that they would be enabled to continue the use of the labour that had been guaranteed by statute, they would scarcely have given vent to the arguments they had used. They had a right to protect the employers of labour in the use of this labour as well as the European labourer himself in different parts of the colony, and he felt quite convinced in his own mind, from investigations that he had made a long time ago, that it was impossible for the sugar-planters of Mackay and the northern districts to carry on the sugar industry with European labour alone. He was as antagonistic to the employment of kanakas in any shape or form as any member of the House; but years ago, when he was mining on Ravenswood, he made it his business to inquire from more than a hundred miners, who had come from Mackay and worked on the plantations at different times, and without exception they all said that they neither would nor could work in the cane-fields in that district. He knew at least one employer of kanaka labour in that district who attempted to carry on his plantation with white labour alone by letting contracts to white men who were allowed to work when they liked, at night or in the early morning, so as to avoid the heat. Yet they came and asked to be released from their contracts, because they could not do the same work as the kanakas could. Further south it might be different, but he was speaking of Mackay and still further north, and in the north it was impossible to carry on with white labour alone, and it would be doing an injustice to stop entirely the importation of that labour. It was all very well for the hon. member for the Logan to stand up and advocate prohibition of that labour, and say that if it were not prohibited he would advocate its being employed elsewhere than upon plantations. That hon. gentleman very likely remembered that a large number of his electors were employers of kanaka labour, and in speaking he had one eye to the European labourer and another to the employers of Polynesians. He had no desire to prolong the debate, but he wished to place on record before the division took place—should there be one—his opinion on the question: that they were entitled on the principle of protection to defend the European labourer from undue competition with an inferior race, and he maintained they were also entitled to protect the employers in the far North who had invested their capital, and to see that such capital was not lost through prohibition of the Polynesian labour. Before he sat down he must take exception to a statement made by the hon. member for North Brisbane, last evening. Not to make a mistake, he would quote the words as found in *Hansard*:—

"He was glad to see that the Government had come round to the way of thinking of the present Opposition."

He (Mr. Macrossan) utterly denied that any member of the present Government had come round in any way to the thinking of the Opposition. They all held, as far as he knew, what they held three years ago, when the present member for the Northern Downs introduced his Bill on the question. If the hon. member read the speeches made by himself (Mr. Macrossan), the Attorney-General, the Minister for Lands, and the Postmaster-General, who was then in the House, he would find that they expressed the same opinions they now held. The hon. gentleman could hardly accuse the Colonial Secretary of having come round to the opinion of the present Opposition, when the hon. gentleman distinctly stated that in introducing the Bill he was guided by the opinions of his colleagues. There was not one of them had changed his opinion as an individual or a member of the Government upon the question, either collectively as a Government or individually. It was well known to every member of the House who was a member in 1877 that he (Mr. Macrossan) expressed himself strongly on the subject, and said that, failing the total prohibition of the importation of kanakas, he would assist any hon. member in preventing their being employed except on plantations. He maintained that the great evil and grievance in this colony about kanakas was their being employed in towns. Let anyone go through Brisbane, and other towns, and he would find kanakas employed as coachmen, nurses, cooks, and housemaids, by the very men who had raised the agitation against the employment of kanakas, and, if not always by them, by gentlemen, members on that side represented. He hoped that the member for North Brisbane would understand thoroughly that he made a mistake in his assertion last night.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I do not think so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, as usual, it was his duty to convince the hon. gentleman he was mistaken. On page 58 of the 23rd volume of *Hansard* he was reported to have said:—

"As he represented a portion of a constituency which employed that labour, he begged to say, he for one would join with any member of the House who would propose to abolish the labour entirely. Failing that, he would go to the next least evil, and confine them entirely to plantations; keep them altogether out of towns; keep them entirely from domestic employment, and confine them to the cultivation of sugar, cotton, or any other tropical production."

Those were his words in 1877, and that was his opinion now. He could refer to the speeches of the hon. Minister for Lands, the present Attorney-General, and the present Postmaster-General, and would find the very same expressions made use of. The hon. the Premier also spoke as strongly on the question as he (Mr. Macrossan) did; and the present Colonial Secretary stated then the very same opinions he stated now—namely, that he did not believe in confining the employment of kanakas to within a thirty-mile radius, believing they should be left free to be employed by any person in the colony—the same thing as he stated last night. So that there was not a single member of the present Government who had changed his opinion either for better or worse upon the question before the House.

Mr. GRIMES had waited very patiently for an opportunity to make a few remarks on the Bill. Before doing so, he would make a remark or two with reference to a statement continually made by hon. members, and just now by the Minister for Works, to the effect that it was impossible for sugar-growing to be carried on with only white labour. Other hon. members referred to the fact of its being carried on at the present time in New South Wales on the Clarence River, and that so far the farmers there had been successful. The hon. Minister for Lands referred to that as a mere accident, and said he did not believe that the climate south of Brisbane was at all suitable for sugar-growing; and that eventually the establishment of the industry would fail. Hitherto they had carried on extensive works, and had been expending large sums of money, and were making arrangements to open up extensive sugar works on the Tweed River. If the climate was not so suitable for the growth of sugar in New South Wales, that strengthened the argument that sugar-growing would pay with white labour. But they had no occasion to go as far as the Clarence for an example. Within twenty miles of Brisbane farmers were growing cane successfully, and were pretty well satisfied with the returns. They were repeatedly offered from £15 to £20 per acre for cane grown on the

river bank, and which would have to be removed to mills in the neighbourhood; and within the last fortnight £25 an acre had been offered and accepted for cane grown on the Brisbane River. Cane was found by the farmers to pay better than any other crop they could possibly grow. If they grew maize the returns for two crops would not exceed £7 or £8, and with two crops there was fully as much labour and expense as with one crop of sugar-cane—for the reason that there was only two ploughings with a crop of two-year-old cane, whereas for two crops of corn a year for two years there would have to be four ploughings. When once the cane was planted, after the first year there was no expense in its cultivation except the rent of the land. If corn at £3 10s. or £4 per acre had hitherto kept the farmer going, surely there was a living to be made by cultivating cane at the prices they were getting at present. Those remarks applied also to the farmers on the Logan, and would bear out the statement of the hon. member for Enoggera that in some cases farmers owning forty or fifty acres had received cheques for £400 or £500. Facts were worth many arguments, and he might refer to his own experience in sugar-growing. In conjunction with his brother he had been engaged in the industry since it was started in Queensland, and they had never employed kanakas at all. They were satisfied from their experience that sugar-growing would pay—he did not say they would realise a large fortune—probably they would not—but at all events they could say it had kept the proverbial wolf from the door, and they had been able to rear their families comfortably and respectably. It had been stated that people about Brisbane were favourably situated for obtaining suitable labour, but that those who were further a-field were not able to do so. But if those further a-field would gradually dismiss the kanakas and take on white people, they would very soon be in the same position as the people near Brisbane. They would very soon find around them a large population of white people who would engage perhaps for six months or perhaps for two years, and who would earn a little money and settle down as small farmers, who would thus be a gain to the central farm. The owners of the mill would be able to employ the younger branches of the farmer's family to assist in harvest-time; and when an extra amount of labour was required for the crushing season they would constantly be able to employ white men, and thus increase their store of labour. One planter in the North had seen the advantage of that system, and had made known that he was prepared to offer five, ten, or fifteen acres of land to anyone who would go and cultivate the same, and had promised to purchase or crush their cane on terms. No doubt that planter would very soon have round about his establishment numerous houses belonging to industrious farmers, which would be better for the State than so many little grass huts of the kanakas. Apart from the question whether sugar-growing would pay with white labour, it had been stated there were some portions of the work that white men could not possibly perform. He should like to know what portion that was; for he was not aware from his experience that there was anything connected with sugar-growing that a youth of from sixteen to eighteen years could not accomplish. They had heard of the steaming process; but he was not aware of that process in working amongst the cane. He knew that if a planter cultivated his cane properly no workmen ought to be needed in the cane after it had reached the height of a man's shoulder. One hon. member had referred to trashing. If they had to trash, no doubt it would be very tedious and unpleasant work; but he had not seen that the work of trashing was so oppressive as some members seemed to think. For the last eight years, however, people had been of opinion that there was no necessity to trash at all. In the establishment with which he was connected they had done none whatever during that period. They had thoroughly tested the returns from trashed and from untrashed cane, and had found that there was not so much difference as would pay the increased cost of trashing. Since that time they had left trashing out of the question altogether, and had not suffered the least. He believed the density of their cane was quite equal to the density of any plantation anywhere around Brisbane. There had been a kind of cane introduced into the colony that really trashed itself—trashed itself too much for the late severe winter. So that, as far as the question of trashing was concerned, there was no occasion to import kanakas for that. Comparisons had been drawn between the white man and the kanaka with reference to their powers of endurance. He had had opportunities of seeing the powers of endurance of the white man—the British workman—and also of the kanaka; and he had no hesitation in saying that, whatever the climate, the kanaka could not in any way stand against the British workman. It was possible the kanaka might be able to stand against those white men who had not been accustomed to agriculture or hard work of any kind—for instance, some of the Lancashire operatives who had perhaps been used to only light work in the cotton mills, and for the first time took up a hoe or an axe; but he was speaking of the real British workman who had been engaged perhaps for years in manual labour, and there was no comparison between his endurance and that of the kanaka. But even if there was a comparison there was no work connected with the growth of sugar which called for endurance. There was far harder work connected with clearing, fencing, and preparing the land for cultivation than in the cultivation of sugar itself. He had expected when the hon. member for Mackay rose to address the House, last evening, that he would have been able to give hon. members a little information on this matter, and would point out the kind of work which was so injurious and trying to a white man to do in Mackay, but the hon. member hardly referred to it at all. He could not understand the hon. member's silence on the point, unless it was that he found that there were other hon. members in the House besides himself who were conversant with the cultivation of the sugar-cane. There was one thing the hon. member said—namely, that the employment of kanakas on a plantation gave increased employment to white men. He (Mr Grimes) must say that his experience had not borne out that statement, as he had been on many plantations where kanakas were employed, and had generally found that ten or twelve kanakas were employed to one white man. The report from Mackay—even from the place that the hon. member mentioned—would bear this out, that the number of white men employed on sugar plantations in that district was not 25 per cent., as represented by the hon. member, but only came up to about 10 per cent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is fully 25 per cent., if not more.

Mr. GRIMES said that even including all the white labour employed in repairing machinery, it did not come up to 25 per cent.—at least, so he was informed by persons whose veracity he had no reason to doubt. The hon. member for the Gregory wondered how it was that white men could not compete with kanakas, but it was not very hard to explain that. The kanaka came to the colony alone, and, to use an old

saying, when he had his hat on it covered his family; but with the white man the case was different, as in the majority of cases he had a family to feed and clothe, and it was through the large demand thus made on his wages that he was not able to work at the same figure as the kanaka. With reference to the Bill, if he thought that the result of its not passing would clear the way for another which would entirely prohibit the importation of kanakas, he should most heartily oppose it, but he did not think that such a Bill as he had mentioned would be carried through the Legislature at present; and, believing that some restriction should be placed on this class of labour, and that some protection should be provided for kanakas who could not protect themselves, he should vote for the second reading of the Bill, hoping that when it was in committee it could be made a useful measure. There were one or two omissions in it, to one of which he was glad to hear the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) refer—namely, the absence of any clause regulating the hours of labour of kanakas. It was very strange that that should have been omitted, as the report of Drs. Thompson and Wray had brought that matter prominently forward as being one cause of the excessive mortality amongst the islanders in the neighbourhood of Maryborough. On Messrs. R. Cran and Company's plantation, it was stated in the report, some of the causes of the excessive mortality were poor feeding, bad water, over work, and the absence of proper care when sick; and, in another part of the report, the medical men referred to said that they considered the hours of labour of kanakas in that district as far too long. He found that, with only one exception, the men on the whole of the plantations worked from ten to twelve hours a day. Now, whatever might be the powers of endurance of a kanaka it was impossible for him to stand out for twelve hours a day; in addition to that, however, they had in many places to work more than six days in the week. It was very necessary, therefore, that some provision should be made in the Bill regulating the hours of labour, and he considered that if they were restricted to eight hours a day it was as much as a kanaka could be expected to do, as they were not much accustomed to labour on their own islands where the whole work they did would not amount to four hours a day. He thought the clause defining who were to be employers of kanaka labour was rather vague, and there was no doubt that if passed in its present form it would be evaded. As had been remarked by more than one hon. member, the whole of Queensland could be brought under semi-tropical cultivation, and he would like to know who was not a sugar-grower? Last evening the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Kingsford) said he was one, and yet he (Mr. Grimes) did not suppose the hon. member had ever made any sugar. There were many persons who, like the hon. member, cultivated various kinds of sugar-cane for feeding stock, and they might apply for a license to employ kanakas. There was no doubt that many islanders would be employed by persons who were not engaged in cultivation at all, and he would therefore suggest that that class of labour should be restricted to sugar-growing, as there was nothing else, not even rice-growing, which could not be done with white labour without any difficulty. He wished also to call attention to the schedule of rations contained in the Bill. That scale might be sufficient for men who had no hard labour to do, but it did not approach what was allowed to a shepherd, and was far below that allowed to an ordinary working-man. He was sure that no man, be he white or black, could work on the rations put down in the Bill. He should have pleasure in voting for the second reading, believing that there might be clauses inserted that would help to make it a very useful Bill for the protection of the islanders.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had had the greatest difficulty he had ever experienced in his life to keep awake during the hour for which the hon. member had been speaking, and he was sure that anyone who had listened to the hon. member for an hour must become a believer in purgatory for ever. He wished that in future the hon. member would bring a Pugh's Almanac, and ask the hon. member for Enoggera to read it for him, as he (Mr. O'Sullivan) would sooner hear that hon. member read for an hour than hear the hon. member for Oxley speak for five minutes. He should support the second reading of this Bill not because he liked it, not because it was a better Bill than the last one, but in the hope that an amendment might be brought forward in committee by which kanaka labour would be done away with in this colony. That was the only reason that would lead him to support it at all. He was not present when it was first proposed, nor did he hear the speech made by the hon. mover, but he was certainly astonished at the speech of the hon. Minister for Works, and were it not that he read an extract from the speech he made here in 1877 he (Mr. O'Sullivan) certainly would not believe that he was in favour of this Bill. He was very glad that the Minister for Works had read that extract, and that he was in favour of much the same thing now as he was then, and that was, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) took it, that he would be in favour of kanaka labour being done away with altogether. At that time he was clearly in favour of that, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) found by his speech now that he was in favour of it still, and he would have an opportunity, in committee, of supporting an amendment in this Bill by which kanaka labour could be done away with altogether. The hon. member said it would be unfair to the capitalists and sugar-growers to do away with this labour, because, he said, they had expended their capital and taken up their country, and that they ought to be allowed black labour. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) said they did no such thing. The sugar-growers were very well protected already. They had got their land for nothing and there was a duty of £5 a ton on sugar, and that was surely protection enough for them. Why should a particular class in this colony be protected when others were not? Why should there be special legislation in this colony for one class and not for others? Was it for the simple reason that they could not get on without it? If so he was prepared to pay a half-penny extra for his pound of sugar and let them keep out of it. Then the hon. member said that in protecting this labour he spoke for the North. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) did not think he should speak for the North any more than for the South—he ought rather to speak for the whole colony. Then the hon. member said he did it for expediency, and to protect the white man. How did he protect the white man—by bringing him into competition with black labour? The hon. member said he would keep them strictly on the plantations. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) said he could not do it—that this Bill would not do it, and that they would never do it. The Minister for Works said to-night that, failing the prohibition of their importation into the colony altogether, he would confine them to that. But had they not the means of prohibiting them altogether? He (Mr. O'Sullivan) said they had. This Parliament could treat them in the same way as they treated the Chinamen. If they could do nothing else they could put £10 a-head on them. They could take the same means of keeping them out as had been taken with the Chinese. It had

been stated from experience that one white man could manage six acres of cane. In all the returns he had seen there was not a single place where the management of six acres was left to a kanaka. So that if a white man could manage six acres of cane, he did not think that the capitalists of Port Mackay, or of any other part of the colony, would be much out of pocket if they got the management of six acres of cane out of one white man. The hon. member for Dalby had said that this sort of labour was purely and simply a sort of slavery. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) agreed with that opinion, but he admitted that matters were improving—that much greater care was now being taken of kanakas. It was stated that they must not be worked for twelve hours a day; they must only be worked for seven hours a day. He had never seen all these privileges asked for for the white man—he had never seen any such arrangement made for them. He knew white men at the present time in the colony working from thirteen to eighteen hours a day, and, in reality, there were much harder working white men—they must work all hours. It came out in evidence, while the Woogaroo examination was going on, that the employés there constantly worked thirteen hours a day. Why should not kanakas do the same labour as other people? If they were stronger than white people they should do more labour, but there was no proof that they could do it. The hon. member for Dalby would abolish that labour, but he could not do impossibilities. He did not want anyone to get out of it like that. Now was the time; there was the Bill, and they could so arrange that that labour could be done away with in three years' time from that date. It was no use making speeches for constituents, to be read in *Hansard*. Let them go into business with that matter in committee, and come to a determination that they should not have, in that colony, any competition with white labour. Besides, how could they draw the line? It was understood, or it was sought to be impressed on the public, that it could be done by restricting kanakas to within thirty miles of the coast. But three parts—he might say seven-eighths—of the white population of that colony were actually within that thirty miles of the coast. If a Bill of that kind was to be carried out at all, it ought to apply all over the colony. There should be no special legislation. If he needed a kanaka to do his garden or groom his horse he had a perfect right to have him. He denied the right of the sugar-grower to have advantages over him. What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and they should either keep the kanaka out or let him work all over the colony. They could not draw the line at thirty miles. A person might be on one side of the road at the end of that thirty miles, and could employ them, and he might cross the road and have to pay a higher price for labour. The proper thing was to keep kanakas out of the colony altogether.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the question had been pretty well worked to death. But as it was not long since he represented one of the greatest sugar-growing districts in Queensland, he did not want to let the question pass without saying a word or two, especially as the hon. member who last spoke had broken some new ground. The hon. member for Stanley objected to the argument that because the sugar-growers of the colony had invested large amounts of capital in the trade on the strength of being allowed black labour therefore they should still be allowed to have it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I simply quoted the expression of the Minister for Works, that no such inducements were ever held out.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he did not think the hon. member understood him. What he said was, that the hon. member particularly objected to the argument that numbers of capitalists had invested such a large amount of capital on the strength of their having black labour. The hon. member objected to that argument. For his part, he did not see why the hon. member should object to it. It was a fact that capitalists had sunk large sums of money both in the neighbourhood of Mackay and Maryborough, approaching, he believed, to a million of money, if not more. Something like a million of money had been sunk in Mackay alone. The proprietors did this with the knowledge that the importation of black labour was allowed in the colony, and, notwithstanding the agitation that had gone on in several corners on the subject, they had every right to expect that black labour would be continued. That, to his mind, was one of the smallest grounds; but he should object strongly to the abolition of this labour now, although he objected to the importation of it generally. It was not a good thing generally, but under the circumstances in which they were placed it was a thing which it was expedient for them to carry on. He did not think, for one thing, that the colony could afford to lose the large sums of money which had been brought into it by the cultivation of sugar. When the late Government were floating their last loan in the English market, the thing to which they drew the strongest attention—the thing to which they pointed in the most marked manner in their advertisements—the thing which was distinctive of Queensland, was the growth and prosperity of the sugar industry. That was one of the encouragements offered to English capitalists to advance money upon Queensland debentures. And there was no doubt the Government were right—it was a very strong reason. No one who had considered the question could deny that the sugar industry was about the most stable industry that they had in the colony. At the time that the colony was suffering throughout from the bitterest depression, what was the industry which then was the most flourishing? What were the towns that were most prosperous? It was a matter of remark that in that time of our great depression there were two towns that were flourishing—Mackay and Maryborough, and Mackay especially. Mackay was entirely dependent upon the sugar industry. Maryborough, he believed, had some other things to fall back upon. Persons passing along our coast and staying at Mackay had time after time brought back the news that Mackay did not seem to be suffering from any depression, and that of all towns they had visited it was the most free from depression. They ought to consider a long while before they decided even to contemplate the doing away with an industry like that. Had the hon. member for Stanley, who suggested it, considered the amount of money which the industry brought into the colony? Last year there was produced in the neighbourhood of Mackay alone £300,000 worth of sugar. Was that a thing which was to be thrown away lightly? Was that a thing they were to vote away in one moment? Or should they talk lightly of introducing a measure to do away with it in three years, or even half-a-dozen years, when they did not know what could be substituted for it? He affirmed that sugar was one of the things which were essentially the products of this particular climate. It was one of the many products they had been encouraged to try, and the one which they had experimented upon with success. It would be suicidal policy to throw away the benefits and advantages which had resulted from all these years of struggling experimentalisation simply for what was very little more than a whim and an idea. The outcry about

kanakas, and that it was not right to employ them, was nothing more than that, as everybody who had seen kanakas upon the estates where they were employed knew that they were as happy as any white people, and in as good condition of body and as contented. The hon. member for Oxley had told them that he had been credibly informed by someone who had been to Mackay that the proportion of white people to kanakas who were employed there was one in ten. He (Mr. Beor) knew that the proportion was very different, and that the hon. member was misinformed. When he was last in Mackay, Mr. Hewitt, of Pleystowe Plantation, and Mr. King, of Branscombe, employed nearly one European to three Polynesians. Mr. Davidson, of Alexandra, employed a like proportion. Mr. Spiller, who was the largest employer of kanakas in the neighbourhood, had nearly 100 white men in his service to not quite 300 black men; and he believed that Mr. Amhurst employed, in times that work was heavy, about one white man to four black men. It was a great thing to consider that, through the employment of 2,500 men—black men—labour was found for between 500 and 1,000 white people; and it must be remembered that if planters were deprived of black labour they would be rendered incapable of employing white labour. Many members would say "no" to this assertion, but surely the planters were the best judges of the matter. If white labour were more profitable they would employ it. They had no preference for blacks over whites: the simple fact was that they did better with a certain proportion of whites and blacks, and it was known that although the planters had been very successful during the last few seasons, it had been for many years the hardest struggling for them to keep their heads above water—and if all things were calculated they had only just made a fair profit upon the money that they had invested for years. Five hundred to one thousand Europeans were not, however, all the white people who were kept going by the plantations at Mackay, and, in consequence, by black labour. Mackay and the neighbourhood contained something like a population of 6,000 white people, counting men, women, and children, and every one of these was dependent upon the sugar industry. Were they going to destroy such a town for an idea? Excepting two or three stations which did not count for much, there was not a single industry to keep Mackay going except the plantations. Not only did the sugar industry at Mackay give employment to the amount of white labour and support the population that he had named, but it had also to be considered that it afforded employment to the people who manned the ships which were engaged carrying the cargo away. To talk of destroying an industry which brought so much money into the colony, and kept so many white people prosperous and happy, was something suicidal. Before he sat down he would endeavour to set at ease the mind of the leader of the Opposition, who, he was told, had expressed the opinion on the previous evening that by repealing the Polynesian Labourers Act of 1868 they might lose the benefits of the Imperial Kidnapping Act. He should like to reassure the hon. member, and to inform him that it was clear by the 8th section of the Kidnapping Act that the passing of the Bill before the House would not deprive them of the benefits of the Imperial law. He was deeply grieved to see the hon. member displaying such gross ignorance. One did not like to see it for it was perfectly deplorable. Now that he had referred to the section, it must be clear to the meanest understanding that what the hon. member had said was said under a wrong impression, and that there really was no danger of the benefits of the Kidnapping Act being lost by the passing of the Bill before the House.

Mr. ARCHER said the question had been so fully discussed that he should not keep members long. He was simply going to enter his protest against the exaggerated statements that had been made by hon. members who had spoken against the Bill. The hon. and learned member for Enoggera had told them that a colossal sugar industry had grown up in New South Wales, close tothe borders of Queensland. Did the hon. member really know the meaning of "colossal," and did he not use the word simply to give force to a strong protest which he could not support by fair argument? The hon. member ought not to apply such a term to an industry which did not supply enough sugar for the colony in which it was established—a colony which did not contain one million people. In comparison with the sugar industry of New South Wales, that of Queensland was better entitled to be spoken of as colossal, because, at all events, it could supply their wants and also produce something to export. The hon. member had also informed them—and he (Mr. Archer) believed the statement—that there were farmers in the neighbouring colony who cultivated their own land and made a fair living by growing sugar-cane and selling it to the mill-owners. If the hon. gentleman would do him the honour to read a lecture which he (Mr. Archer) delivered in England nine years ago when Agent-General, it would be found that he prognosticated that the state of things described would be the result where cheap labour was not to be had. If they were ever to do away with Polynesian or other cheap labour, sugar must be cultivated in the way that it was in New South Wales; but as yet the system was not a proved success in that colony, and before it could be pronounced to be a success it must be shown that it could supply the wants of the colony and compete in the open market with other sugar-producing countries. If it did that without importing labour other than it now employed, then he would concede that it would be an excellent thing for Queensland to introduce the same system. But he would say, do not let them injure an established industry by advocating the adoption of a system which was being tried in a neighbouring colony as an experiment. If that system failed, let them avoid making the same mistake; if it succeeded, let them follow in the footsteps of New South Wales. There was another argument used on the previous evening which he thought extremely absurd. The hon. member for Rosewood called attention to the evils that had always followed the use of coloured labour, and had said that America could not get rid of coloured labour until it had gone through the frightful convulsions of a civil war. The hon. member must be mistaken; at any rate, he (Mr. Archer) was not aware that America had done away with coloured labour—it had done away with slavery, which was the cause of the civil war. These were the kind of arguments which were used against a Bill which ought to be discussed on its merits. No one could be more completely convinced than he that any kind of labour which approached slavery was a curse, not only to the men, but to the employers; it deadened all moral feeling, and entailed the consequences which had followed in the United States, and in every country which sanctioned slavery. But they were not warranted in regarding the employment of kanakas in this colony, under the laws which existed, as approaching slavery in any form. The member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) had said that nothing was done to elevate the kanakas who came to the colony. He entirely disagreed with the hon. member.

They taught the kanaka to do steady work instead of the fitful labour he was in the habit of doing in his own country, and he maintained that to teach a man to do a fair day's labour was the foundation of all future efforts for his improvement. He perfectly agreed with the remarks which had fallen from the member for Maryborough, and was glad that the Bill would so far protect these people that they could not be called slaves. He had heard it argued that the islanders were sent from their native land against their free will. Speaking comparatively, they were children. Children of white people were sent out to work against their will. Had he (Mr. Archer) been consulted he should probably have chosen a different occupation from that marked out for him, but he was glad that he had been set to work of some kind. In the same way the islanders were forced to work by the chiefs who stood to them in the light of parents; but when they arrived here they were not one iota more slaves than the lad who was apprenticed to a trade was a slave. Believing that the proposed measure would do good rather than harm, and that the amendments to be introduced would reduce the mortality among the islanders, prevent ill-usage, and ensure their return to their islands in a more civilized condition, he held that it would be unwise to reject it. Until it could be shown that the practice of small farming followed in New South Wales could be carried on without the assistance of a high protective duty, it would not be discreet to limit the operation of the Bill to three or any other specific number of years.

Mr. MILES said he regarded it as a great misfortune that two sittings of the House should have been taken up in discussing a question which had already been talked threadbare. If the matter were debated from Monday morning to Saturday night it would not make the slightest difference. Two sessions ago he (Mr. Miles) had the honour of introducing a Bill dealing with the question, and at that time there was a strong expression of opinion that a clause should be introduced limiting the duration of the measure to three years, in order that the importation of kanaka labour might cease when the employers of that kind of labour had made arrangements to carry on their operations without it. The matter was discussed, and with the consent of the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) he (Mr. Miles) promised that such a clause should be prepared to be introduced into the Bill. He presumed, however, that the hon. gentleman's constituents saw by *Hansard* what was likely to happen, and made representations to the hon. gentleman. At all events, the Bill was put at the bottom of the paper, and it never got to the top afterwards. He would therefore suggest that the hon. member for Stanley should not think too much of his amendment, as this Bill might be treated in the same way. Believing that this measure would be far preferable to the one on the statute-book, he intended to vote for it, reserving to himself the right to move amendments in committee; and he should also be happy to assist the hon. member for Stanley with his amendments. If the sugar cultivation could not be carried on without black labour the best way would be to give the people of the North separation, and let them do what they liked. European immigrants could not be expected to come out here to compete with black labour.

Mr. SCOTT said he agreed with the last speaker that too much had been said on the subject. With regard to the measure itself he was indifferent, but, as he would not have another opportunity, he wished now to enter his protest against the proposed amendments. Certain amendments had been circulated among hon. members, and others to a similar effect had been indicated by the leader of the Opposition. Something had been said in the debate about slavery; but, if some of the amendments suggested were made, he held that they would result in pure unmitigated slavery. Men were brought here under a three years' agreement, and after that time they should be as free as any other immigrant to hire where they liked and as they liked. It was now proposed that the islander who had served his term should be told, "You shall go and hire to that individual at such and such a rate of wages," when, perhaps, he could get double the wages elsewhere—or else leave the colony. It was to be banishment or slavery. He (Mr. Scott) would rather see a Bill passed prohibiting the importation altogether than see the labour degraded in this manner. If the labour was bad it should be done away with, but the statute-book should not be disgraced by the institution of a species of slavery nearly as bad as that which prevailed some time ago in the Southern States of America—or, rather, in Jamaica, where those who had formerly been slaves were prevented from taking what employment they wished.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was read a second time, and its committal fixed for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 9 o'clock.