Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 1880

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 27 October, 1880.

Return.—Fassifern Railway.—Petition.—Constitution Act Amendment Bill—second reading.—Pacific Island Labourers Bill—second reading.—Customs Duties Bill—first reading.—Duty on Cedar Bill—first reading.—Appropriation Bill No 3—first reading.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN took the chair at 4 o'clock.

RETURN.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid on the table a return to an order made by the Council on August 4—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return to date, accompanied by tracings, showing the lands resumed or proposed to be resumed for railway purposes in connection with the construction of the Warwick and Stanthorpe, Maryborough and Gympie, and Bundaberg and Mount Perry railways; such return to show whether the said lands were freehold or otherwise, the owners or reputed owners, or agents treated with, the prices respectively demanded by said owners or agents, the awards, if any, of the Government valuator, showing also the prices paid, or agreed to be paid, by the Government.

In laying this return on the table, he begged to point out that the expense of furnishing it had been very great. He was informed by the Minister for Works that since the date of the order—that was, for the past two and a-half months—a surveyor had been constantly employed in making the tracings required by the motion. The House had been reluctant to refuse any papers that had been called for, but if hon. members had foreseen—he must confess that he did not—the expense of preparing this return he believed it would have been refused. He could not move that it be printed, because it was nearly all surveyors' work.

FASSIFERN RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid upon the table the report of the Select Committee on the Fassifern Railway, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

PETITION.

The HON. W. H. WALSH presented a petition against the Marsupials Destruction Bill from certain residents in the marsupial district of Rockhampton.

Petition read and received.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL —SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that, before moving the second reading of the Bill, he should like to point out that there was not the slightest reason to apprehend that the measure would be forced through without the concurrence of a large majority of the members of the House—in fact, this was the first day this session that he could have brought on the second reading with any hope of carrying it, because although what was known as the two-thirds clause of the Constitution Act was repealed in 1871, so far as the Legislative Assembly was concerned, the two-thirds clause which related to the constitution of the Council remained in full force, and they could not even read this Bill a second time unless there were at least twenty-one members in attendance and everyone concurred. He mentioned that fact in order to relieve the minds of hon. members from the impression which he found prevailed, or was at anyrate held by certain hon. members, that this measure was an attack upon the Constitution which ought to be resented. He thought that where it was shown that any matter of detail in the Constitution was defective, and where practical inconvenience was experienced, there was no reasonable cause why they should not endeavour to amend it in that particular. The Bill dealt with the question of the Standing Orders. He wished to state that if it got into committee he should ask the House to allow that portion to be excised, so as to deal only with clauses 1 to 7. At the time he had prepared that portion of the measure he had gone through the Standing Orders very carefully to make grammatical corrections. He did not suppose that there would be much opposition, as he adhered strictly either to the language of the Constitution Act or of the Standing Orders themselves. The design of the Government was simply to bring in a Bill which should have the effect of validating the Standing Orders, which at present had been held to have no force whatever if any hon. member chose not to observe them, or some of them at any rate. However, he could see plainly that it would be perfectly hopeless to expect the Standing Orders to go through, and he should therefore ask the House in Committee to excise them from the Bill altogether. He might add that in revising the Standing Orders he did omit one—namely, the one which required that all resolutions for the resumption of Crown lands should be laid upon the table for a week and be referred to a Select Committee before being dealt with. He had done so because the Act upon which that Standing Order was founded had been repealed, and instead of that order he had inserted the one with reference to committees sitting on railways. Turning now to that portion of the Bill which he asked the House to consider, he would refer them to the circumstance that at the very beginning of the session he moved that certain matters should be referred to the Standing Orders Committee. These matters were—

"(1.) The expediency or otherwise of so amending the 47th and 48th Standing Orders as to allow of Lapsed Questions being restored to the Business Paper without notice,

"(2.) The expediency or otherwise of enforcing Standing Orders 27, 28, and 29.

"(3.) The number of Members required by the 26th section of the Constitution Act to form a Quorum of this House.

"(4.) The expediency or otherwise of amending the Constitution Act of 1867, in respect of the term of two successive Sessions during which a Legislative Councillor may, under the 23rd section of said Act, absent himself from the Legislative Council."

The 1st clause of the Bill repealed sections 23 and 26 of the Constitution Act. There would not be much alteration required, but when making amendments on sections it was usually found that the better course was to repeal the sections, and then re-enact them. The interpretation clause said that in the Bill, and in the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867, the expression "one whole session" should mean a whole session of not less duration than one month. He believed that the Hon. Mr. Sandeman, whilst a member of the other Chamber, had suffered from the existing law. A member who lived at a distance of hundreds of miles from the seat of Parliament might become disqualified, and lose his seat by an absence from a session which lasted only a day or two; so, in order to prevent anything of that kind in the Council, the interpretation clause was inserted that a session should not be less than one month. The 3rd clause of the Bill was the 23rd section of the present Act with an amendment. Instead of the words of the section—

"If any Legislative Councillor shall for two successive sessions of the Legislature of the said colony fail to give his attendance in the said Legislative Council without the permission of Her Majesty or of the Governor of the colony, signified by the said Governor to the Legislative Council."

The clause in the Bill provided that "if any member of the Legislative Council shall for one whole session of the Legislature of the said colony fail, except as hereinafter provided, to give his attendance in the said Council," his seat should become vacant. The remainder of the clause was precisely the same as the section proposed to be repealed, and the whole amendment was therefore in the first five lines. As would be seen, as the law stood at present a member could be absent for two successive sessions without permission, and he could be absent for the whole term of his natural life if he could obtain permission from Her Majesty or the Governor of the colony. It was known that there was one member who, after being absent for two whole sessions, obtained leave from Her Majesty in England which would carry him on until the end of 1881, being in fact an absence of nearly four years. Every member would admit that if a member required to be absent for four years in succession his duty was to resign. It was unfair to the other members, and he was not performing his duty to the country by being absent so long. He thought that a member who was absent for one whole session, unless he obtained leave, ought to be disqualified. In order that no hardship might be suffered it would be found that the 4th clause provided that when a member failed to give his attendance for a whole session his seat should not become vacant as aforesaid—

"1. If he is absent from the Council by reason of any engagement in the service of Her Majesty."

That would apply to the President; or

"2. If special leave of absence for a prescribed term not exceeding one year has been granted to him by the Governor, in pursuance of an address from the Council praying that such leave may be granted, and setting forth the reasons therefor."

The House would perceive that this was only an extension of the principle already embodied in the Standing Orders, which provided that any member who absented himself for more than fourteen days in a session without leave from the Council should be guilty of contempt. They had never attempted to enforce that Standing Order, and if they had he believed they should have been unable. However, the clause simply extended the principle already affirmed by the Standing Orders. The remaining alteration—that reducing the quorum—was one which he did not feel much inclined to insist upon. It would be an improvement if it were accepted; but if hon. members thought it undesirable to make the alteration he should be quite prepared to accept their decision. He might state, however, that the 26th section of the Constitution Act was repealed for the purposes partly of altering the quorum and partly to remove an ambiguity, it being doubtful at present whether to constitute a quorum there should be ten or eleven members present. The Bill settled the question. Clause 5 provided that the presence of at least one-fourth of the whole number of members of the Council, exclusive of the President, should be necessary to constitute a quorum; and clause 6 said that if at any time the whole number of members constituting the Council, exclusive of the President, was not exactly divisible by four, the quorum of the Council should then consist of such number as was next greater than one-fourth of the whole number. Clause 7 provided that all questions which from time to time might arise in the Council should be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present other than the President, and when such votes were equal the President should have a casting vote. The Bill affected no principle of the Act. It did not touch the independence or liberties of members in any respect, though it was certainly intended to prevent members from abusing their privileges by neglecting to perform their duties while accepting and retaining all the honour of being members of Parliament. He did not know whether there would be any opposition to the measure, but it would be seen that if there was—owing to the two-thirds provision—it could not go through. He should be prepared to accept the decision of the House, and hoped hon. members would assist in removing the obstacles past years had shown to exist. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that, as no other hon. gentleman seemed inclined to speak at the present moment, he rose to move an amendment—that the Bill be read that day six months; and he did so, first, because he thought it was very unwise to attempt to alter the Constitution unless members were well prepared to consider the alteration and unless it was introduced at the beginning of the session. He also deprecated much the Postmaster-General having brought in another House. They should be very delicate before bringing that matter forward. He also thought that, however ingenious the explanation of the hon. gentleman had been, he had slipped over some of the principal portions of the measure. He could hardly imagine that the Postmaster-General after framing the Bill understood the drift of it, for there was one clause in particular, a vital one, which the hon. gentleman had barely alluded to. In concluding his speech, the hon. gentleman said there was nothing in the Bill which could affect the independence of members in any way. Now, that was most extraordinary. Here was a measure which vitally changed the Constitution, and he alluded more particularly to clause 7. He really did not think that the hon. gentleman could have looked well into the Constitution Act — that he must have imagined, when framing the Bill, that the Constitution had been altered, and that it did not require two-thirds of the members to alter the Constitution. At present they had thirty-one members, and it required twenty-one members to alter the Constitution. If twenty

members had assented to this alteration he should have stood in his place to dissent from it, and perhaps under the circumstances he would have been the only one. However, he was sure that there were many members, the majority in fact, who would not see the Constitution altered unless very good reason was shown. Clause 7 said that all questions which from time to time arose in the Council should be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present other than the President.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that was a re-construction of the existing 26th section, which said that "All questions which shall arise in the said Legislative Council shall be decided by a majority of votes of the members present other than the President." Clause 7, therefore, used the precise words of the section.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that might be so; but they were repealing a certain clause, and if the clause were repealed, then by a sidewind he took it the Constitution would be changed. At all events, it would be a grave question whether it would not be so. So long as the clause remained he would allow that it would require two-thirds to alter the Constitution; but if the clause were excised, clause 7 would make it lawful to decide anything by a majority of votes—at least, he thought it would be very hazardous to pass such a provision. He also thought, himself, that there could be no great difficulty in obtaining a quorum of eleven in the House. He was aware that on several occasions there had been no quorum, but that had very likely been for special reasons. He thought a quorum of eleven could have been obtained almost at any time, and he also differed from that part of the Bill which said that an absence for one session should make a member lose his seat. An absence for two sessions had that effect at present, and it was very true that there had been times when members had been longer absent; but it was more to the benefit of the Council that the law should remain as it was. Members of the Council were, or should be, chosen as representative men; they were or should be men of some age and standing—men who had been members in the other branch of the Legislature, or who had been old colonists, or who possessed means. He thought that any hon. member who was appointed to the Council should be an independent man, and a gentleman so situated might in his old age wish to return to England for a short time; and it would not be to the advantage of the colony if he necessarily lost his seat through being absent for one session. He therefore disagreed with the measure, and without entering further into the matter he would move, as an amendment, that the Bill be read that day six months.

The HON. C. S. MEIN said he agreed with the Hon. Mr. Prior that they should be very careful in considering an amendment of the Constitution Act. At the same time, he did not view every proposition for an amendment of the Constitution with such feelings of alarm as, judging from the hon. member's remarks, were experienced by the Hon. Mr. Prior. He thought the Bill, in the shape in which the Postmaster-General was prepared to accept it, was a very harmless one, and might with a few verbal amendments be accepted by the House. There could be no doubt that for a long time past too great facilities had been offered to hon. members to absent themselves from the deliberations of that Chamber. Time after time members left the colony, and did not return for a period of three years; and on some important occasions there had been extreme difficulty in transacting the business of the country. There appeared, also, to be some ambiguity in the clause of the Constitution Act defining the number of members who should be present for the transaction of business. That ambiguity had forced itself upon their attention more than once, and in consequence it had been felt—under the wise decisions of their Presidents—that they could not transact business unless more than the number of members contemplated by the framers of the Act were present. Under these circumstances it had been felt, not only by the Postmaster-General but by his predecessors, that it was desirable, when a convenient opportunity offered, to fix in an unambiguous way the mode in which their quorum should be calculated. He also agreed with the Postmaster-General that the time had arrived when they should determine the time during which hon. members could absent themselves from that Chamber without proper permission. Under the existing law hon. members could practically absent themselves without the permission of the Crown for a period of two years. He believed there was only one instance in the whole history of the colony in which there had been two sessions of Parliament in one year. And successive Ministries had felt themselves compelled, in consequence of precedents laid down by their predecessors, to grant leave of absence for terms varying from one to two years; and it had frequently occurred that when an hon. member had absented himself during the whole period, and had continued absent, the House had been forced to investigate the matter and declare the seat vacant. He believed that in almost all other corresponding branches of Legislature it had been provided that an absence for a whole session should vacate the seat of the absentee. Possibly under exceptional circumstances that might be found to be a hard rule. It was found hard, for instance, in the case of one member of the Legislative Assembly, where the House, after sitting for a week, was prorogued. The member in question came down and found, very much to his surprise, that the session was over. Upon the matter being referred to the law officers of the Crown in England, they declared that the seat was properly forfeited. A good rule between the two extremes might be found in the provision that an absence for a whole year should vacate a seat. If a member whose seat was vacated under that provision was a valuable member of the Legislature, and had reasons of an exceptional character for absenting himself, those circumstances would be taken into consideration by any Government which might be in office, and the member would stand a fair chance of re-appointment. It had been felt that the clause of the Constitution Act was too lax, and that a burden was thus unduly thrown upon those hon. members who were prepared to attend regularly. He did not agree with the Hon. Mr. Prior, that because the majority of gentlemen appointed to that Chamber might be more advanced in years than members of another branch of the Legislature facilities should be given them for absenting themselves. When a gentleman accepted an appointment to that Chamber he ought to feel bound to discharge the whole of the duties attaching to that appointment. He should not hold the office as a matter of self-glorification; but should be possessed of an earnest and conscientious desire to perform his duty to the country. How could an hon. member conscientiously perform his duties if he constantly absented himself from the deliberations of Parliament? If an hon. member found that it was inconsistent with his personal convenience to attend to those duties, he should give up the office at once in favour of another person who was prepared to perform its duties. His sympathies were with the Postmaster-General in the direction of his proposed amendments in this matter; but instead of making the limit

one whole session, he would allow a member to absent himself for a whole year. With regard to the quorum, he agreed with the Hon. Mr. Prior that the limit contemplated by the Constitution Act was small enough. The Constitution Act stipulated that any amendment of their Constitution should not only be approved by two-thirds of the voting members, but by two-thirds of the whole House. If, therefore, they delegated to a fourth of the House the right of determining all other matters of legislation, they would be proceeding against the policy of the Constitution Act. He had noticed the 7th clause, and was inclined to think with the Hon. Mr. Prior that, although it was not intended by the Postmaster-General, that clause might have the effect of indirectly repealing the two-thirds clause of the Constitution Act. That defect, however, could be remedied in committee. The other clauses were harmless; and with modifications in the directions he had indicated he would support the Bill, believing that it would be unwise to burk further discussion by postponing the debate for six months. He believed that the basis upon which the Legislative Council was formed was the soundest basis upon which an Upper House of Legislature could be formed. He was entirely opposed to those persons who thought that an elective Upper House was a desirable thing. Experience in other colonies showed that when the upper branch of Legislature was elected collisions were frequently occurring between that House and what was called the popular or representative branch. Wherever there were nominated Chambers they had always been willing, where there was a decided and well-ascertained expression of public opinion, to sacrifice their own convictions. At the same time, he was inclined to fix a limit to the term for which hon. members were appointed. In these colonies public opinion grew or altered very rapidly, and he believed hon. members would admit that there were times when they must give way to that opinion, however unsound it might appear. If members were placed in that House for life, with freedom to absent themselves from the performance of their duties, there was a tendency to make them too conservative for the rapid growth of young communities. He thought they would do well, therefore, to limit the term of appointment. But, judging from the manner in which the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Prior were applauded, there seemed very little prospect of an alteration of the Constitution in this direction. Meanwhile he thought that this Bill ought not to be rejected upon the motion for second reading.

The HON. C. S. D. MELBOURNE said he agreed in the main with the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Prior. They were asked to say that a House composed of eight members might not only alter the Constitution Act but go far beyond that. As long as there were eight members present when the sitting commenced, two members would be able to alter the Constitution Act. He would support the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Prior.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that, with the permission of the House, he would withdraw the second reading of the Bill. To proceed further would be a simple waste of time.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he had expected that a debate of that important character would be extended over several sittings. He had supposed that the Bill involved questions upon which every hon. member would feel bound to express an opinion. He thought the Postmaster-General was very much mistaken if he thought the Council would allow him to withdraw such an important Bill because he expected an adverse vote. He had strong feelings with respect to the action of the Government in this matter. He did not wish to accuse the Postmaster-General of being the instrument of the Government; but he had not the least doubt but that the Government intended at the beginning of the session to introduce the Bill in this peculiar manner upon the report of a select committee. It would be remembered that when the Bill was introduced he at once denounced it as an infringement of the Postmaster-General's duty as chairman of the committee. The committee simply ordered him to bring up a report of a certain kind; and when he introduced a Bill affecting not only the constitution of that but of the other Chamber, he was plainly taking liberties as the chairman of the committee. As the Postmaster-General was going to abandon the Bill, it would not be worth his while to speak upon the measure itself. The Postmaster-General, however, had given them information which had not come before them officially. It had been reported that the Hon. Mr. Simpson had received leave from Her Majesty direct to absent himself from Australia—the matter had not been stated in his hearing. If that were the case, however, the Government, as Her Majesty's representatives, should be the very last persons to call in question Her Majesty's conduct. The remarks of the Postmaster-General were something to this effect—that as Her Gracious Majesty had given leave of absence to one of their members, it was their duty to step in and prevent her from doing so again. He would not give his assent to any measure with such an object in view. Again, even if the House were foolish enough to pass a Bill reflecting upon Her Majesty, did the hon. member think that Her Majesty would assent to it? Did he not know that of all ladies in the world Her Majesty exhibited the most dignity and the most determination when she was right? It was unworthy of the hon. member to ask them to pass a Bill which would reflect upon Her Majesty for some kind act which she had done at home upon advice, good or bad. It would be unworthy not only of that Chamber, but especially unworthy of the Ministry who introduced the measure, to pass such a Bill. Another objection to a Bill of such vital importance was, that it had been introduced at the fag-end of the session. A Bill of that character ought to have formed one of the chief topics in the Governor's Speech when the Houses were called together. The whole country should have been warned of the intention of the Ministry. Upon these grounds he felt compelled to vote with the Hon. Mr. Prior. The confession of the Postmaster-General that he was anxious to withdraw the measure before hon. members had sufficient time to give expression to their indignant feelings made it unnecessary for him to offer any criticism upon the details of the Bill; but he should like to say a few words with reference to a suggestion which had fallen from the Hon. Mr. Mein, to the effect that members of that House should be appointed for a certain time. If he were not mistaken, that plan had been tried and condemned in another colony, and the reasons which led to its condemnation there were such as to convince anyone that nothing would be more pernicious than the operation of such a plan in that Chamber. The effect would be to destroy the independence of hon. members, because when they felt that their term of office was about to expire, when they were there for their last session, and when they saw the Government then on the Treasury benches was likely to be there in the ensuing session, they would be in fear and trepidation lest they should provoke the ill-will

of the Government. What would be the effect if the seat of the Hon. Mr. Mein, for instance—and there was no more valuable member of that House—were vacated at the end of this session? Did hon. members imagine that he would be reappointed by the present Government? Did they think, too, that if the Hon. Mr. Taylor's seat were also to become vacant that he would be reappointed? He could not look upon more than six or eight members who were likely to be reappointed if their seats were vacated at the end of the session. He was glad to observe that the Postmaster-General had thought it worth his while to withdraw a measure which had been so ignominiously introduced.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said he wished to say a few words upon the matter, but he would be very brief. The Postmaster-General complained of his inability to get a quorum, and that hon. members would not attend to their duties. He held in his hand a return with reference to the present session. It appeared that there had been twenty-seven actual sitting days, the total time occupied being 58 hours and 30 minutes. The average duration of the sittings would therefore be 2 hours and 10 minutes. Of these sittings, two were interrupted by the House being counted out; and in addition to that, there had been seven days on which the House had been unable to proceed to business through the want of a quorum at the time of meeting. Why should they be called together at 4 in the afternoon and sit only up to 6 o'clock? They seemed to be studying the convenience of those hon. members who lived round about town, among whom there seemed to be an understanding that they would not come back after tea: but what in the world had the country members to do with the tea of these hon. gentlemen? How could they expect country members to travel 100 or 150 miles to attend in the Council for one hour in the evening? Why did not the Postmaster-General so arrange the business paper that they would have sufficient business to keep them sitting up to 10 o'clock at night? They would then get through business. He was aware that he had not been there often. He did not intend to be there, in spite of any Standing Order which might say that he should be in contempt if he did not. When the Government wanted his seat they could have it. Perhaps they would put some gentleman who lived in town in his place. He found there were nineteen members in the Council who lived in or about town, and yet the Postmaster-General complained that they could not get a quorum, and the country members were abused because they would not attend to their duties. If they had two full sitting days a week the country would be very well satisfied, and they would be able to get through all that they had to do. He protested most strenuously against members having two, three, or five years' leave of absence, retaining "M.L.C." behind their names, and travelling all round the world with "M. L. C." upon their boxes. He believed, however, that the limit of twelve months' leave of absence, as suggested by the Hon. Mr. Mein, was rather too short. He thought members might be allowed two sessions whether they were away twelve or eighteen months. The absence of the Hon. Mr. Simpson had extended far beyond the proper period. In spite of all his loyalty to Her Majesty, he could not help thinking that she had no right to give that hon. gentleman two years' leave of absence. Her Majesty did not appoint members of that Council, and ought not to interfere in these matters. She was exceeding her powers when she gave the Hon. Mr. Simpson two years' leave of absence. The sooner that was stopped the better, or precedents would be established which every hon. member would think he had a right to follow. If the Queen saw him she would very likely be inclined to give him leave of absence; but that was not the question. The suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Mein relative to the appointment of members for a fixed term would never work. The Hon. Mr. Walsh was rather hard upon the present Government when he talked of their being unlikely to reappoint the Hon. Mr. Mein. If the other side were in office they would be quite as severe upon their opponents as the present Government were likely to be. It was natural that the Government should look after themselves, and be anxious to get positions for their friends.

The HON. F. H. HART said that, as a member of the Standing Orders Committee, he felt bound to give expression to his opinion upon this subject. In adopting the report which the Postmaster-General had proposed, they had recommended that the legislative action should be taken upon sections 23 and 26 of the Constitution Act. They did not say, however, what that action should be, and he for one was taken by surprise when that Bill was laid upon the table. He had gone through the Bill since, however, and he regretted that the Postmaster-General had withdrawn it, because he thought it might be made a good measure. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Mein that leave of absence should be limited to one year. Experience had shown that it was dangerous to limit it to one or two sessions, because they did not know how long the sessions were likely to last. With regard to the question of quorums, and the reduction of the number from one-third to one-fourth, he would point out that when the Constitution Act was passed the number of members of the Council was fixed at fifteen, and the one-third of that number would be five. The present number was thirty-one, and, calculating the quorum upon the same basis, they had ten or eleven. The reduction of the numbers to one-fourth would still give them, for a quorum, three more members than the number originally contemplated by the Constitution Act. The reduction of the quorum would undoubtedly assist them to get through business on many evenings when it would be otherwise impossible to proceed with business after tea. If the Bill had been allowed to go into committee he should have expressed his disapproval of introducing provisions affecting the Legislative Assembly. The provisions of the Bill should be confined to the Standing Orders of their own House.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he understood that the Hon. Mr. Prior had consented to withdraw his amendment. If the House allowed him to do so, he hoped no objection would be raised to the withdrawal of the Bill. The Hon. Mr. Walsh had cautioned the House as to what the Government might do supposing the question of reappointing members arose. From what the hon. member said, anyone would imagine that the present Government went out into the lanes and hedges and appointed the worst members they could possibly find. It was a remarkable circumstance, however, that the Government had appointed the Hon. Mr. Walsh himself. The hon. member's remarks, therefore, amounted to almost censure upon himself. He thought at the time the hon. member was appointed that the Government had made a very wise appointment, and that as the hon. member was an old and experienced politician who had done good service to the country, his appointment was probably deemed a graceful recognition of that service; but if the Hon. Mr. Walsh wished to inform the House that he objected to his own appointment, surely he could not be ex-

pected to differ from the hon. member. The indignation expressed by some hon. members was rather unwarranted. Surely the Government could introduce a measure which was merely intended to provide for the alteration of certain details of the Constitution Act without being subjected to charges of presumption? If the Bill had been introduced by a private member, and that hon. member had gone beyond the scope of the recommendation of the committee, there might be some grounds for censure; but he thought the Government were not going beyond their legitimate sphere when they introduced a measure which sought to amend certain clauses of the Constitution Act. He believed the sense of the House would be with him in that particular.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that the Postmaster-General having consented to the withdrawal of the Bill, he would, with the permission of the Council, withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

The HON. G. SANDEMAN said he desired to say a few words upon this question, which was one of great importance. He rather regretted the action which had been taken by the Postmaster-General, because whether the Bill were carried or not it was necessary to give scope for the full discussion of a question in which both branches of the Legislature were interested. That some measure of the kind should be introduced was not only desirable but necessary. That had been proved by the experience of that session. He would not go into the reasons because they were patent to every member. There were a few points which had arisen in the debate which had taken place to which he would like to refer. With regard to one month constituting the definition of one session, he thought it a great improvement, but he believed it would be scarcely sufficient. A member might be appointed from a distant portion of that large territory, and he would scarcely have time to arrive in Brisbane to save his seat, supposing a prorogation were impending. He thought discretionary power should be granted in the case of members who lived at a great distance from the city. When a member had been assiduous in his attention to his duties, and required to be relieved from those duties on account of ill-health, it was not too much to ask that he might be relieved for more than one session. He thought that in the case of members who had devoted a very great amount of time to the legislation of the country, two years would not be too long a time to give them for recruiting their health. Then with regard to the quorum, he thought that to propose to reduce the quorum to one-fourth of the number of the Council, and to allow that number of members to deal with matters of perhaps the most vital importance to the country—to deal with grave constitutional questions, would be wrong. He thought the limit prescribed by the Constitution Act was sufficient—that the quorum should not be reduced under one-third. The Hon. Mr. Mein had remarked that too great facilities were given to members for absenting themselves, and said that he was in favour of one year's absence being made the limit; and, as he (Mr. Sandeman) said before, he believed if it were put to the majority of the House they would not agree to one year being sufficient. The Hon. Mr. Mein had also enunciated what some hon. members would no doubt designate a conservative principle—that of a nominee House being preferable to an elective House. He (Mr. Sandeman) believed that the true conservative principle would be an elective House. He might be singular in that opinion, but he had studied the question and seen what had occurred in the other colonies, and he believed that if a nominee House had existed in Victoria, when the scenes that took place some two sessions back occurred, matters would have been much worse there than they were now. He believed the time was coming when thinking men would come to the conclusion that, subject to proper conditions, an elective House would be the proper mode of constituting the Legislative Council. At one time he thought that he should never come to that view, but, looking at the experience of the past in these colonies, he had most decidedly come to the view that election was the proper mode of constituting the Legislative Council. He regretted very much that the Bill was about to be withdrawn, and sincerely hoped that if it could not be brought forward again this session, the Government would at anyrate give their best attention to a subject than which there could be none more important for the interests of this country.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said that although the Postmaster-General had stated his intention to withdraw the Bill, he thought it was one of such vital importance to the interests of the whole country that it behoved every member who had formed any opinions upon the subject to give utterance to them on this occasion. He should extremely regret that any hon. member should be influenced by thinking that there was other business waiting to come forward, and be thereby restrained from stating his views with regard to the subject, as it was bound to become a question of very weighty consideration at no remote period. The few points to which he intended to refer were those he was anxious to place on record as his individual opinion in connection with one or two leading features of the Bill. The one he would first deal with was the limitation of the period of absence of members of that House. It was not a new question, and consequently the opinions he had arrived at were the result of very mature deliberation, and he was perfectly satisfied in his own mind that one year would be quite sufficient time to be granted. His reason was similar to that already expressed by several hon. members, and that was that if any member who absented himself beyond the prescribed time possessed such qualification that he would be really a valuable addition to the House, there was no doubt he would, in a very short time after his return to the colony, be again placed on the list of members. Following on this point he could not help referring hon. gentlemen to the limitation of the power of the Crown in special cases, and he should be very sorry indeed to support, under any circumstances, any resolution or amendment in the Constitution Act which would in any way restrict the present powers of the Crown. It was not probable that Her Majesty would be ever advised to give leave of absence to a member of that House without very sufficient and just grounds, and any step that would tend to break up the strong feeling of loyalty and reverence they all had towards the Crown would be one which he should sincerely deprecate. He could not, therefore, under any circumstances, fall in with the view of limiting the prerogatives of the Crown. On the subject of a quorum, he confessed that at one time he was inclined to think it would facilitate business if the number were reduced, but upon further consideration he had now come to the conclusion that it would be far better to leave it where it stood– setting aside an amendment removing the ambiguity that had frequently been pointed out during the last three or four sessions, when there was doubt entertained as to what really constituted a quorum. Amending the Act so far as to make it perfectly clear on that point would be a great improvement. With regard to some remarks which fell from his hon.

friend, Mr. Taylor, he could not help observing that if that hon. member had added to his statement or statistical return of the number of hours the House had sat during the present session, the number of hours that had been wasted in useless and aimless discussion, he would have reduced it by at least one half. It would be invidious, however, to point out where and when that waste of time was brought in. The proposal made to include the Standing Orders of that House—he left out of consideration the part referring to the other House, because he thought they had no right—that it would be very undesirable to attempt to dictate to them what they should do—in the Bill, and make them part of the Constitution Act, was, he thought, undesirable. They saw by experience of the British Legislature that they deemed it always desirable, although they had not got a written constitution like this colony, to have standing orders, which, from time to time, according to the altered circumstances of the country, would admit of some slight modification without involving so important a change as an absolute alteration of the constitution. To obviate the necessity of such a measure he thought it was far preferable that the House should continue to be governed in all its ordinary actions and the conduct of business under standing orders. At the same time, he fully concurred in the opinion, which had been more than once expressed, that it would be exceedingly desirable if that House possessed some absolute power of restricting the action of members, who on more than one occasion, from want of respect to the chair, made use of disorderly remarks, or, in fact, were guilty of any impropriety in the conduct of debate. He thought that in such cases there should be some greater power behind the Standing Orders to coerce or even to punish. They were drifting, and had been for some time past, in a direction which was extremely undesirable; and he should be fully prepared to support any measure to give power to the House to restrain members who acted in the way he had referred to. He should have been better pleased if, instead of withdrawing the Bill altogether, the Postmaster-General had simply stated his intention to only move in committee that the first seven clauses should be considered, as they could then, he thought, have made a very useful measure of it. There were one or two parts of the Bill that he did not agree with, as he had pointed out, but in other respects he should have been glad to see the Bill fairly discussed in committee.

The HON. C. S. D. MELBOURNE said he rose to draw attention to an error that had occurred in the course of the debate. It was stated that permission was granted by Her Majesty the Queen to the Hon. H. G. Simpson; but such was not the case. It was granted by His Excellency the Governor, at the request, he presumed, of the present Government, in the month of January last.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said if the hon. member would look at the date of the permission granted by His Excellency, he would find that it expired on the 31st December, 1879; so that Mr. Simpson must have got further permission in some way.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had to apologise to the House for having unconsciously made a misstatement. He stated that leave was granted to Mr. Simpson by Her Majesty the Queen; but, since making that statement, a letter had been handed to him dated Toowoomba, 30th January, 1879, addressed to the President of the Council, informing him that His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to grant leave of absence to the Hon. H. G. Simpson to the 31st December, 1879. Although that time had expired, as he (the Postmaster-General) read the Constitution Act it cleared Mr. Simpson for a period of two years beyond that. His absence under the 23rd section of the Constitution Act only began to be computed from the 31st December, 1879, so that he had leave for two years further. He believed that was Mr. Simpson's understanding of the leave.

The HON. C. S. MEIN thought, considering the manner in which the discussion had been conducted, it was highly undesirable that the Postmaster-General should persist in his intention of withdrawing the Bill. As far as he could gather the feelings of hon. members, a decided majority of the House was in favour of discussing the Bill in committee. Hardly one member—certainly not more than one member—had intimated an opinion adverse to what was contemplated by the first portion of the Bill. All admitted that there were certain anomalies that it was desirable to amend; and, under these circumstances, why should they not amend those anomalies, even if it was the eleventh hour of the session? The Hon. Mr. Simpson's leave of absence appeared to have expired at the end of last year, but under the 23rd section of the Constitution Act he had a right to absent himself without further permission for two more sessions; and in all probability that would be for two years. At the same time, entertaining the views the Postmaster-General said the Government held, it must be a matter of surprise to find that it was whilst the present Government were in office that this leave of absence was granted, because, no doubt, His Excellency the Governor acted under the advice of his responsible advisers, in accordance with the direction of the Imperial authorities that he was to be guided in all matters of detail by the advice of his responsible advisers. No doubt the Government recommended it, and he was glad to find that they had arrived at the conviction that their action in that respect was wrong, or rather, inadvisable, and that it was highly desirable that an amendment should be made to restrict the unlimited license that was granted to members to absent themselves from the deliberations of the Chamber. He hoped the Postmaster-General would not withdraw the Bill.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior consented to withdraw his amendment conditionally on the withdrawal of the Bill, and he (the Postmaster-General) had therefore no option but to withdraw it.

Bill withdrawn, by permission.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL—SECOND READING.

Resumption of adjourned debate on the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, "That this Bill be now read a second time."

Question—That this Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he was quite surprised at no hon. gentlemen getting up to speak on this Bill. He could only look upon it as a Bill to introduce slavery into the country. He could not see why, in the first place, any employer had not a right to employ such labour as he deemed necessary, and why South Sea Islanders should not be free. Were they not in a free country—on British soil? It had always been the boast of Britain that as soon as a slave placed his foot upon British soil he was free; and why should not South Sea Islanders be free? Was he not under the protection of English laws as soon as he arrived in the colony? and he (Mr. Murray-Prior) thought it was

nothing but slavery to prevent that man from hiring. No doubt this Bill, like any other Act of Parliament, was one that a coach and four could be driven through if it became law; but there were many people who were more conscientious, and would not do so; and as to paying for a license, some few people in towns where these men were known to be very useful might pay the £2, but why should anyone have to pay £2 for employing men who were free men? He only wished they could throw out the Bill. He would sooner see no Bill than a Bill of this sort. There was no doubt that South Sea Islanders were as good, as useful, and as respectable, and as honest men as they had anywhere, and he thought it was a sin to pass a Bill containing some of the clauses that this Bill contained.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said he wished to say a few words upon the Bill, and in discussing it he must go some time back in the history of the colony, to show the difficulty which had existed with regard to labour for the last forty years. Between forty and fifty years ago labour in the colonies was done by convicts, who were useful in their way, and served their turn. Following them came exiles, who were allotted at fair and moderate wages compared with the rate now ruling. Then the goldfields broke out, and employers were obliged to employ another kind of labour, mostly Chinamen, who were imported in large numbers—in fact, such terror did the goldfields cause among employers, that squatting properties became perfectly valueless. He was young at that time, but he recollected that he was offered squatting properties on the Darling Downs at a shilling per head for the stock, the stations being thrown in. They were, of course, not so valuable then as they were now; still the fear caused among employers of labor, at all the men rushing off to the goldfields, was such as he had described. Merchants in Sydney became greatly afraid also. After employing Chinamen, a gentleman was engaged as Immigration Agent, and he went to Germany and selected a large number of Germans, who on being brought to the colony were engaged at a much higher rate of wages than had previously been paid. They served their turn. Then the sugar industry sprung into existence, and the reason that Polynesian labour was first employed in connection with it was because at the busiest moment of sugar-growing the white men then employed by the sugar-planters near Brisbane struck for higher wages. Captain Hope, Captain Towns, Captain Whish, Mr. Raff, and other planters, determined that they would not put up with such treatment, and imported Polynesians, who proved good servants, and saved many planters from being ruined. For years and years he had a great objection to this kind of labour, not because it was unpopular but because he did not like the style of it. His manager told him that if he did not employ it his run would be ruined with Bathurst burr. He resisted for a year or two; but, at last, his manager became so pressing that he agreed to get Polynesians. His manager said it was impossible to get white men to do the work, because burr cutting was carried on at shearing time, and white men who did not like the work engaged elsewhere. His first shipment of Polynesians was ten men, and he spoke with the utmost truth when he said that better men he had never had. They kept his run clear of burr for the two or three years he had them, and gave the greatest satisfaction, and he might say that his manager offered some of them, when their term of service was up, £30, £40, and £50 a-year to stop; yet these were the men who were not to be allowed by the Bill to be employed within towns —who were, he supposed, to be handcuffed and put outside the municipalities. He had employed thirty Polynesians since, and they had also given him satisfaction. With some he had a little trouble, but that was the experience with all kinds of labour. There was a clause in the Bill which stated that Polynesians should not be engaged in towns. There were a great many in Brisbane, Ipswich, Maryborough, Rockhampton, and the other coast towns. How were the Government to act to get at these men? Were they going to set policemen to catch them and put them outside the municipalities? They would find it a more arduous task than they imagined. Some of these Polynesians had been baptised and confirmed, and some had become so much civilised that they had been made members of churches—elders or something like that. He did not know this of his own knowledge, but he had heard it. What was going to be done with these men? Were they to be handcuffed, taken out of their churches, and walked outside the municipality? No doubt some of these men were also married to virtuous women. What was to be done with their wives? Were they also to be handcuffed and walked outside the municipality with their husbands? There were some clauses in the Bill which he considered a perfect disgrace that they should be brought before any Assembly. As for the quality of these men, he said they were good men, and that they served the purposes for which they were introduced. He had none now; still those that he had employed served his turn for the time being, and while he had them they kept his run clear of burr better than he had ever been able to keep it since. They were good, industrious servants, very pliable, and very quick at learning anything to which they were put, and they gave little trouble. It was a strange thing that there should be so much dislike to these men displayed by members of the Assembly. A little while ago the dislike was to the Chinamen, but now it was to Polynesians, who were good men. He seldom saw that they were tried for any offence. He noticed by a paragraph which he had cut out of one of the newspapers, that Bishop Hale lately preached in the Church of England at Maryborough, and the paragraph said that his Lordship also held a confirmation service and baptised twenty-one South Sea Islanders. What was to become of these twenty-one islanders who had been baptised by Bishop Hale? They all knew the style of man the Bishop was, and he did not suppose that his Lordship would baptise a man who was not thoroughly fit to be baptised; still, according to the Bill, they were to be turned out of the towns, and only to be allowed to work where the police magistrate or inspector chose to let them. It seemed a very hard case. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, as he found it contained several clauses which were good; but it also contained several which were bad, and in committee he trusted that members would expunge those clauses. They had heard a great deal lately about the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, but it was nothing compared with the way these Polynesians were to be served. It would be a great hardship if some of the clauses in the Bill were passed. He might state that in 1873 he had a tremendous flood on his station, Cecil Plains. Eight people were then drowned, and had it not been for the kanakas in his service many more would have been drowned. The kanakas were the means of saving the life of a son of his, and of many people. Therefore, he had the greatest feeling for these men for their kindness on that occasion, and on other occasions. He might say, further, that there were millions of acres of Crown lands in this colony not worth sixpence. He knew hundreds of thousands of acres which were not

worth having for the deeds, and it would pay the Government at this moment to give that land away, or sell it at 1s. or 2s. 6d. per acre; and if they allowed the purchasers to bring in kanakas to root up this bad country, clear it of the saplings and underwood which were covering it, it would bring in a revenue; whereas now it was totally useless. He would now point out the clauses to which he chiefly took exception. The second part of the 7th provided that no license should be granted unless the applicant proved to the satisfaction of the Minister that he was engaged in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture, and that the islanders whom he desired to introduce were intended to be employed in such agriculture only. He would like the Postmaster-General to tell him what "tropical or semi-tropical agriculture" meant?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is explained in the interpretation clause.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said that in looking at the interpretation of the words "tropical or semi-tropical agriculture," he noticed that it did not name maize, which was a semi-tropical plant. What was meant in the interpretation clause by the words "or other tropical or semi-tropical productions?" It took a first-class man to find out the meaning of such terms. Then, he came to part 4 of clause 12, which provided that no passenger should be introduced who, in the opinion of the Government agent, was less than eighteen years of age. He would defy any Government agent to tell the age of these islanders, for it was impossible to do so. Besides, he considered that eighteen years was too high an age. He had had boys who were not more than twelve, and he paid as much for introducing them as for men, and found that in the course of three years they became very useful, and more serviceable in some things than men. Yet boys were not to be allowed to come if they were under eighteen years of age! He had a conversation once with Mr. Robert Tooth, a gentleman who owned much machinery up north, who told him that he had to remove his machinery, and that whilst he was engaged doing so all his European labourers, with the exception of the foreman, struck work. The kanakas were put on to the job of removing the machinery, and the foreman declared that he never saw men pick up anything so quickly. He (Mr. Taylor) maintained that the younger they came into the colony the better. He noticed that the Bill was very severe upon shipping arrangements; but with that he had nothing to do—the ships must look after themselves. Clause 19 said no transfer of the services of a labourer should be made except with the full consent of the transferror, the labourer, and the inspector or a police magistrate; nor until a bond for £5 for each labourer intended to be transferred, executed by the transferree and two sufficient securities approved by the inspector, had been given, to provide for the return passage of such labourer to his native island at the expiration of the agreement. All this seemed to him to be throwing the greatest difficulties and obstacles in the way of the employment of this kind of labour. Supposing he had ten Polynesians, and had done with their services, why should he not be allowed to transfer them, or dismiss or discharge them, instead of having to go to all this trouble? Then the clause went on to say that no transfer should be permitted unless the inspector or a police magistrate was satisfied that the proposed transferree was engaged in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture. Suppose that he asked for a transfer of six men from, say, the Postmaster-General, he wondered whether he would get it? He grew wool, corn, hay, and maize, and produced tallow and hides, which were all tropical or semi-tropical products. It really seemed to him that some of the clauses were put in for the purpose of preventing, in every possible way, people engaging Polynesians. Clause 20 he thought most arbitrary. It provided that no employer or other person, except in pursuance of a transfer duly registered, should remove a labourer from the estate or place on which he was intended to be employed without the written permission of an inspector; nor should he employ such labourer elsewhere than on such estate or place without like permission. It was all very well to say that they were to get permission, but if he had four or five estates he was not to remove his labourers from one to the other without permission. That seemed a perfect absurdity. Talk about the iron-hand! The clause also said that no employer or other person who so removed or employed a labourer without such permission, except under a transfer duly registered, should be liable to a penalty not exceeding £10 for every labourer so removed or employed. The whole Bill appeared to him too strict, stringent, and tyrannical in every possible way. Clause 25 was another extraordinary clause—

"From and after the thirty-first day of December, 1881, no person shall employ an islander for a longer period than seven days except under an agreement or license made or granted under the provisions of this Act."

What did the clause mean? Did it mean that there was to be a fresh agreement every week? Were they to have a fresh agreement every time they employed a kanaka for a few days? Clause 26 was equally extraordinary—

"Every employer shall provide his labourers with proper medicine and medical attendance during disease or illness; and any employer who neglects to provide a labourer, when sick, with such medicine and medical attendance, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, and not less than five pounds, and shall further be liable to pay any reasonable expense incurred by an inspector in providing such medicine and medical attendance."

The penalty of £20 was very heavy. For his own part when a kanaka or a Chinaman was sick, he was prepared to treat him as he would treat a white man; and his own experience of hospitals was that kanakas were cared for in these establishments quite as much as white men. Another clause provided that in the event of a kanaka dying the money due to him should be paid to the Colonial Secretary, or to some other officer. He believed the Colonial Secretary had stated in another place that no money due to deceased Polynesians had been received; but the hon. gentleman made a mistake, because he had seen money paid to the Immigration Agent. He could not understand the meaning of the clause which provided that districts were to be proclaimed for the establishment of hospitals. Then there was a provision that employers were bound to contribute to the maintenance of these hospitals. He believed they did so every year in the case of any hospital. Clause 34 ran—

"Any employer in such district who fails to send any of his labourers or islanders to such hospital for treatment when sick shall be liable, on conviction, to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds nor less than five pounds'

That clause was outrageously severe. Here was another clause which would prove excessively inconvenient to persons who desired to employ kanakas for the travelling of stock—

"Any person who, without the consent of an islander, and the written permission of the Minister, removes, or attempts to remove, such islander out of the colony of Queensland except for the purpose of his return to his native island, shall be liable to a penalty of twenty pounds for every islander so removed, or attempted to be removed, and it shall be lawful for the Minister in any case to prevent the removal of such islander except for the purpose of his return to his native island as aforesaid."

It would be very inconvenient if he wished to send 20,000 sheep to New England to be unable to place kanakas in charge without the permission of the Colonial Secretary. If the Colonial Secretary were a political ally he might get permission, but if not he would not get it. It was excessively awkward, to say the least of it, to have to bow to officials for favours of this description. If these objectionable clauses were not expunged in committee, he hoped the Bill would be thrown out upon the third reading.

The HON. L. HOPE said he could not see the wisdom of the Bill. They were confessedly suffering from a dearth of labour, and they were seeking by means of this Bill to place restrictions upon a most valuable description of labour. His own experience was that the kanakas were most conscientious, sober workmen. He could not understand what injury they did to the colony. The chief opposition to their employment seemed to emanate from publicans, who might lose some custom through the introduction of kanakas. These publicans might be described as men who said, "We won't work, and you shan't." The exclusion of Polynesian labourers would be a great check upon the advancement of the colony in many ways. There were many occupations to which they were most applicable. They could always be depended upon, and no sober, industrious white man need complain of being put on one side by kanakas if he were inclined to work. The Bill endeavoured to discriminate between class and class, inasmuch as it allowed black labour to sugar-planters and refused it to others. He agreed with many clauses in the Bill, because they would have the effect of protecting the Polynesians, but there were already sufficient provisions for that in the existing Act, if it were properly administered. It seemed that from the fear of being supposed to countenance this black labour, the Government had shirked the question and brought the matter into the state of muddle in which they now found it. He would be quite prepared to oppose the second reading of the Bill if any amendments were moved.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said he objected to the Bill because it appeared to him to have been brought in as a matter of expediency. He believed the Government had taken action in the matter contrary to their own belief—in fact, the Postmaster-General had himself said that he believed that the Polynesian labour should not be confined to one class of industrial pursuits, but that to stop the feeling against this labour the Bill had been brought in. Personally, he did not employ Polynesians. He always believed in white labour when he could get it, but in the western district, at one time, men were obliged to use Polynesians because they could not secure any other kind of labour. His opposition to the Bill, therefore, was not of a dog-in-the-manger description. Even if Polynesians could be employed in the West he had no desire to employ them. He did not object to the sugar-planters having the advantage of the labour, but it was absurd to say that it was the only kind of labour available for sugar-trashing. His own experience was that white men could do work which no other men could do. Of course white men would not do the work so cheaply, and the price of labour was a matter of some importance to the planter. He could quite understand that it was very necessary for a sugar-planter to have a large body of men under his control. A squatter could allow wool to remain upon the sheep's back, but the sugar-planter could not allow his cane to stand more than a certain time. He did not, therefore, grudge the sugar-planter his labour, but he objected to the Government bringing in a Bill the principles of which they did not believe in. The Postmaster-General was not the only member of the Government who did not believe in them. There was another member of the Government who was well known to be a large employer of kanaka labour who did not believe in them. The Bill, in fact, was simply to stop the mouths of people who were agitating against kanaka labour. He did not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but there were a great many provisions which he would like to see altered in committee. It would appear from the provisions of the Bill that they were treating the Polynesians as slaves. They did not seem to recognise the fact that they might come to the colony to be educated or to receive the benefit of civilisation. Clause 21 said—

> "No employer of a labourer shall charge him with the payment of any moneys on account of stores supplied to such labourer, or deduct any sum in respect thereof from the wages due to him."

Why should not a Polynesian be charged with a certain amount of stores supposing he wanted them at any time in the course of his three years' service? They had heard a good deal about the truck system, but there was none of that in this case. Clause 24, which provided for the re-engagement of time-expired islanders, was very disadvantageous to those islanders who came to the colony, and who having learned a business, and become to some extent civilised, were somewhat averse to return to their islands for good. These men were in a very anomalous position—they became pariahs—no one dared to employ them. If a labourer found he could earn an honest living he should be allowed to do so free of control; and he should be entitled to claim the amount of bond into which the original employer had entered for his passage back. He knew of particular cases where kanaka boys had been employed—where they were satisfied with their employer, and where their employers were satisfied with them. The boys were anxious to go home to the islands and see their friends, with the intention of returning to the colony again to work at white man's wages; but under this Bill they would have to return again as recruits. He quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. Taylor in his reference to hospital provisions. His own experience of hospital accommodation was that kanakas were admitted quite as readily as white men when necessity required, and it was quite right that state of things should exist. In districts where there were a great many kanakas it might be necessary to have a separate hospital; but these clauses were perfectly useless to effect that object, because the amount of money proposed to be contributed would be quite insufficient to build, apart from equipping, any hospital. The second part of clause 30 read—

> "Any employer failing to pay the hospital capitation fee on account of any labourer when required so to do by an inspector shall, in addition to the amount of such capitation fee, be liable to a penalty of ten shillings for every labourer on whose account default in payment has been made."

That was a very good thing; but how was the penalty to be recovered? He could see no provision for that in the Bill. The clause which limited the employment of Polynesians to the colony was a very wise one. They had no right to take the islanders outside the jurisdiction of the colony. He could not agree with the Hon. Mr. Taylor in his remarks upon this subject. With regard to the employment of Polynesians in the travelling of sheep, the tenor of the Bill was to prevent them from having anything to do with sheep, unless it could be proved that sheep were a semi-tropical production. He voted for the second reading of the Bill, because there was some good in it, but he hoped to see it materially altered in committee.

The HON. C. S. D. MELBOURNE said he would direct the attention of the Postmaster-General to what appeared to him to be an omission in the interpretation clause under the heading of employers. The Postmaster-General was doubtless aware that a large number of Polynesians were employed in the pearl-fishing off Thursday Island and the eastern coast of the colony. No provision was made for the employment of these men. The Postmaster-General was also aware that a large amount of money had been invested in this industry, not only by the colony of New South Wales but by residents of that colony, and he thought some provision should be made respecting labourers employed in these fisheries. The industry was one in which there could be no objection to the employment of islanders. He presumed it would not be said that pearl-fishing came within the definition of tropical or semi-tropical agriculture. There was nothing in the Bill which bore upon the subject. If the Postmaster-General referred to a recent return he would see that there was something like £50,000 or £60,000 invested in vessels engaged in these fisheries. If it were intended to carry out the provisions of this Bill rigidly he did not see how Polynesians could be employed, because the amended Constitution Act provided that the jurisdiction of the colony of Queensland should extend from three to five leagues from the coast, and it was within that distance that the whole of these fisheries were carried on. He believed that it was his duty to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because, as previous speakers had remarked, there was a great deal of good in it. Some portions might be eliminated, but there were others which would be of great advantage to the islanders themselves. Clause 21, which related to the payment of wages, was a very important section. Some cases had come to light in which Polynesians had served their full term of three years without receiving a sixpence of their wages. There was a case of insolvency within the last twelve months, in which eighteen islanders appeared as creditors to the amount of £18 each for three years. The 21st section provided for cases of that kind by making the wages payable at the end of every six months. There were other portions of the Bill which were necessary as a protection to the taxpayers of the colony. Some hospitals were obliged to receive Polynesians without any charge—to receive them, in fact, when they were suffering from diseases in which white men would not be admitted. These islanders were kept at a heavy expense to the colony, and no subscription was paid by their employers. In the town of Rockhampton there were generally three or four kanakas in the lockup every Monday morning. That did not altogether agree with the excellent character which the Hon. Mr. Taylor and some other hon. members were prepared to give the islanders. No doubt when they were kept away from the town at work they were all that could be desired, but contact with the towns seemed to demoralise them. The Postmaster-General, he believed, was aware that in a certain portion of Rockhampton South Sea Islanders coming into town behaved in such a manner as to drive white people away, and in fact became a perfect curse and terror to the district. With reference to the remarks of the Hon. J. Taylor, he (Mr. Melbourne) could say that in the neighbourhood of Mackay it would be perfectly impossible for a white man to work out in the sun in the terrific heat of summer in the way kanakas had to do. The plantations were only six or seven miles from the coast, and there was always a heavy muggy heat surrounding the place in which it was impossible for any European to work. It was therefore absolutely necessary that kanakas should be employed on sugar plantations, although there were certain reasons why they should not be employed in towns. Whether it was advisable that they should be employed out in the interior was a matter upon which there was a difference of opinion; and, no doubt, the question would be settled when the Bill went into committee, if it did get into committee. For reasons he had given he intended to support the second reading of the Bill, which he thought it quite possible might be made a good measure in committee.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said that, with regard to the concluding remarks of the last speaker, he had to say, at the outset, that he doubted very much whether the Bill could be made in any way good or useful to the country; for he held this strong opinion—that nothing that in its inception was not founded upon virtue was ever likely, for any length of time, to be beneficial or even useful. He believed that almost every member of the House, including even the Postmaster-General, believed that this Bill had been forced upon the Government for the purpose of disabling the opposition of a certain portion of the colony, and, probably, of propitiating that portion; hence he maintained that a Bill whose origin was of that nature could never be ultimately of much advantage to the country. He did not hesitate to say that he looked upon the introduction of the Bill with pain; he had never read it attentively till that evening, and he did not hesitate to say that he had never read a Bill of such a colour and of such a hue as this. It was not to ennoble or benefit, as far as he could see, these poor unfortunate kanakas, but it was apparently to make them such slaves as would prevent them coming to the country—to fetter both them and their employers with such obligations as would prevent them coming to the country, either willingly or unwillingly. That was a great defect in the Bill. Far rather than bring these men down to the level of slaves, as this Bill did, they should either give them the utmost freedom to go here and there wherever they liked—for when they landed upon English soil they were as free as the rest of the people—either that or they should keep them out of the country altogether. Here they introduced a law which provided that the moment these people set foot in the colony they were, probably for the first time in their lives, to be made slaves; they were not to be free agents. Such an Act would not only be a discredit to their statute-book, but was the very reverse of the way in which they should treat these people. If such care was exercised to protect and throw such a shield about these kanakas, why was not the same care taken of the immigrants who had landed upon their shores that very day? Why did not the Government see that they were provided with hospitals, that they got their wages paid duly, and that they got proper rations and clothes given to them? Why was not the same attention, and protection, and kindness—if kindness it were—shown to them by their employers returning them to the country they came from? Why should they insist that kanakas, who come here to make the country their home, should be sent back to the country they come from, and not mete out the same kindness to immigrants? They did not hear kanakas grumbling about coming to the country, but they heard hundreds of Englishmen saying they had been allured and decoyed to the country; and why should not their employers return them to the country they came from, after having the same care taken of them that they provided should be taken of kanakas? It was a gross injustice, he maintained, to white men if it were absolutely necessary to make all these provisions for the protection of the black. The question with regard to the

employment of kanakas in the tropical parts of the colony had been successfully answered by the Hon. Mr. Melbourne in his remarks with reference to the district of Mackay. He (Mr. Walsh) endorsed all that hon. member had said on that subject, because during a short visit he (Mr. Walsh) paid there, Lord Normanby actually took evidence from white men on the plantations as to whether they were in favour of the employment of black labour, and he heard no contradiction of it ; on the contrary, he heard them explain to Lord Normanby the necessity for kanakas being employed, because there was work, not only in trashing and cutting cane in the field, but in the boiling-house, which no white man could possibly do. Apart from that, there was an enormous tract of this colony that was not exactly suitable to the growth of agricultural produce such as that mentioned in the interpretation clause of the Bill; he was now speaking of the far northern district, and of the Gulf country especially. He knew there was work out there—even shepherding, bullock-driving, and fencing—that white men could not do in that open treeless country, which at the same time was some of the richest country in Queensland. He had heard from people who had been there, and who were now there, that without kanakas they could do no work at all. The masters themselves were obliged to live like slaves. One gentleman wrote to him begging him to send him some kanakas to put up some fencing, as no white men could do the work. There were thousands of miles of such country that would be stocked, and peopled by ten times as many white people as were there at this time, if they could get Asiatic or some other tropical labour to do the drudgery ; and until they could get that kind of labour that part of the country would not be doing even justice to Queensland because it would be comparatively unstocked, and unoccupied, and unknown territory. Lately the Government had been furnished with a report of a splendid river discovered, he believed, by an officer of their own, in which he gave such a description of the country that would lead all readers of his despatch to think that it was a place where boundless wealth could be invested in the cultivation of every tropical production ; but it would remain a locked-up country until some Asiatic or other coloured labour was employed there. Supposing capital could be introduced to invest in the production of such products as that officer said could be grown there, such as rice and sugar, would they get capital to flow into that part of the country if their statute-book were encumbered with this Bill ? It was not likely. They knew it had been said, and said most truly, that when it was officially announced that this Bill was to be introduced, the large sugar company of New South Wales abandoned the project they had of sending up capital and a person to take up a large tract of country for them. That was the effect of the announcement that employers were to be further fettered with a Bill to control the management and introduction of suitable labour, and the country had been deprived of all the advantage in that particular case. He would tell hon. gentlemen this one fact—that if they could not grow their own sugar with black labour they would not grow it at all. He came to that conclusion from the one fact that he did not know any sugar-producing country where white men were employed as labourers. His eye roamed over every part of the world within the tropics, and in every country where sugar was produced from sugar-cane only coloured labour produced it ; and it was the same with all other tropical productions. Why did they not grow their own coffee, tea, and rice, as they ought to be doing after twenty years' occupation of the country ? They had some of the finest country in the world for it. Gentlemen from Batavia and Ceylon, who had travelled all over the colony, said they could produce almost every tropical product ; and why should these fine tracts of country not be occupied at the present time and assist in raising this colony to the greatest position of any colony in the southern seas ? It was because of the jealousy of people in the southern part of the colony, and of Brisbane in particular. That was the reason why the colony was being retarded. Three-fourths of the country was tropical country, and that three-fourths was being debarred from turning its efforts to producing that which Nature evidently intended it should produce. God had given them a fine, grand territory, with a splendid climate for the growth of tropical products ; but men in the southern portion of the country, where nothing would grow, had marred the efforts of the Almighty in that respect. He should not vote for the second reading of the Bill if a division was called, because it made a slave of the kanaka and a slave of the employer by placing him entirely at the mercy of the Government, or even of the inspector. The man who had to carry out all these arrangements to the satisfaction of the inspector would be that man's slave if he did not propitiate him in some way. In confirmation of the necessity of employing dark labour in the North for more than agricultural production, he could say that he had heard Captain Bedwell, who was lately in charge of the coast survey, say over and over again that he could not get a white crew to do surveying work along the coast, and that it was absolutely necessary to get kanakas to do the work. There were so many defects in the Bill that he could not see that it would ever get through committee, and if it did hon. members might rest satisfied that it would never come back to them from the other Chamber. Therefore, he thought it was better to take a stand at once and either reject the Bill altogether, or—which he thought would be more creditable to them as Englishmen, who ever maintained that there should be no slaves where they existed or governed—retain only the first clause, which he believed to be the only good clause in the Bill. Then they should not be shirking their duty but would be doing it, and doing it to the satisfaction of three-fourths of the people of the country. The Bill would then read, "The Polynesian Labourers Act of 1868 is hereby repealed." That should be the beginning and the end of the Bill. Let them take the highest grounds they could for rejecting the Bill. The very lowest that could be advanced they knew had been advanced for the purpose of introducing it, and let them take the highest ground for rejecting it—that it was unworthy of Englishmen—that there should be no slaves amongst them—that they drew no distinction between the freedom of whites and blacks in this country—that the black man should be allowed to go where he liked, and that white employers should be allowed to employ the labour he liked ; and let them both be bound by the ordinary laws of the country and no other. With regard to the treatment of these islanders after they had served their term of agreement, he would point out that there were hundreds of blacks in the towns of this colony who were a credit and an honour to mankind; who attended their churches ; who contributed to their charities. Who contributed more freely, for instance, to the Brisbane Hospital than kanakas ? Who attended their churches, *pro ratâ*—according to their numbers in Brisbane and other towns—more frequently than kanakas ? When he (Mr. Walsh) was last at Maryborough he sat amongst twenty or twenty-five kanakas, and better behaved men he never wished to be amongst.

He had also seen many of them attending churches in Brisbane; and these were the men who under this Bill would be driven out of the towns because no man would be such a slave as to place himself at the foot of the Government by having to ask for a license to employ them. He had often given a kanaka who applied to him a few days' work, not because he wanted the work done, but because he thought it a duty; but under this Bill he would be precluded from doing so unless he took out a license; and was this poor man to stand shivering in the cold, and perhaps hungry as well, while he (Mr. Walsh) obtained this permission to employ him? That would occur with him and in hundreds of other cases. He said the Bill was bristling with cruelty and the degradation of the very men it professed to benefit. He knew at that moment a kanaka employed within almost a stone's-throw of himself who was one of the best servants he ever saw. His present employer gave him fifteen shillings a-week, and he knew one employer who would give him a pound a-week, he did his work so well. Was that man to be hunted out of the town and be prevented taking service simply because publicans and other jealous people had induced the Government to bring in this Bill? It certainly did seem odd to him (Mr. Walsh) that almost one of the first acts of the Colonial Secretary was to employ a number of these men himself, in spite of a regulation passed by his predecessor contrary to the Act, and that immediately after he should bring in a Bill of this kind which would have the effect of preventing his neighbours from also availing themselves of the services of these men. If kanakas were indented to one man out in the Warrego or Mitchell for a number of years, why was that man's neighbour to be prevented getting them also if he required them? Simply because the Government thought it necessary in order that they might avert opposition to themselves. He honoured the Colonial Secretary for his action on that occasion: he (the Colonial Secretary) knew that the regulation that had been passed by his predecessor was contrary to law, and, to show that, he not only abrogated that illegal regulation but acted upon the law himself by immediately employing a large number of these kanakas. The Colonial Secretary when he did that did a noble act—a thrice noble act; but it was all undone now by the introduction of such a Bill as this, and for the reasons stated in introducing it. He thought that as there were some hon. gentlemen who had pledged themselves to vote for the second reading of the Bill, the best thing he could do to get them out of the dilemma was to move that the Bill be read that day six months. He hoped that hon. gentlemen would prefer to live under the old Act—if they did not repeal it now, now they had the opportunity of doing so—rather than spend nights and nights, which they would have to do, in eliminating some of the worst parts of this Bill, and then find as the result of their efforts that the Bill in its amended shape would be probably treated with contumely in another place. He moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

The HON. G. SANDEMAN said he did not like to allow this question to pass without making some observations upon it. He did not look upon it as a question of sentimentality, or as a question for pandering to political pressure, but as a question upon which the future of a very large portion of this large territory was dependent. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Walsh that unless they resorted to the introduction of a class of labour fitted for the tropical parts of the colony they should never be able to develop the resources of a large portion of the colony. Believing that the question had been treated in the most unjust manner by former Governments, and that it was not being treated as it should be even under the present Government, he should gladly join the hon. member in throwing out the measure; but he looked at an interest which none of them ought to ignore. It was one of great importance to the colony at present, and would be of great consequence to its future. He spoke of the sugar industry, and he felt reluctant—in fact, he did not feel justified in voting for the rejection of the measure, if it were only for that reason. He would not at present go into the unjust, the one-sided view which had been taken of the employment of this class of labour; but if the Bill were thrown out now they should very likely in the future have a change of Government, and should throw the question into the hands of a Government who did the gross injustice of passing a resolution which made slaves of these islanders. He said slaves advisedly. He had seen a great deal of these islanders; he had employed them, although he was prohibited from doing so now; and he was prepared to state that if any islander who had been employed in the colony were asked whether he would go to a sugar plantation or into the interior he would prefer to take the employment in the interior. The employers in the interior had been grossly libelled, he believed, and he was certain that if the statistics of health were properly gone into it would be found that the death-rate in the interior was far less than it had been on the sugar plantations. He knew that to be true. He should be sorry to leave the question to the tender mercies of those who had acted so unjustly on former occasions, and therefore, for the sake of the most important interest which he had mentioned, he did not feel justified in voting for the throwing out of the Bill. But he hoped that if the measure went into committee they should be enabled to make good improvements in it.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that when he rose before he said very little upon the Bill—in fact, he knew there ought to be discussion and therefore he stood out, being in a great measure unprepared to speak. He would now give his reasons why he would support the Hon. Mr. Walsh if the question went to a division, and he hoped the reasons he should give would also have some effect upon some hon. members who had spoken in favour of allowing the measure to go into committee. The Hon. Mr. Taylor had taken to pieces every clause which he (Mr. Prior) had marked, and had very ably shown how badly the Bill would work, and how numerous would be the amendments which would have to be inserted to make it anything like a Bill suitable to the House. He had not the slightest doubt that the Bill, if it went into committee, might be made a fair measure; and, if the House only had to deal with it, he should say by all means let it go into committee. But hon. gentlemen who had had experience respecting Bills coming from another place, in which there had been numerous amendments made by the Council, must be aware that the way a Bill left with amendments was very different from the form in which it was ultimately passed. In another place the amendments of the Council were, perhaps, to a certain extent agreed to, but others were disagreed to, and the Bill went backwards and forwards, and the result was that generally, for the sake of peace, the amendments which were ultimately passed were not the amendments which the Council first brought out. If they had no law dealing with this question, and if it were a question whether the whole matter should be thrown out, it would be quite a different thing. They had another Act, however, and a very

workable one if it was properly looked after by the Government. The Hon. Mr. Sandeman had given, as a reason for voting for the Bill, that if another Government came in they would bring in a measure much worse than this; but he would ask hon. gentlemen if they had it not in their power to do their duty to the country, and prevent the passing of such a measure? The Government might then frame regulations and carry them out, but that could only last for a time. It could not go on for ever; and he would ask what Government could bring in a worse measure than the Bill before them was as it stood? It was prohibitory —it was entirely class legislation. It was not to protect kanakas, but to drive them out of the colony; and no man with the feelings of a gentleman, no honest man, would place himself in the position which this Bill would place him in if he hired Polynesians under it. There was no doubt that sugar never could be grown to pay in this country with white labour, but he might say that throwing out this Bill would in no way injure the sugar-planters. Kanakas could be employed under the old law in the manner in which they had been for years, and certainly of all classes the planters were the last that any Government would attempt to dispossess of kanakas. He would simply say that if they went into committee and made amendments, their amendments were almost certain not to become law in their entirety. They had now a numerous House, and he hoped on a division to see hon. gentlemen who had hitherto spoken in favour of going into committee—not one had spoken in favour of the Bill, everyone had spoken against it—vote for its rejection. That kanakas might give trouble in town was not very extraordinary. Where would they find a body of men who had saved money, who were not tempted by publicans? A few kanakas doubtless did commit crimes; but in that respect kanakas were not worse than our own countrymen. At the same time they had the testimony of many hon. gentlemen who had mixed with kanakas, and they had given them a character as honest and industrious workmen on the whole, and that their being out here had done them good and had done good to the country and to the employers. For his own part he had employed kanakas in former years, and he would undertake to say that among six men five were better Christians than anyone on the station. He had no hesitation in saying so; it might be a shame to those on the station, but the kanakas were practically better Christians than any of the white people on the station. They were an example to them; he never heard any filthy language from them, and they did their duty. Why should they exclude them? As far as the Bill was concerned he thought that it would be better to shelve it.

The HON. F. J. IVORY said that, as a free-trader and an antagonist of all class legislation, he could only say that he could not support the Bill. It seemed to him that it might well be termed a Bill to make provision for cheap labour for sugar-planters, and otherwise to prevent the employment of coloured labour. If they read the Bill carefully through they would find that in clause 47 it was stated that the averment in any information under the Act, that any person named therein was a labourer, islander, or passenger, should be sufficient proof thereof until the contrary was shown. Supposing he had some coloured labourers coming from Ceylon, New Caledonia, Fiji, or some other island, any person who wished to put him to trouble had only to lay an information, and if he lived in the interior he might possibly have to ride 60, 100, or 200 miles to defend himself. No man would be in a safe position in employing any person with a coloured skin if such a Bill as this became law. There was another reason for his opposition. He was an advocate for cheap labour, maintaining that cheap labour was simply capital introduced into the colony. If they had cheap labour the value of the capital at present in the country would be doubled, and consequently the colony would be better developed than it could otherwise be. At the present time the cry was for more capital, and in this labour they had capital for the development of many industries which could not be established for the want of it. If they carried the objection that had been raised to the employment of kanakas to its natural conclusion they should exclude labour-saving machinery, because it interfered with labour in the colony, and they would justify the actions of the weavers in the olden time, who broke, on the same principle, all the machinery that they could lay hands on in England. Hon. members had heard from everyone who had been an employer of these kanakas that they were decent, trustworthy, painstaking people. He had had sixteen in his employ, and there was not one that he could say a word against, and during the three years that they were in his service he never had a moment's trouble with them. The fact of the matter was, that the antagonism which had sprung up against them had originated in the interior. He had not the slightest doubt that it had originated with the publicans and storekeepers, because the Polynesians did not get their wages paid in the interior, so that the publicans and storekeepers might have milked them dry before they came to the coast. There were many clauses which had been well characterised as introducing a system of slavery. What could be more unjust than the case he should put before the House? A gentleman had told him of this circumstance: He had had several boys who had been good servants; he was pleased with them, and they were pleased with him. They had a document from him written upon parchment which they were supposed to present the moment they arrived in the river on their return from their island, stating that they wished to enter his employment. Supposing the Bill passed, if the boys came here, almost as free passengers, for the purpose of engaging with that particular employer, they would be told that they could not go to him, as the Act prevented it. Instead of entering his employment and getting £30 a-year they would be told that they must go to the sugar-planter to serve another three years for £6 a-year. Was there any justice or any credit in passing a Bill of that kind? He knew that his boys, who left him about nine months ago, would be only too glad to come back to him, and he should be only too glad to take them; but the Bill would not allow him to employ them. It was a piece of the grossest class legislation which he could picture. It would be exclusively confined to sugar-planters—as if they had not been sufficiently protected already. Had they not been protected by a duty of £5 per ton on sugar? Had they not had facilities granted to them for taking up the best lands in the colony at very low prices? Had they not exclusively, at the present moment and under the late Ministry, made importations of this class of labour? They were protected to a large extent during that time, and now the Legislature were to perpetuate that condition of things. If they were to judge according to the feelings which were supposed to exist throughout the colony, but which he should be sorry to think did exist, they were to believe that although the kanaka was an unmixed evil to introduce, still, forsooth, the sugar industry was of such material moment to the welfare of the colony that they might do evil that good might come from it. If kanakas were

bad, he for one would go with those who said that they should be excluded; but if they were good, why should the Legislature bolster up one industry at the expense of another? and he maintained that was what they were doing. There was another matter for consideration. Their sheep were being pushed back into the interior, and the old class of shepherds had died out altogether. His theory for that was that this class of labourers—who, when they found old age coming on them, used to flock into the interior and take to shepherding as a last refuge—did now, owing to the farming population on the coast, owing to the sugar industry, and owing to the concentration of population in the districts, manage to keep up a precarious living by going from place to place to do odd jobs rather than go into the interior. He said it without fear of contradiction—that it was impossible to pick up shepherds of the old class; and what was the consequence? He took his own district, which was not an exceptional one, as an example. Owing to its being second-class country for sheep, they only thrived when particularly well attended to; and he believed that if a class of labour such as the kanaka, who could be depended upon, who would do what he was told, and required no overseering or watching, had been allowed to be employed in the Moreton, Burnett, and Wide Bay districts, a very large number of sheep would be still reared in those parts of the colony; and in so doing he maintained that not only would they be benefiting the colony, but they would be absolutely finding more employment for white labour than would be otherwise required. Any gentleman who was conversant with these matters must know that everyone who had sheep required a large number of labourers. Granting that kanakas were allowed to assist them on the stations, a large quantity of supplies would have to be brought up, and the carriers would get employment; furthermore, the sheep would require to be washed and shorn, and white labour would be employed for that, for it was not to be supposed that one would pick up a number of boys for that purpose. There was more employment in many shapes and forms in connection with sheep than there was with cattle, and the consequence of doing away with this class of labour and confining it exclusively to the plantations would be that country which would otherwise be supporting sheep would be turned simply into cattle-supporting country and be very sparsely populated. The Hon. Mr. Graham had made a very good point indeed, and one which he thought a great deal of. Why were they in this colony going quite adverse to the spirit of the age? Why were they, after having introduced these Polynesians—after having taught them what it is to know the benefits of civilisation—to tell them at the end of their three-years' service that they must go back, that they must be savages again, that they would not be allowed to live amongst civilised people? That was what the Bill amounted to. Every precaution was taken in it to force these people to go back to be savages again, and possibly to be greater savages than they originally were. A sentimental view had been taken of the matter in many instances, but he was glad to find that it was dying out. Very few people would state now that Polynesians would not thrive better in the interior than on the coast. The recent revelations at Maryborough showed that the most horrible cases of death and destruction of these creatures had taken place on the coast. He might say that his sixteen boys were all healthy when they left his service, but unfortunately when they got to Maryborough one died. Very few sugar-planters at Maryborough or Mackay could say that they did not have any deaths among a corresponding number of their islanders. He did not think that they should hear anything more of the sentimental question. The Act at present in force was sufficient for all purposes. The only bad point in it was the invidious position in which the Colonial Secretary was placed. According to the Act, it was quite clear that kanakas were entitled to go anywhere and that anybody was entitled to employ them, but that was prevented owing to the Hon. Mr. Douglas, when Colonial Secretary, issuing in his autocratic way a regulation entirely at variance with the Act which expressly allowed pastoralists to engage kanakas. Owing to Mr. Douglas' action and to what happened while the present Colonial Secretary was away in the North, all the trouble had arisen. He agreed with every word which had been said against the Bill. It seemed to him utterly abominable, but at the same time he knew that there was a very strong feeling againt these unfortunate kanakas. The colony had been importing from the home country of late a discontented class of labourers—trades-unionists who had been forced out of England. The major part of the people who had been imported of late were men who had been discontented with the labour market at home, and who brought with them all their antipathies and antagonistic feelings to men who had worked themselves into positions of independence; and it was to pander to the feelings of these people that a young colony like this was supposed to sacrifice all its best interests and the patrimony which was in the hands of the present inhabitants. Was a young colony like this not gasping for labour? How many industries could be supported and fostered if cheap labour were obtainable? Spice, rice, tea, and coffee could not be produced without cheap labour, yet they were to pass a piece of class legislation and prevent themselves being benefited. They had imposed upon one of the most industrious races a penalty of £10 for coming into the colony, which was another instance of giving way to popular clamour. He hoped the House would do nothing of the kind in this instance, but would do all that in it lay to prevent such principles as were embodied in the Bill becoming law.

The HON. K. I. O'DOHERTY said he was unfortunately not present at the commencement of the debate, but he was glad to observe that so much good feeling had manifested itself in spite of the variety of opinion which had been expressed. He had had some experience in legislation affecting Polynesian labour. He had introduced a Bill in the other Chamber to repeal the Polynesian Act, but he had lived long enough to rejoice that the proposal he made had not been acceded to. He had been led to move for the repeal of the Act at that time because of the odium which had been brought upon the colony from the depredations and atrocities that had been perpetrated in the South Sea Islands by those who attempted to kidnap and carry the islanders off by force. The step taken by the Imperial Government, however, had put an end to the continuance of anything of that kind. He believed the point raised by the Hon. Mr. Melbourne was worth the consideration of the Government. It was very desirable that the employment of Polynesians in the pearl fisheries should run on undisturbed. It seemed to him, from what remarks he had heard, that the consideration of the Bill introduced by the Government must take one of two shapes—one was the treatment of kanakas along the coast, and the other their treatment in the interior. He must confess that he listened with pleasure to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Ivory, with reference to the employment of this labour in the interior. He thought

too much could not be said in favour of kanaka labour as a savage labour. They must consider themselves extremely fortunate that they had along their coast a number of islands inhabited by men who were destined to be of so much advantage to Queensland employers in the future; but he thought that the very fact that they had such a description of labour within a stone's-throw of their territory made it incumbent upon them to take every possible step to prevent their intercourse resulting, as it had too frequently resulted in similar cases in other parts of the world, in the destruction of the race. He thought the Bill should be regarded in a different light to that in which it had been regarded by some who had spoken that evening. Take, for example, the coast line of the colony, especially the northern parts of it. It was of the utmost importance—not merely that the sugar industry, but the other industries—the growth of tea, coffee, and spices—should have every encouragement. He did not think that anyone who had studied that Bill would say that the provision placed before them would have any other effect but to encourage in a marked degree those industries. Dr. Thompson and Dr. Wray had reported upon the condition of the islanders in that part of the colony. In their report these gentlemen said—

"The experience on most of the plantations was, that dysentery becomes epidemic during the summer and early autumn months, and that new arrivals suffer most. Notably, however, at Magnolia and Alpha, while the epidemic nature of dysentery was admitted, it was denied that it was the chief disease, pulmonary consumption being more common; nor was it allowed that it attacked chiefly the young, for old hands suffered in like proportion.

"But whatever diseases may be giving rise to the mortality, this last is certainly appalling. In England, the death-rate of the adult male population (a population relieved of the diseases of infancy and childhood, of those of old age, and of those peculiar to women), reckoning from 16 to 32 years of age, is as nearly as possibly nine (9) per thousand (1,000) per annum.

"The kanaka population in the Maryborough district might also be looked upon as an adult-male one, and yet the mortality in the year 1879 was seventy-four (74) per thousand (1,000), while on Yengarie, Yarra Yarra, and Irrawarra, the plantations belonging to R. Cran and Co., the mortality for the five and a quarter (5¼) years ending 31st of March, 1880, was ninety-two (92) per thousand (1,000), and for the year 1879, one hundred and seven (107) per thousand (1,000), and for the three (3) months ending 31st March, 1880, one hundred (100) per thousand."

The report of these gentlemen spoke volumes in favour of the measures proposed in this Bill to prevent such an enormous death-rate. He agreed with Mr. Ivory that those kanakas who had been imported into the interior were placed in a better condition—from a sanitary point of view—than those who were located upon the coast. He would have no objection to the employment of kanakas in the interior of the colony provided that they understood the English language. He had such a belief in the intelligence of those people that he was sure that if they went to any part of the colony possessing a knowledge of the English language they would be a great advantage to employers; but to allow Polynesians fresh from the islands to be cast into the interior without understanding their language would be inhuman. Upon that ground alone he went with those who opposed islanders being sent beyond what might be called the protection proposed to be afforded them under the terms of that Bill. Hon. members who took his view of this matter could come to no other conclusion than that every provision of that Bill was absolutely called for. He remembered when the measure for Polynesian protection was first introduced into the Lower House, that all these measures of protection were suggested; but the Government found it impracticable to carry them out, the machinery required being of such an expensive character. He happened to know the effect of not having some special place of refuge for sick kanakas; he had had a good deal of experience with them. They could not be received, as a rule, among the ordinary class of patients; they had a special ward into which these kanakas were put. No one understood a word they said, and the difficulty of knowing what to do with them was extremely great. Considerations of that kind justified in the highest degree the action which had been taken upon the reports of the gentlemen who had been commissioned to investigate the condition of the Polynesians. It was essential to the safety of the Polynesians that proper hospitals should be appointed for them. These institutions having been established, the Government would probably appoint interpreters and others who would know how to deal with kanakas with a view to save their lives. At the present time there was an immense mortality, from the fact that in the hospitals into which they were received there was no possibility of their being treated as they ought to be treated. Hon. members who spoke of that Bill as a measure of class legislation ought to feel their minds relieved when they reflected that it did not impose any tax upon the general revenue. The planters themselves were to be taxed, and surely there should be no objection to that. However desirable it might be to amend the Bill in committee, he hoped the second reading would be passed in order that these sanitary provisions might be employed. He would support the second reading, and, if any hon. member would propose a clause providing that all islanders who understood the English language should be in a position to seek employment in any part of the colony, he would support him.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER said he, in common with other hon. members, had felt very interested in the excellent speech of the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty. The hon. member had thrown a good deal of light upon the subject, and some good points had also been raised by the Hon. Mr. Ivory. He was of opinion that the measure the Government had introduced was based upon perfectly sound principles, and he did not attach any importance to the clap-trap which they had heard from some hon. members relative to interference with the liberty of the subject. They were perfectly justified in making these regulations in view of the conditions under which the Polynesians laboured side by side with Europeans. Moreover, Polynesians would only be birds of passage. At the same time, he agreed with the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty that when Polynesians had been labouring for some time in this colony they should be free to use their labour as they pleased. He did more, and thought that at least in the coast parts of the tropics the employment of Polynesians should be available to every industry. In the tropical parts of the colony white labour could not exist for any length of time. He should vote for the second reading of the Bill, hoping that in committee it might be so amended as to become a really good measure.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said that, after the many able speeches that had been delivered to-night, he would not detain the House more than a very few minutes. There was no need to enlarge upon the question of the benefits to be derived by the introduction, on a proper principle, of islanders into Queensland; at the same time, the debate had brought out one or two salient points which might be very properly dwelt upon at that stage. The Bill must present itself to the minds of everybody as one which had been introduced simply with a view of endeavouring to stamp out the introduction of Polynesians into the colony. To suppose other-

wise would be an insult to the intelligence of hon. members and of the other branch of the Legislature. Whether that would be for the benefit of the country was a subject for their discussion. It was clear that it was greatly to the advantage of Queensland that the introduction of islanders should continue; but under the proposed Bill they would be made but little better than slaves. As Britons, they prided themselves on their freedom and the freedom they gave to every man who came among them, whatever his colour, creed, or nation; and yet they were asked to place the islanders under disabilities greater than those attempted to be placed on the much-maligned Mongolian. Why should they, under a false pretence, say that this Bill was for the benefit of the Polynesians? It was not. If the Government took up the old Polynesian Act, and amended a few clauses, giving protection where it was necessary, they would do a great deal better than by attempting to pass such a Bill; for the measure would have to be so radically changed before it became workable that its own godfathers would not know it when it was returned. As to the effect the introduction of islanders had upon European labour, it was a perfect fallacy to imagine that it was hurtful; on the contrary, the introduction of islanders in much larger numbers would materially increase the demand for European immigrants. He had on one occasion ruined his chance of being returned on a contested election by giving utterance to an opinion of that kind. He felt that he could not support the Bill as a whole, and in amending it the Bill would get so mangled that the other Chamber would not accept the alterations, and they would come into collision with it needlessly. Several hon. gentlemen had alluded to the question of hospitals, and to the cost of the maintenance of kanakas there. In every instance that had come under his notice—and they had been many—when kanakas were sick they were sent to the hospital, the expenses were paid by their employers, and they had quite as much nursing as any European. With regard to the number sent to the hospitals, a much larger per centage of European cripples, imported into the country by the Government as free immigrants, went there and became a burden on the country, than Polynesians. He trusted the result of the debate, whatever it might be, would cause the Government to insert a few amending clauses into the existing statute, giving a little additional protection to the islanders. Even if the Bill passed its second reading, he was certain it would not emerge from the committee without the excision of one-half its clauses.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had been exceedingly surprised at the tone of the debate. Having been for some years a member of the other branch of the Legislature, and having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the current of public opinion on the question, it seemed singular that a number of members should have their eyes closed to the unmistakable direction of public opinion on the subject. Had it not been repeatedly shown in the representative House that a large majority had united to carry out legislation of a restrictive character with reference to the importation of Polynesians? Year after year Bills had been brought in and the principle affirmed by a majority; and the Bills had only been prevented from being sent up to the Council by means of obstruction on the part of the minority. Not only in the present Parliament had it been distinctly shown that the people demanded some restriction in the employment of Polynesian labour, but also in the former Parliament. Under the constitution under which they lived, whenever there was an unmistakable expression of public opinion on any subject it was the duty of that House to yield. The matter had been carefully debated during a great many days in repeated sessions in the Lower House, and there was an almost unanimous opinion there that some such measure was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the colony. He was surprised to hear hon. members who were employers of labour get up and say this movement was caused by a mere clap-trap cry raised by a few interested publicans and storekeepers. Such an accusation was an insult to the people of the colony. He knew of many men who had no interest in the employment of Polynesians, and also men who were large employers of them, who said that they did not believe in the unrestricted introduction of that kind of labour, and a number of honest, virtuous, and educated people had assured him that they did not believe in Polynesians being scattered broadcast in the interior and employed in avocations which could be carried on successfully by the labour of their fellow-countrymen. He had no prejudice against Polynesians; on the contrary, he had a most kindly feeling towards them. He had employed them occasionally and they gave faithful service. All other things being equal, he should feel inclined to be in accord with those hon. members who urged that Polynesians should be open to engagements by all classes of employers, so long as certain necessary restrictions for their well-being were carried out. The feeling of the people, however, was unmistakably demonstrated. They were bound to yield, or at least to pay deference, to the opinion of intelligent and disinterested men. It had been urged that the Government had introduced this measure to propitiate a certain class, and that the white immigrants introduced were of an inferior class; and stigmas had been cast upon numbers of their fellow-countrymen who had settled in the colony, and who were dependent for the livelihood of themselves and their families on the prosperity of the various interests in it. It was quite untrue that the Government had introduced the Bill to propititiate any class. It was introduced in deference to the deliberate and almost unanimous opinion of the people of the colony. They might resist that expression of opinion in the Council, and they might throw the Bill out, and for years obstruct the settlement of the question; but if hon. members would remember what was done by the last Government that was in power, they would see that it would be just as much in the power of succeeding Governments to decree that no licenses should be issued at all. If hon. members would remember that fact, they would see that it was better to accept the Bill now presented to them than to risk the disturbance of the principal industry of the colony by the revulsion of feeling that might follow the rejection of the Bill by the House. He did not apologise for the action taken by the former Premier in making regulations which the statute did not give him authority to make. But there was no doubt he had the feeling of the majority of the country behind him. If that was the case, and if a Bill was rejected by the Upper House the principle of which had been repeatedly affirmed by members of the representative Chamber, they might soon get a Ministry into power who would risk all consequences and stop the introduction of islanders altogether. Viewing the matter in that light it would be better to accept the Bill—perhaps in a modified form—rather than leave the question in an unsettled state, and liable to the intervention of Ministries who might come into power on the strength of popular feeling that carried everything before it. It had been said

that the industries of the country were languishing because the Government interfered with labour of that kind. It was perfectly true that enterprise had been interfered with, and that many persons willing to take up the northern lands for the cultivation of sugar and other tropical products had been deterred by the belief that legislation of a hostile character would take place. He had heard from sugar-growers themselves that they had every year been in a state of constant apprehension lest Parliament should pass a measure which would deprive them of the labour and the means of making their industry successful; and anything that would tend to settle that much-vexed question would be preferable to leaving it in its present unsettled condition. Every hon. member must know that in business matters uncertainty was the most difficult thing to be contended with. A man with money to invest always wanted to know the worst that he would have to encounter; and, therefore, to either reject the Bill summarily, as the Hon. Mr. Walsh suggested, or to destroy it in committee, as several hon. gentlemen had intimated it was their intention to do, would be the worst possible course that could be adopted. There was also another consideration. The other House of Legislature consisted of fifty-five members, chosen by the constituencies which formed the people of the colony. In this House, although there were thirty-one members, the work of Parliament was practically done by fourteen or fifteen members: were they, the fourteen or fifteen members who were ordinarily present, to set up their opinion against the fifty-five members of the other House, and presume to reject a measure which had repeatedly received their deliberate sanction? To do so would be not only an act of impropriety, but the greatest political mistake the House could make. He did not wish it to be inferred that he considered the majority were always right: very often the minority were right; but this was a question which, he thought from the speeches of hon. gentlemen to-night, had not received full consideration. Some of the speeches delivered by hon. gentlemen who were employers of labour seemed to indicate that those hon. gentlemen looked at the question simply from their own standpoint. He did not say all;—many of the speeches made in opposition to the Bill had been delivered by hon. members who evidently thoroughly believed that the principles they advocated were in accordance with British precedent, but there were some hon. members who had not taken such a broad and statesmanlike view of the question as he should have desired. It had been urged that, as an English-speaking people, the inhabitants of this colony should give free scope to every man who came to the colony to earn an honest living as he chose; but he believed that if Polynesian labourers were to be introduced into England in the same proportion as they had been introduced into this colony a popular movement would take place to restrict them or exclude them from the United Kingdom altogether. Englishmen occupying an insular position had no fear of the introduction of kanakas or Chinamen, and they could look upon Australia without the slightest apprehension of being placed in similar circumstances. So that when hon. members urged that this Bill was not in accordance with English policy it should be remembered that circumstances had arisen here which had not arisen in England. The Imperial Kidnapping Act of 1872, however, showed that the British Legislature were quite prepared to go into discriminative legislation on the subject of coloured labour whenever the occasion arose. One clause of that Act imposed heavy penalties upon the captain of any vessel who took on board a native of any of the Pacific Islands on the high seas or elsewhere without the consent of the native, proof of which lay on the party accused. The captains of vessels engaged in that trade for this colony took on board islanders who had no knowledge of English, and who could not communicate their ideas in any tongue. How could they prove to the satisfaction of a court of justice that those islanders had given their consent? Had the British Parliament to encounter the same difficulties as had been met with in this colony, he had not the slightest doubt that they would deal with the matter in some such measure as that before the House at the present time. He hoped that the Bill would be allowed to pass its second reading, and that hon. members would be inclined to give the matter such consideration in committee as would lead to the passing of all the principal clauses. There were no doubt some clauses which hon. members would desire to expunge, and if the majority of the Committee wished to make any reasonable amendment he should be quite prepared to give the matter fair consideration. He trusted that the main principles of the Bill would be respected, and that nothing would be done by design, or otherwise, to destroy its character as it stood.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said he wished to say a few words upon the amendment. The House had been treated to a long and eloquent speech from the Postmaster-General which hon. members no doubt appreciated, although it contained many threats. The hon. gentleman had threatened that if the House did not pass the Bill without making many amendments they would have a Ministry coming in who would carry matters with a high hand and make hon. members take anything they liked. He had heard threats of that kind from former leaders of the House, and he did not care a straw about them. He took all the measures that came before the House on their merits, and voted for or against them as he thought right. The hon. gentleman also said that if the House passed the Bill and returned it to the Assembly with a great many amendments no doubt the Assembly would throw it out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I deny having said that.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said he had taken down the words uttered by the hon. gentleman. If the Assembly chose to throw the Bill out, he would say let them do it. Hon. members of this House would have done their duty, and that was all they needed to care about. They were not to be told by the Assembly what they were to do. They were to use their own judgment, and if the Assembly did not choose to pass a Bill to take care of these poor creatures and prevent them from going into the country, that was their look-out. The hon. gentleman also said that the sugar-growers had represented that it was a bad principle to allow the kanakas to be distributed all over the colony. The poor self-interested creatures no doubt wished to monopolise all the good things and not allow the pastoralists a share. They were not satisfied with £5 a-ton protective duty on sugar, but they must have all the kanakas who were imported to themselves. He had never heard such a ridiculous argument, and he should like to know what friend of the Postmaster-General gave him that grave and sage advice.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No friend of mine.

The HON. J. TAYLOR said, then it was evident that the hon. gentleman had fallen into a trap when he was led to repeat those words here in the expectation that they would have some weight. The hon. gentleman went on to

say that the sugar-growers—men of capital—were all in fear and trembling lest the importation of kanakas should be restricted. No doubt they were in fear and trembling, seeing that it was out of the kanakas they made their great profits: the coffers of the capitalist were in danger. But the hon. gentleman said not a word when the squatters were threatened with the loss of half their runs, and when a law was passed by which, upon six months' notice, the whole of their runs might be taken. That matter was kept in the background, and only the sugar men were to be encouraged. He supposed their turn would come by-and-bye, and they would be wiped out in the same way as other unfortunate men had been. The speech made by the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty had been a very amusing and instructive one. At first it gave promise of being one of the most liberal-minded speeches that any man could make. The hon. gentleman said he did not object to the kanakas being spread all over the colony. But when the hon. gentleman got further on, he said he found by the reports of some doctors that 100 kanakas out of 1,000 died on the plantations annually. At that rate they would decrease very rapidly indeed; yet, after saying that, the hon. gentleman said that kanakas ought to be confined to the plantations and not allowed to go into the bush—they should, that was to say, be kept on the coast country, or anywhere excepting the west, where they could live. He wanted apparently to keep them on the coast where they would die off rapidly and where there were plenty of medical practitioners. He (Mr. Taylor) was sorry the hon. gentleman was not present, as he liked to speak to a man's face. He could tell the hon. gentleman, however, that the kanakas did not die on stations in the bush. Of thirty that had been in his employment only one had died, that one having killed himself—in cutting off a piece of damper he got lock-jaw, and died. His hon. friend (Mr. Ivory) had never had any die—they were generally very happy in that part of the world. The hon. gentleman then went on to say that he was glad to see the clause about the hospitals; but he (Mr. Taylor) should be surprised if the hon. gentleman did not propose a new clause in committee to compel every planter to keep a doctor on his plantation, by which means some of the second-class doctors would be provided for. The Hon. Dr. O'Doherty was willing that all kanakas who could speak the English language and understand the terms of an agreement should be allowed to go into the bush. But why did the hon. gentleman pick those out—were the people in the bush such a set of rascals that they could not be trusted to deal fairly with these men, or were the planters actuated by such high moral principles that they could be trusted with those who could not talk English? The hon. gentleman appeared to be doubtful whether a kanaka who had served three years understood the nature of his agreement: but he (Mr. Taylor) could assure the House that in that case the man was as wide-awake as his master, and knew perfectly well what he was doing. The hon. gentleman in opening his speech said he deprecated most sincerely any class legislation, but no legislation had been more distinctly of that nature than the legislation which the hon. gentleman had been advocating—it was setting the planter against the squatter and the squatter against the planter. As he had said before, he should vote for the second reading of the Bill, and should then endeavour to expunge nearly half of it by cutting out several tyrannical clauses, which he considered a disgrace to any House. If those clauses were not expunged he should, on the third reading, vote dead against the Bill.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he should like to have an expression of opinion as to whether hon. members would prefer to take a division on his amendment or on the second reading. If the latter, he should ask permission to withdraw the amendment.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Withdraw!

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he begged to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by permission, withdrawn.

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

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Divide!

The HON. C. S. MEIN said that no division was called for before the presiding Chairman had declared that the "Contents" had it, and no division could be taken now.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he had called for a division before the Presiding Chairman gave his decision.

After some further remarks—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he heard the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior utter some exclamation in an undertone, but he could not say what it was. He had no wish to force a division, and if the Presiding Chairman put the question again he should raise no objection.

The HON. W. H. WALSH doubted whether the rules of the House would permit of the question being again put.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN said that when he put the question the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior, as far as he could see, stood up, but said nothing, and no division being called for he gave his decision.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he had intended all along to divide the House, and he thought it was unmanly of the Hon. Mr. Mein to take a victory in that way. He should dispute the ruling of the Chairman.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said if the hon. gentleman disagreed with the ruling of the Chairman he could make a motion to that effect.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that the Presiding Chairman had expressed his willingness to put the question again; and, whilst reserving to himself the right to move that the Presiding Chairman's ruling be disagreed with, he should move "That the question be again put."

Question—That the question be again put—put and passed.

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

The House divided:—

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The Hons. C. H. Buzacott, J. C. Heussler, C. S. Mein, G. Edmondstone, W. Pettigrew, J. F. McDougall, W. Graham, W. D. Box, J. C. Foote, J. Swan, J. Taylor, J. Cowlishaw, W. F. Lambert, F. T. Gregory, F. H. Hart, and C. S. D. Melbourne.

NON-CONTENTS, 3.

The Hons. W. H. Walsh, T. L. Murray-Prior, and L. Hope.

Question, consequently, resolved in the affirmative.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow, the matter to take precedence of all other motions.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL—FIRST READING.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding this Bill for the concurrence of the Council.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday next.

DUTY ON CEDAR BILL—FIRST READING.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced a further message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding this Bill for the concurrence of the Council.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday next.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 3—FIRST READING.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced a further message from the Legislative Assembly, forwarding this Bill for the concurrence of the Council.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at half-past 10 o'clock p.m.