

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 1882

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 5 July, 1882.

Questions.—Formal Motions.—Address in Reply—
resumption of debate.—Explanation.—Joint Com-
mittees.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. H. PALMER, without notice, asked the
Minister for Works—

Is there any intention on the part of the Government
to grant a Lease of the Burrum Railway Line to the Bur-
rum Coal Company, or any other company?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Mac-
rossan)—
No.

Mr. MILES asked the Minister for Works—

Is it the intention of the Government to call for
Tenders for the Construction of the First Section of the
Warwick and Killarney Railway?—and if so, when?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS—

Yes; and Tenders will be called as soon as the work-
ing plans are ready.

Mr. GROOM asked the Attorney-General—

Whether any Reports have been supplied to him by
the Registrar of the Supreme Court relative to Returns
to be furnished by Friendly Societies under the pro-
visions of the Friendly Societies Act of 1876?—If so, will
he lay such returns upon the table of the House?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Pope
Cooper): The answer is "No."

FORMAL MOTIONS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Mr.
McIlwraith), the following resolutions, relating
to Sessional Orders, were agreed to:—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for
Despatch of Business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wed-
nesday, and Thursday, and at 10 o'clock a.m. on Friday,
in each week; the sitting on the last-named day to ter-
minate at 1 p.m.

That on Tuesday and Wednesday in each week Govern-
ment business take precedence of all other business.

That Standing Order No. 8, relative to business under
discussion, and business not disposed of at time of any
adjournment of the House for want of a quorum, be
suspended, so far as it relates to Notices of Motion,
with a view to giving effect, until otherwise ordered, to
the following recommendation of the Standing Orders
Committee, adopted by the House on the 22nd Decem-

ber, 1870, viz.:—"That Remanet Motions, instead of
being placed at the bottom of the Notice Paper for the
following sitting day, shall, with the motions for that
day, take precedence in the order of the dates for which
they were first given; but that they shall not be per-
mitted to displace motions originally given for the day
to which such Remanet Motions go over."

That it be an Order of the House during the present
Session that on each Wednesday, when the House is
sitting, the Clerk shall read out the titles of all Motions
for returns agreed to previously by the House and not
yet furnished.

That it be an Order of the House during the present
session—

1. That every Motion, or Order of the Day for the
third reading of a Bill, to which (on the question being
put from the Chair, "Whether there is any objection to
its being a 'formal' Motion, or Order of the Day")
no objection shall be taken, shall be deemed to be a
"formal" Motion, or Order of the Day.

2. That, before the ordinary business of each day
shall be entered upon, the Speaker shall call over the
various Notices of Motion, and the Orders of the Day
for third reading of Bills; and, on any such Motion or
Order being called, it shall be competent for the
Member otherwise entitled to move it, to have the above
question put with reference thereto; and such "formal"
Motions or Orders of the Day shall be disposed of in the
relative order in which they stand on the Business
Paper, taking precedence of all the other Motions and
Orders of the Day.

3. That no debate shall be allowed on any such
"formal" Motions or Orders of the Day, or upon the
further proceedings following the reading of such
Orders; but the House may proceed to division there-
upon, without amendment or debate, as in the case
of the motion for the first reading of a Bill.

4. That in consequence of any such "formal" Orders
of the Day having been disposed of as aforesaid, it shall
not be held that the House has proceeded to the Orders
of the Day upon the Business Paper, so as to exclude
thereafter the asking of Questions, the presentation of
Petitions, or the reception of Notices of Motion.

That in compliance with the Standing Order 266, a
Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in
all matters which relate to the Printing to be executed
by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting,
and arranging for printing, Returns and Papers pre-
sented in pursuance of motions made by Members.

That such Committee consist of the following
Members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, The Chairman of Com-
mittees, Mr. McLean, Mr. Kingsford, Mr. Hamilton, Mr.
O'Sullivan, and Mr. de Poix-Tyrel.

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present
Session consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr.
Speaker, The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Macdonald-
Paterson, Mr. Norton, and the Mover,—with leave to sit
during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon
subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee
appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

On the motion of Mr. MILES, it was re-
solved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a
Return showing—

1. The number of Cattle Trains despatched from
Roma to Brisbane, from the 20th December, 1881, up to
the 30th June, 1882.

2. The number of Cattle conveyed by each Train.

3. The amount of Freight received per each Cattle
Train.

4. The cost of wages, fuel, and return empty Cattle
Trucks per each Train during same period.

ADDRESS IN REPLY—RESUMPTION OF
DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day for the resumption of
the debate, on the motion of Mr. Ferguson
—"That the Address in Reply to the Opening
Speech of His Excellency the Governor be now
adopted by the House"—being read by the Clerk,

Mr. McLEAN said the hon. Colonial Treas-
urer was to be congratulated on the very happy
mood and jaunty air he had assumed at the head
of the Treasury benches on the previous evening.
He was sure that hon. members on his (Mr.
McLean's) side of the House entertained the
very highest feelings of respect for the hon.
member for Blackall, and were gratified to see
him in his present position; but there were one
or two things in the speech of that gentleman

that he (Mr. McLean) considered himself justified in taking exception to. The hon. gentleman said :—

"It was a difficult matter to make a speech on a Queen's Speech, especially when, as in the present case, paragraph by paragraph, it seemed to be just exactly to describe what the country wanted, whilst the Opposition had criticised the proposals with mild and bated breath."

He (Mr. McLean) denied that what was contained in the Queen's Speech was just what the country wanted, and he was confident that if the present Government were to go to the country on the Speech that was delivered by His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber on the previous day, they would find to their loss that the programme they had enunciated in that instance was not exactly what the country wanted. There was another remark he would take exception to. The hon. gentleman went on to criticise the action of the Opposition in opposing every measure that the Government introduced on behalf of the selectors, and said :—

"But whenever the present Government party had attempted to offer rather greater inducements to farmers they had been blocked by the Opposition members. They had tried during several sessions in succession to remove the most objectionable provisions of the Land Act of 1876 relating to the expenditure of money on useless improvements; but they had not been allowed to succeed, simply because the Opposition insisted that they knew better how the farmer should spend his money than he knew himself."

He (Mr. McLean) denied that the action taken by hon. members on the other side of the House had ever been in the interests of selection. They had never had the courage themselves to introduce any measure into that House to assist the struggling selectors. Private members had been put up by the Government to introduce two Bills for the relief of selectors, but he (Mr. McLean) denied that the selectors had received any benefit from the Government; and he thought the hon. Colonial Treasurer went a little beyond the mark in the assertions he made in reference to those two measures. He could heartily enter into the congratulations of the Government on the providential escape of Her Majesty in the late attack on her life in the mother-country. He could also enter into the general feelings of congratulation on the increased prosperity of the colony. With reference to the Divisional Boards Act—which was the first thing of great importance mentioned in the Speech—the country were promised an amendment to that Act, and an amendment was absolutely necessary. As the Premier had said himself, their first attempt at legislation in the cause of local self-government was very crude. But the present Government were not entitled to credit for whatever success had resulted from the passing of that Act, as that Bill went through Parliament under misrepresentations. It would never have passed had it not been that the Premier most distinctly stated that the Government would take control over the main roads of the colony. The Government also stated that there would be no increased taxation, but they knew perfectly well that the Divisional Boards Act brought increased taxation. He held that that was one of the misrepresentations under which the Act had been passed. The Government had distinctly stated that that they would take in hand the construction and maintenance of the main roads of the colony. With reference to the British-India Company as an immigration service, he did not know that they could congratulate themselves on its success, as he had seen by telegrams that came down from Cooktown, that among the passengers by the last mail steamer there were three deaths from sunstroke, and when that information reached the mother-country it

would go very much against the British-India Company as a passenger service. As a carrying service he did not suppose anyone would deny that it had been successful; but as a postal service no one would say that it had been so. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had informed the House last night that the Government had never imposed any fines in connection with the postal service. He (Mr. McLean) thought the hon. gentleman had better think over the matter again, as he could inform him that fines had been imposed, and he himself had paid them.

The PREMIER said he did not say so. What he explained was that letters posted by the Torres Straits route in London were charged 2d. deficient postage and 6d. fine, but the Government had refused to enforce it; but where 6d. was charged on a letter posted *via* Brindisi it was enforced.

Mr. McLEAN said the Government charged the extra 2d. and 6d. fine. He had had to pay it himself.

The PREMIER said the hon. member would understand the matter better if he put the explanation in another way: Here was a letter posted according to their printed regulations sent by the Queensland Government to the home authorities. It was addressed "per Queensland Royal Mail Steamer," but the English Government refused to send that forward per Queensland Royal Mail Steamer, although that steamer might be lying in the docks at the time, but they sent it *via* Brindisi, and charged 2d. deficient postage and 6d. fine. That deficient postage and fine the Government had always refused to pay.

Mr. McLEAN said he understood that statement; but, at any rate, when a letter was posted to come out by Melbourne, and 6d. postage was paid for it in London, and it was delivered in Brisbane, the recipient of that letter had to pay 6d. additional postage and 6d. fine. All papers had to pay 1d. fine.

The PREMIER: I do not think they do.

Mr. McLEAN said that persons in Queensland were not aware of the action of the Government in the mother-country, and as the postal rate from Queensland was 4d. they naturally expected that the postal rate to Queensland was 4d. also.

The PREMIER: So it would be by the Queensland Mail Service.

Mr. McLEAN said the differential rates of postage gave rise to serious mistakes, and people in Queensland were not aware of the action of the Government in the mother-country. With reference to the Transcontinental Railway, he wondered if the Government had kept the speech of their hon. colleague (the Colonial Treasurer) at Rockhampton in the Government scrap-book? If hon. members could get a glimpse of that scrap-book they would find that it was more of an Opposition scrap-book, or of speeches delivered by Opposition members carefully culled and pasted up like arrows in a quiver to use when a weak point in the armour of the Opposition was discovered. With reference to the management of their railways, he did not quite agree with the remarks of his hon. friend the member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson). Instead of their railways passing out of the hands of the Government, the Government ought to keep them and appoint a commission to work them. If the hon. Minister for Works could not get his instructions carried out, he ought to try some other plan instead of going on with the present system. He had no doubt, from what he had heard in that

House, that something of the kind would be done. He was strongly opposed to the construction of a railway from Rockhampton to Port Alma by a private company, and he would oppose any proposal of the kind *in toto*. They had the experience of America and other places before them, and they found that the Government of the United States were now calling upon a large number of syndicates to hand their railways back to the State. In Victoria private companies had constructed railways, but the Government had purchased them, and at the present time all the railways in that colony were in the hands of the Government, and he believed that was the case with most continental nations.

The PREMIER: Which of them?

Mr. McLEAN said he could not single out one just then, but he held it was departing from first principles for them to offer their land in the first instance for the purpose of constructing railways, and then allowing private companies to run those railways. He would say nothing more on that point at the present time. Another paragraph in the Governor's Speech which carried with it the condemnation of the Government was the following:—

"The Public Works of the colony have been very much retarded by the extraordinary and unprecedented demand for labour in every part of the colony. My Government have taken exceptional steps to increase immigration; and to supply the existing demand no efforts on their part will be spared."

Whose duty was it to see the labour market supplied but that of the Government, and for several reasons. The Government themselves were large employers of labour. Hon. members knew that the construction of the railways had not been carried out with that speed with which they ought to have been. The Northern line in particular had only been going on at a snail's pace, and it was the duty of the Government to have foreseen to a certain extent—he did not say that they could have done it altogether—that there would be an increased demand for labour. He knew that they certainly could not have possibly foreseen the prosperity of the present time; but they knew, as large employers of labour, that their railway construction must go on, and they should have foreseen that there would have been an extra demand for labour. He thought that the paragraph in the Speech referring to that point carried with it the condemnation of the Government. In regard to the sugar lands of the colony, they were told in the Speech that—

"Confidence in the future of the colony has manifested itself strikingly during the past year in the increased desire to acquire land in almost every district. Land suitable for sugar cultivation is eagerly sought after, and an immense area has been selected for that purpose in the northern portions of Queensland. These lands were withdrawn from selection last year, and again declared open at an advanced upset price, without affecting any diminution in the rate of selection."

Those lands were withdrawn after certain friends of the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches had taken up large blocks of country in the North, ostensibly for increasing their value. And then came the withdrawal, and then the lands were again thrown open. He wondered upon what principle the Government then fixed the price? On the map published in connection with the sugar lands of the colony there were simply lines drawn straight across, and the statement that some of those lands were 10s. an acre and that others were 20s. an acre. He wondered upon what principle the Government acted in the matter, and how many reports they had had sent in. He would guarantee that not one mile in 100 had ever been visited by a white man, and yet the Minister for Lands simply sat inside his office and drew those lines, saying that some of the land should

be 10s. an acre and some of it should be 20s. For that reason he (Mr. McLean) held that there had been no principle observed in the way the sugar lands of the colony had been dealt with. He would draw the attention of the House to the way in which the lands of the colony had been dealt with by the present Government. The House had been told how anxious the Government were to foster settlement and to assist the struggling settler as far as they possibly could. Hon. members would remember that some time ago a deputation waited upon the Minister for Lands with reference to the Goondiwindi commonage, and the way in which the statements of a Mr. Jenkins were taken exception to by the Minister. That would show them the way in which the lands of the colony were manipulated by the present Minister for Lands. Mr. Jenkins said in a letter—

"The hon. the Minister for Lands was also pleased to state that he had been previously misled by me in the sale of some lands. I have only had one transaction"—

The transaction he (Mr. McLean) was referring to—

"with him, so he must refer to that. The particulars are as follows:—The proprietor of Callandoon, upon my suggestion, agreed to buy at auction some 24,000 acres at 10s. This was after the land had been inspected by the Under Secretary. I supplied rough plans showing what I would buy, and instructions were accordingly issued to the surveyors to cut it up into blocks of 640 acres. This was done, the sale gazetted, and all the blocks specified. It was distinctly understood between the Minister and myself that all the blocks, as surveyed, were to be submitted to auction, on his part; and, on mine, that I was not to pick and choose the best blocks only, but buy everything that was offered, good, bad, or indifferent, as it came."

Those were the lands manipulated, and why, he asked, were not the lands put up so that any person could settle down on the land, step in, and say "I want to buy some of that land"? There was a distinct agreement between the Minister for Lands and Mr. Jenkins. The land was to be cut up in blocks of 640 acres as a sort of guise. Why had they not put it up at 10s. an acre, and let anyone step in and buy? Had they done so it would have been all plain and clear to the public. But this was to throw a guise over them. The land was cut up, and then it was agreed between the Minister for Lands and Mr. Jenkins, that the former was to put the land up, and the latter to buy up the whole quantity.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins): Read the whole of it.

Mr. McLEAN said that he was going to read the whole of it. The letter went on to say—

"I attended the sale fully prepared, and with every intention of carrying out the arrangement, but to my surprise, on the sale commencing, the commissioner stated he had been instructed to withdraw some 1,300 acres from the sale, only two days previously, and also was to notify that, as soon as one lot was passed, the sale was to cease."

Why was the sale to cease? Some other parties might have wanted to buy land—perhaps after twenty-four lots had been passed over. Why was it then, when they wanted to buy the twenty-fifth lot, that they could not? Why were instructions given in that case for the rest to be withdrawn?

The PREMIER: You will never make a Lands Minister.

Mr. McLEAN said he would certainly not make a Minister after that fashion. If the Premier had told him to put up land in such a way as that, he would have thrown his portfolio at the hon. gentleman. He would never do as the present Minister for Lands had done. Mr. Jenkins' letter went on as follows:—

"To obtain this particular 1,300 acres, I had urged the proprietor to buy some 3,000 acres of very inferior

country, so as to make a compact block; and as that, with another 1,000 acres I had agreed should be reserved, was the only dry country in a large flooded paddock of which I was purchasing two-thirds, I could not in justice to my employer continue buying the swampy flooded blocks adjacent to that withdrawn from sale, and without which it was valueless. I bought some 10,000 acres, every block as it was put up, but when it came to one of the blocks adjoining those withdrawn I declined to bid, and the sale closed."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLEAN: The letter went on to say—

"Now, with these undeniable facts as a guide, I again ask which of us had the right to say he was misled? The hon. the Minister for Lands broke faith with me. I was prepared to carry out the agreement in its entirety had he done the same. But when the hon. the Minister failed to carry out the honour and integrity of the arrangement"—

He said he did not know where the honour of the arrangement came in—

"on his side, surely there was nothing any longer binding on me, either morally or in honour. Now, was it dignified, right, or just of the hon. gentleman to cast such aspersions upon me without the slightest foundation?"

That was the way in which the lands of the colony were manipulated by the present Minister for Lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What were you reading from?

Mr. McLEAN said it was a letter from Mr. W. Vaughan Jenkins to the *Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs General Advertiser* of the 4th July, 1882. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman was connected with that paper or not. He (Mr. McLean) should leave his remarks on the Coolie question until the leader of the Opposition introduced his Bill. In regard to another matter, he was not at all surprised at the report of the Commission to inquire into the Volunteer Force of the colony. He remembered a report which was presented to the House on a former occasion, and which did not show a very flourishing state of affairs in the force; and he had expected that something of this kind would take place. He did not know what action the Government were going to take, but he hoped that whatever they did they would have some control over the men who composed the Volunteer forces of the colony. There was just one other point that he wished to draw attention to before he sat down. He saw in the Speech mention of a Bill to make better provision for the Regulation of Immigration into the Colony of Queensland; and there was one fact in connection with that subject which he wished to bring under the notice of the head of the Government, which was that they were bringing out immigrants under the present remittance arrangement—immigrants who had no sooner landed than they went to New South Wales. And for this reason: People in New South Wales knew the liberal treatment the Government of Queensland were offering, and were making inquiries as to the terms on which their friends could be brought out here on the assisted principle; and they sent the money here to get their friends out, and then a great many of the latter went to the southern colony as soon as they reached Brisbane. He thought that something ought to be done to put a stop to that if possible. He did not see why they should pay £16 each for the passages of persons who left the colony again as soon as they got to it.

The PREMIER said that special provision was made in the Bill for that matter.

Mr. McLEAN said he was glad to hear it.

Mr. BAYNES said that it had not been his intention to speak at that stage of the debate on

the Address in Reply, but he rose more particularly to put the Government straight upon what the hon. member for Logan had stated with regard to the Bill introduced last session for the relief of selectors. He was one of the two private members who were said to have been "put up" by the Government. He was one private member who brought a Bill forward for the relief of selectors, but he denied *in toto* that he was put up by the Government or anyone else. He had stated at the time, if the hon. gentleman could only have taken the word of a man—but the hon. gentleman was like one of his colleagues, too mean to understand what manhood was—that he had not spoken to one member of the Government on the question. He defied any hon. member—in the House either then or now—to say that he had. The hon. the Minister for Lands had derided him for it; and perhaps if he had done so the Bill would have been passed. He considered it mean of the hon. gentleman to say that the Government had put him up. He had always given the Government a liberal support, and he had not been as mean as the hon. member on the other side of the House told him he was. He would have liked to see the hon. member when he was Minister for Lands throw up his portfolio for any difference of opinion. They all knew how hungry he had been for office ever since he lost it. There was no fear of seeing him throw up his portfolio, or any other member on that side of the House. The hon. member was not bold enough to say what he had to say about the Coolie question; but the time to speak was now, and he should, as a representative of the people, have said what he (Mr. Baynes) said now—that he would not support the Government on the question. That was what he said, and what he promised his constituents; and he would sweep off the statute-books all laws relating to coloured labour. The present was the time and opportunity to make that statement, but the hon. member for Logan had not the honesty to do the same.

Mr. McLEAN: I have done so to my constituents.

Mr. BAYNES said that he did not believe him a fraction. He considered that it would be political dishonesty on his part to sanction the bringing forward of an obsolete Act. He called it obsolete because twenty years in this colony was as much as a century in the old country. He thought, with all due respect to the Government—to whom he intended to give his support as usual—that it was bad policy on their part. There were one or two questions on which he should differ from them, and on which he should take this opportunity to make explanation. The Coolie question was one of them. He considered it party legislation. They had no right to legislate for one particular class. If that labour was good and cheap for the sugar-grower, it must be good and cheap for the wool-grower, and the wool-grower had as much right to it as the sugar-grower. He knew it would be to the advantage of the sugar-grower, and the temporary advantage of the colony, to have in coolie labour, but he doubted whether it would be for the eventual benefit of the colony to import any coloured labour or Asiatic labour whatever. He was not a mere delegate from his constituents. If he felt that that labour would be a permanent benefit to the country he would support the Government; but he did not think it would be any benefit. He was glad, however, that he was able to look a little beyond Queen street. He did not think that the Government should in any way be blamed for any shortcomings in the Divisional Boards Act. It was a bold measure on the part of any Government, and probably it had done as much good as any Act on their statute-book.

He did not know what the amendments were, and probably he should take exception to them. There was room for very great amendment in the working of the Act. So far as the British-India Mail Service was concerned, a great deal was said in opposition to it; but he considered that, next to the Divisional Boards Act—and probably before that—and notwithstanding the unfair opposition to it, it had been a great boon to the colony. Probably it had been of less benefit to Brisbane than any other part; but if they looked at the map they would see that they were on the southern boundary, and was not the North to have any consideration? He had not a penny invested in the North, but he was glad to support anything that would be a benefit to it. He was glad that the Government were alive to the importance of getting a constant supply of European immigrants. He was not, like the hon. member for Rockhampton, afraid of having too many. He had seen an influx of population at different periods, both here and in Victoria. The country was too large for them to be of any trouble. It was bound to absorb them, and probably this mail service would more thoroughly distribute the immigrants than any other means the colony had had. Probably there might be exceptions to the rule, but the Premier had been warned, and would, no doubt, be cautious. Another matter which the hon. member for Logan did not dilate upon, as he might have done, was the Trans-continental question. He (Mr. Baynes) intended to oppose the Government on that question, and he had very good reasons for doing so. He should be sorry to see any railway or any lands in large blocks in the possession of any syndicate. He had seen the folly of it in Victoria and in America. The first railway in Victoria, the Hobson's Bay Railway, was made by a company and was handed over to the Government not many years since in a rotten state, and hence came the accidents on account of which the Government had to pay such heavy damages. The company were as a positive fact too hungry for gain to keep the line even in safe repair. And so it was with the Tasmanian Main Line Railway, and, in fact, with all the railways made in Tasmania by companies. The Tasmanian Main Line Railway was constructed some years ago, and was in such a state that it was not fit for the Government to take over. Had it not been for an able and bold Press, the Government of Tasmania would have been forced to take the line over when it was not fit to travel on. As it was, the syndicate or ring, whichever it was, had to reconstruct it, and the Government had not even yet, he was glad to say, taken it over. The other lines in Tasmania were equal failures, having been made by syndicates. Although there was a great deal of credit due to the Minister for Works, he did not wish to eulogise him beyond his merits in saying that under his care they were just beginning to know how to make railways; and, taking into consideration the labour question, the lines were being well pushed forward. The men who came here ought not to remain always as navvies. They should be made colonists and they should be settled on the land. Some said that he wanted to improve his own land at the expense of the country, but anyone who knew him would not say so, as he had expended more on his own land than anyone. He had indeed, to his mind, spent a great deal too much on it. In America he knew that the greatest trouble had occurred through the railway rings that were formed—not by Yankees, but by English capitalists—causing immense sacrifices on account of bad construction a few years ago. That was sufficient reason to keep the railways of this colony in the hands of the Government. There

had been, he believed, more corruption in America through land rings formed in London than through any other cause. The people of the United States were, however, waking up to a sense of the evil, and things were not now so bad as they were formerly. He would, however, solemnly advise the Government to reconsider this question of railway syndicates. He was satisfied to support the Government on a broad basis if they would forego their idea of placing the lands of the colony in the hands of syndicates. He would even support them if they were bold enough to borrow money to buy back the lands which had been alienated, with a view to letting them on lease, not for ninety-nine years, but for twenty-one years. If a man could not make use of the land in that time it would be better for him to part with it. At the end of that period the outgoing tenant should receive a substantial reward for improvements, and the land should be put up to auction or re-let. This was not only a question of what the Government were doing; hon. members had also to consider what the present Opposition might do if they came into power. Were they to trust those hon. members to place the lands of the colony in the hands of syndicates? He ventured to say they would make a mull of it the very first chance. He blamed the Government very much indeed for not having opposed the Sugar Refining Bill brought in last session by a member of the Opposition. It was one of the worst pieces of legislation ever passed by the House, doing for the rich man what would not be done for the poor man. Because a rich corporation could bring money into the colony it was allowed to combine selections and get a good title to the land, only, as it proved, that the land might be locked-up for a lot of coolies. The poor man who wished to join his own and his sons' selections, in order to surround them with a ring fence, was not allowed to do so. He was disappointed with the action of the Minister for Lands in connection with the question of reserves, which to the graziers and men outside the towns were a very great nuisance, being merely hotbeds for weeds. Though no promise was given on the subject, he understood that the Minister was willing to consider whether the Government could not take the matter into its own hands and either sell or let the reserves which were not required.

Mr. GROOM said he was very pleased to notice the good feeling evinced on both sides of the House during this debate; it augured well for a session of business and not of personal recriminations. The paragraph in the Speech expressing the deep regret felt at the loss of the late lamented President of the Legislative Council, Sir J. P. Bell, had his very hearty approval. It had been his good fortune to take his seat, for the first time, on the same bench with that gentleman, in May, 1863; and on that occasion he (Sir J. P. Bell) was selected by the Premier, Mr. Herbert, to move the Address in Reply. The favourable impression he then made was no doubt the first stepping-stone to the distinguished honours he afterwards enjoyed at the hands of the Parliament and of the Sovereign. And it was not only in politics that he was held in high esteem. A large number of working men on his own station and in the neighbourhood of Dalby had cause to regret the loss of a benevolent employer who made the interests of his employees always his first consideration. Each Christmas every child, to the smallest, was reminded of the historic occasion by some little token of friendship. He was, in short, one of the most large-hearted and liberal men who ever held a seat in the House, and was an honour to both branches of the Legislature. With regard to the paragraph relating to the Divisional Boards Act, he (Mr. Groom) had

always advocated local self-government, and had given the Bill on its passage his strenuous support. His opposition to the Bill introduced by the present Government had been not so much to the measure itself as to the way in which it was introduced. At that time, owing to bad seasons, the people were not in a position to stand additional taxation; but he was prepared to concede that in the settled districts the Act had proved a great success. Instead of the business-paper being burdened as formerly with forty or fifty motions for road and bridges, the people had now taken those matters under their own control, and hon. members were left free to concentrate their attention upon matters of more general importance. There were, of course, defects—palpable ones—in the Act; but the Bill would no doubt contain the amendments which had been suggested by the working of the Act. Coming to the subject of the British-India Mail Service, he had not the remotest sympathy with some observations made by hon. members of the Opposition. It could, perhaps, hardly be called a mail service at all, but as a cargo service it had done a very considerable amount of good. The argument advanced against the service, that the people of Townsville had chosen to import from the mother-country instead of from Brisbane, was one of the most ridiculous he had ever heard. It would be just as reasonable to argue that the merchants of Dublin, Liverpool, and Glasgow should purchase their goods in London, so that the shipping might be concentrated in the latter port. One of the great causes of complaint in New South Wales just now was that the centralising policy of the Government was tending to bring everything to Sydney. The Customs revenue returns for the quarter ending June 30 showed that out of £371,000 no less than £327,000 had been collected in the port of Sydney. The Government, by the introduction of the British-India Mail Service, had done a good thing in opening up a direct trade with Great Britain and relieving Queensland from the position of an appendage of New South Wales. As a cargo service it was a good one; but as a mail service it was a very great failure. He had not much sympathy with the remarks of the Premier on the subject of postage. It seemed a monstrous anomaly that merchants in Brisbane should be able to receive goods into their warehouses and sell the greater part a fortnight before they received their invoices by the British-India Mail Service. There should be free trade in this matter, and everyone should be allowed to send his letter by the route he preferred. Speedy communication was one of the first elements in business transactions, and no impediments should be put in the way. As far as the Northern ports were concerned the British-India Service would do very well, but people in Brisbane would much prefer to use the Orient or Peninsula and Oriental Services. With regard to the Transcontinental Railway, his views were pretty well known. He agreed with the hon. member (Mr. Baynes) that syndicates had been a gigantic evil in America. They had been the curse of the country, and were even now the bone of contention amongst senators; questions constantly arising in connection with land which had been given away upon conditions which had never been fulfilled. If these syndicates were not able to fulfil their conditions in a country like America, with a population of 50,000,000 and a steady inflow of nearly 100,000 per month, how could they be expected to succeed in a country with a population of only 200,000 persons, a large proportion of whom were settled in the south of the colony? It seemed hardly a sane proposal to make at the present time, and he should give it his most strenuous opposition.

The Coolie question would come on for discussion upon a motion, notice of which had been tendered, and he should reserve his remarks until then. In reference to immigration, he wished to draw the attention of the Premier to a circumstance that recently came under his notice. Whilst addressing his constituents recently, a clergyman—the Rev. Thomas Thatcher—stated that he had letters in his possession, written to him from England, informing him that emigrants had been refused passages to Queensland on the ground that they had families of five children, the regulations stipulating that families should not exceed two or three. He (Mr. Groom) and his fellow-member were asked to ascertain the cause of that obstruction. Whatever might have been the evil results of an immigration policy in past years, there was not much probability of anything of the kind occurring now. A great wave of prosperity was passing over the colonies, and he believed the present was only the beginning of it. Now was the proper time to step in and secure a part of the stream of immigration flowing to America. The Pacific mail steamer which arrived last Thursday brought some interesting items of news from America. The *New York Tribune*, speaking of immigration, said—

“The immigration into the United States for April (writes the *New York Tribune*) was unprecedentedly heavy. The total was 70,000, against 61,000 for April last year. The arrivals since January numbered over 142,000, against 109,000, for the same period of last year. Of the April arrivals 27,000 were Germans, nearly 8,000 Irish, 7,000 Swedes, over 6,000 English, over 6,000 Italians, and nearly 3,000 Hollanders. There has been an increase of more than 100 per cent. in the Italian immigration over last year. The Germans continue the most desirable class. The women are good domestics and mill hands, and the men good farmers and mechanics. Most of them are either skilled labourers or have sufficient money to purchase western lands. Next to the Germans the Scandinavians are a desirable class, hardy and thrifty, and earn their living from the day they land. The Hollanders are also a valuable class. They have no difficulty in finding immediate employment at good wages. Nearly all are farmers, dairymen, or skilled mechanics. There has been a great improvement in the character of the Irish immigrants. Few as compared with former years stay in New York. All the Irish arrivals this year are of a much better class than for several years.”

Not only the present Government, but all Governments of the colony, seemed to fail to give sufficient facilities for immigrants to come to Queensland. If something were done to imitate the Canadian policy in some respects, good might result. The Rev. Mr. Thatcher had placed papers in his (Mr. Groom's) hands, showing that the offer of Mr. Allen, of Rockhampton, to introduce and establish a number of families of Primitive Methodists, which was rejected by the Queensland Government, had been gladly accepted by the Canadian Government, and that the families had not only received free passages, but had also been received on arrival by a society organised for that purpose. The advantages given by the Canadian Government were of themselves almost sufficient inducement to immigrants. A homestead of 160 acres was given to each head of a family free of all charge, on condition that he should live on the land, cultivate a certain portion, and have the whole enclosed within five years. In addition, he had a pre-emptive right to the extent of 160 acres for his family; and if the conditions were fulfilled at the end of the five years he could purchase the land so pre-empted at one dollar per acre. But further steps had been taken outside the Government to foster immigration to Canada. In a letter taken from the *Alta California*, reprinted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of July 1st, the following paragraph appeared:—

“A gigantic land and colonisation scheme was completed at Chicago on May 31. The Duke of Manchester and President Stephens, of the Canada Pacific Railroad

Company, came from the West, and R. B. Angus, Vice-president of the Canada Pacific, and Scorth and Company, of Toronto. Besides these, the parties interested included Robert Tennant, of Leeds, England; Todd, of the firm of W. H. Kennedy and Company, of New York (representing the South and Canada Pacific Syndicates); and, in fact, practically all the large land syndicates. In addition, capitalists in Paris, London, Montreal, New York, and other points are interested in the scheme. The plan as outlined here, with the Duke of Manchester as President, is as follows:—The Syndicate represents a capital of 15,000,000 dollars. It proposes to buy the 95,000,000 dollars unsold bond of the Canada Pacific Railway now held by the Bank of Montreal, and take a second issue of 6,000,000 dollars bonds of the road not yet in the market, paying par for them. In turn the Canada Pacific agrees to accept these bonds in payment for lands granted by the Canadian Government, which are to be taken chiefly in Saskatchewan county at the rate of 1-10 dollar. The grant to the Canada Pacific was 25,000,000 acres, of which 22,000,000 remain unsold. The combination proposes to take 11,000,000 acres on the terms mentioned. Connected with it is an immense colonisation there, including, among other things, the erection of farmhouses for settlers unable to build, to be sold to them on easy terms. It is stated one effect of the scheme will be to insure the early completion of the Canada Pacific Railroad."

In the case of Canada, therefore, in addition to the natural attractions of varied industries and high wages, great inducements to immigration were being held out by large syndicates with immense capital. Why should not Queensland strike out and do something of the kind itself?

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM said he presumed the Premier, by that, meant why not have a transcontinental railway and bring immigrants to the colony in that way? He should, however, be inclined to go in another direction and say, why not give them 160 acres of land free when they came to the colony? An instance of the way in which immigrants were welcomed in America occurred in New York lately on the arrival of some 3,000 Jews who had been forced to leave Russia on account of the atrocities lately perpetrated there. They were received with open arms, not only by their co-religionists, but also by the Christian community generally—treated with great hospitality in the immigration depôt, furnished with free railway passes by the railway companies, and offered any amount of land if they wished to settle upon it. It was a well-known fact that in some cases private companies went so far as to furnish the settler with seed to plant if he were not able to purchase a supply for himself. The secret of so many of the Queensland immigrants going on to the southern colonies was that sufficient inducement to stop was not offered to them here. He did not mean to say that skilled mechanics should be encouraged to believe that they could earn a better living by farming. That would probably be inducing them to come under false pretences; but at the present time there were in England many small tenant-farmers, disposed through the action of land-owners in combining small farms into large ones—men with knowledge of farming and moderate means—who would gladly come out here if the opportunity were put before them in a legitimate way, and the land thrown open to them. Up to the present time the Government had been very parsimonious, and they had thrown impediments in the way by unsettling men's minds with regard to the land laws. The secret of the enormous amount of free selection in New South Wales was that the land laws which were passed in 1861 had only been amended once; and the Legislature were very jealous of any proposal to alter them. People therefore knew what they had to depend upon. Here, on the other hand, there were such continual alterations that people were utterly unable to understand the law. Every session since he had been in the House—twenty years on the 9th August—some Bill had

been introduced to amend the land laws. At first the homestead selection was 640 acres; that being considered too large, the area was next reduced to 320; then it was made 80; then again 320; then 80 again; and lastly it had been enlarged to 160 acres by the present Government. It was time that some effort should be made to associate the settlement of the land with immigration. He noticed amongst the promised measures a Bill to make better provision for the regulation of immigration into the colony of Queensland; and he hoped that would be a step in the right direction by bringing to this colony some portion of that immigration which was now going to other countries. Why should not, for instance, some provision be made to bring out German immigrants in larger numbers? For some reason or other immigrants of that nationality had not been brought out lately.

The PREMIER: We can get plenty of Scotchmen.

Mr. GROOM said that was quite true, but it was no reason why the colony should not have immigrants from the continent as well, especially those who came out with a little capital. Such men would come out willingly if sufficient facilities were offered. America had set the colonies a good example with regard to her maritime, commercial, and industrial arrangements, and that example would have to be followed if ever Queensland was to become a great country. With a steady stream of immigrants of a better class, new industries would be founded and progress would be more rapid than had ever before been experienced. He had been looking through the Estimates for the Volunteer Force for the last six or seven years, and had noticed that every year the House had been called upon to provide £5,000, £6,000, £7,000, and as much as £10,000. What had the colony got for that large expenditure? According to the report, the force was now in a complete state of demoralisation and inefficiency. When Colonel Blaxland was appointed Commandant he (Mr. Groom) predicted that he would not hold his position twelve months, and he had not held it much longer. It was considered an outrage by some that a local gentleman should be made Commandant, and steps were at once taken to impair his efficiency and undermine his influence, in order to bring about his dismissal. He could assure the House that the colony had no more efficient officer than Colonel Blaxland, and his removal would be a great loss to the force. Perhaps some aristocratic dandy would be appointed to take his place, who could not do a tithe of what that officer had done to place the force on a sound footing. The money spent on the force had been literally wasted. There had been an outcry in certain quarters because there had been no Easter encampment this year. For his own part, he rejoiced when he heard that the Treasurer had refused to give money for such a purpose. The real truth about those encampments had been that they were little better than drunken sprees. Instead of teaching discipline and drill they had done a great amount of harm, had laid the foundation of drunkenness and disease, and had probably had a good deal to do with the present disorganised state of the force. The question was one surrounded by difficulties. Some advocated the establishment of a permanent force; but what had been the result of that in Sydney? In that city, with a population of about 300,000, one would suppose there would be a large number of active young men imbued with a martial spirit; and yet the greatest difficulty had been found in getting men to join the permanent force; the reason apparently being that the pay was small, and that they could do

much better in different branches of trade and industry. He did not know what the intentions of the Government were, but he observed that they were going to introduce a Bill to place the defences of the colony on a better basis. He trusted the House would hesitate before it wasted more money on what he called playing at soldiers. At an earlier period of the afternoon he had put a question to the Attorney-General with regard to friendly societies, and he would now explain why he had done so. At first bluish hon. members might think it a very small matter, but it was really one of considerable importance. The aim of those societies was to encourage habits of frugality and thrift among the working classes, who contributed to them weekly a certain portion of their savings. The Friendly Societies Act of 1876 was passed for the purpose of protecting those savings, by insisting that those in charge of them should send an account of them every year to the Registrar of the Supreme Court, who would then make out a return, which was to be laid annually before Parliament by the Attorney-General. That provision of the Act had never, he believed, been carried out, and the consequence was that the same state of ignorance regarding the doings of those societies prevailed now as before the passing of the Act. That Act was a transcript of the Imperial Act, with amendments making it adaptable to the colony. What had been the result of the discoveries of the Royal Commission on friendly societies in New South Wales? The *Sydney Morning Herald* of last Saturday drew attention to one fact, as follows:—

"The financial collapse of a lodge connected with one of the principal friendly societies of the colony is a matter of serious concern to that large section of the public who depend upon these societies for assistance in times of sickness and family bereavement. It has been announced that 'Court Friendship,' an old Sydney lodge connected with the Order of Foresters, has failed in consequence of there being no more funds available to meet sick cases and doctor's bills. It is poor consolation to be told that the district lodge or supreme court of the order has met the contingency by making an equitable distribution of the aged remnants of 'Court Friendship' among the young and sound lodges. The financial basis of every lodge should be such as to render a collapse almost impossible. The contributions of the members should be so regulated as to provide means for promptly meeting all legitimate risks, and any man entering a lodge should have the fullest confidence in its ability to satisfy any subsequent claims. In this particular instance there does not appear to have been any extraordinary cause to precipitate the collapse. The probable explanation is that the lodge was an old one, that so long as its members were young and there was a steady influx of young men, and the funds were regularly fed by initiation fees, it had no unusual difficulty in meeting its engagements; but when its members grew aged, and the sick calls and doctor's bills became heavier and more numerous, the assets rapidly diminished, and the rate of contributions not being sufficiently high to cover the increased demands, insolvency was the result. Such an explanation, at all events, applies to a considerable number of lodges of various orders in this colony, and actual failure has, we know, been prevented in many cases by temporary suspension of benefits. By that means the funds have been permitted for a while to accumulate, and the lodge has gone on working smoothly until a death occurred, or a number of cases of sickness arose, and suspension of benefits had again to be resorted to. If a lodge fails, and its old members are distributed among young lodges, the latter thereby have their liabilities suddenly increased; and, in some instances, they, too, as they grow older and weaker, may go to the wall. A system which admits such irregularities must be unsatisfactory, and the Royal Commission now inquiring into the working of the Friendly Societies Act has an excellent opportunity for rendering the public a great service by exposing the serious defects which exist in societies now enjoying public confidence."

Those societies in England had accumulated funds amounting to some millions of money; and even in this colony the amount was pretty considerable. It was only right that those

moneys should be protected, as they would be if the provisions of the Act were carried out. He hoped, now that public attention had been called to the matter, that the Attorney-General would see that the Registrar carried out his duties with reference to friendly societies. He had just been informed by his hon. friend, the member for Fortitude Valley, that applications had been made to the Registrar of the Supreme Court for forms, and the answer given was that there were no such forms in existence. That could be easily remedied by giving the necessary instructions to the Government Printer. Before resuming his seat he would say one word with regard to railways generally. It had been stated that instructions had been sent to London for the appointment of a traffic manager. If that was correct, it was a step in the right direction. Of late something seemed to have gone wrong in the Railway Department; but for that he by no means blamed the Minister, whose hands were tied by a superabundance of red tape. With a new traffic manager the department might be made to work much more efficiently. The muddle that prevailed in the department at Brisbane on the Queen's Birthday—the series of mistakes that were made—seemed almost inconceivable. At the Clapham Junction Station, 1,200 trains a day passed and re-passed, and yet it was rarely that accidents occurred, and no difficulty was experienced by the public. In this colony the punctual arrival and departure of trains was rather the exception than the rule. He had supported the late traffic manager, Mr. Statham Lowe, because although perhaps a martinet, he knew him to be a thoroughly efficient officer. The new traffic manager, whoever he might be, would also have to be a martinet to keep some of his subordinates in order, with whom incivility was the rule rather than the exception. As a whole, the railways of the colony were making satisfactory progress, although the hon. member (Mr. Ferguson) seemed to think that the Central line was not being pushed on with sufficient vigour. In his opinion, for a young country, they were pushing on their railways very fast indeed, and when a few more branch lines in the agricultural districts were constructed we should have as fine a network of railways as any other colony, and increased prosperity would accrue to the colony. He hoped the measures to be passed this session would all tend towards this object.

The Hon. G. THORN said he did not wish to disturb the harmony of the meeting, for he had never heard so tame a debate on the Address by both sides of the House. Indeed, he should not have arisen but for two or three of the paragraphs that appeared in the Opening Speech. Before alluding to them, however, he wished to congratulate the Premier on his accession to the leadership of the Government. When Sir Arthur Palmer was there the Premier was not the head of the Government, but the moment he was raised to the Peerage the Premier took the first opportunity, at Warwick, to call himself the head of the Government. During the three years that Sir Arthur Palmer was his colleague he never said so; he knew better; he dared not. He therefore congratulated the Premier on assuming that position. On a former occasion he (Mr. Thorn) said that when the Premier went to England he went on his own private business. He would repeat it now, although he knew he should be contradicted by the Premier. He got the information from England, but, in addition to that, he held in his hand a paper—the *American Exporter*, Australian edition—which proved most conclusively that his statement was correct; and that, therefore, the Premier had no right to take the country's money to pay his expenses while there. That paper, which was occasionally quoted by one of the Government organs in

Brisbane—the *Courier*—contained the following paragraph:—

"This Australian experiment is not a new one. Nearly three years ago a cargo of frozen beef was shipped to England from Melbourne by an Orient steamer, and about a year ago another cargo was shipped in the 'Strathleven.' A good deal of interest was taken on this side of the Atlantic in both of these events. In England and Australia they were the subject of widespread speculation and had a perceptible effect on the markets. The Premier of Queensland was financially interested in the first venture and preceded the cargo to England. When it arrived he was tendered a banquet, at which the Australian beef was one of the principal features of the menu."

After that the House would see that he was not wrong in his former statement, that the Premier went home solely on private business. He would also congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address on the manner in which they had acquitted themselves. But why were they sitting on the Government side of the House while their senior colleagues sat with the Opposition? There must be something radically wrong in the sentiments of the electors of Darling Downs and Rockhampton. Why, also, did the Premier single out those two hon. members to move and second the Address, when other new members had been elected subsequent to them? Whatever was the reason, he could assure the Government that although they had carried those seats the feelings of the electors had not changed. It was merely owing to want of tactics on the part of the Opposition that they lost those seats. They were not such good electioneering agents as some on the other side. Coming to the Speech, he would first touch upon the immigration question. While going south some time ago, he found on board a large number of our immigrants going south also. He asked them the reason why, and they told him they wanted to go to a better climate. They were from Townsville, and could not stand the summer heat. The same thing was told to the Hon. Mr. Smyth, whom he happened to meet in Sydney at the same time. In his opinion all immigrants ought, in summer, to be landed in the south of the colony, and only in the winter in the north. He did not like the idea of bringing out immigrants by the mail steamers. They had not seen the losses which were almost sure to happen some time or other to those vessels. He hoped he might be wrong, but he was very much afraid on that point. With regard to the Divisional Boards Act, he opposed it most vehemently when it was passing through the House, and would do the same thing again to-morrow if necessary. He had all along foreseen that it would be a partial measure, and that the Government would not under it deal out evenhanded justice to all parts of the colony. He knew that they had their favourite districts. Many districts were now paying for the roads, reservoirs, and water-supply of other more favoured districts. It was said that the main roads would be made by the Government. That was done in only one particular part of the colony; and if in one, why not everywhere? Why should the settled portion of the population, who were wedded to the soil and had made improvements on it, be taxed, while others who were only here to-day and gone to-morrow go scot-free? In proof of that he would point to the North and North-western districts, where the rich pastoral lessees paid very little rates. He was aware of cases where lessees who held country capable of supporting a quarter of a million of sheep were only paying an annual rate of £6 a year—not so much as was paid by a farmer in the Moreton district with only 100 acres. Those farmers, too, had to make provision for their own supply of water, while the pastoral lessees in the districts he alluded to had their dams made for them at the expense of the country. The farmers had to

go to the Treasurer and get a loan. The pastoral lessees wanted no loan. He knew a member of a divisional board in the South who asked for £130 and was refused it except as a loan. In towns such as Aramac, Winton, and Muttahburra, where there was a very fair population, and where divisional boards were in operation, the Treasurer was making dams for the people. He had noticed in the *Government Gazette* that tenders were called for constructing dams in Aramac and Winton by the Government. Why could not the people, through the divisional boards, borrow the money and make the dams themselves? The same thing was going on in other districts. He did not see why the Government should do those works for the people. The system at present carried out was unjust, and it showed very clearly how the wind blew. Another paragraph in the Speech said—

"I am happy to inform you that the revenue has increased beyond our most sanguine expectations. The financial year closed with a gratifying surplus, a portion of which my advisers propose to appropriate to particular services instead of carrying it over as a balance to the following year. The Estimates of the present financial year will be duly submitted to you, and I hope you will find that they have been framed with a view to the strictest economy consistent with efficiency."

He would take the first part of it first. There was no doubt that the revenue had increased, and the expenditure ought also to have increased. Look at the colony at the present time. The whole of the surplus ought to have gone during the year in providing new railway stock. The state of the rolling-stock was a disgrace, and he wondered that there were not serious accidents. He did not so much blame the Minister for Works; he blamed the Treasurer, who, he believed, would not allow the Minister for Works to have sufficient money. Look at the Fassifern Railway, which was to be opened in a few days: it was a line with very little ballast, and yet it was to be looked upon as a main line to connect with New South Wales, and there was no rolling-stock provided for it. There were complaints everywhere about the scarcity of rolling-stock, and he hoped that in future the Minister for Works would have a little more forethought, and that more of revenue would be devoted to that purpose. He also hoped that the hon. gentleman would put his department in a better state of organisation; at present it was the most disorganised department in the colony, in every branch of it. The fact was that the Minister for Works was everything—Traffic Manager, Locomotive Manager, and everything else. There ought to be proper officers and proper management, as there would be in a properly organised office. The department, he could say, had been properly managed before the present Minister for Works came into office. The Speech said:—

"The financial year closed with a gratifying surplus, a portion of which my advisers propose to appropriate to particular services instead of carrying it over as a balance to the following year."

He knew what the Government proposed to do with that. They intended to corrupt the constituencies. There was a general election looming in the distance, and the electors were to be got at. He hoped, however, that they would resist the bribe. He thought the Government ought to devote a part of the revenue to providing water in different parts of the colony. In such places as Warwick, Toowoomba, and Ipswich they were obliged to raise water by steam at considerable expense, whereas in Brisbane it cost next to nothing. He might state that he knew that in Ipswich people paid as much as from 20 to 25 per cent. on the capital value of their property for water-supply, which was a great tax on the people. He hoped

the Government would act upon the suggestion he had made, and would provide water in all places where it was required. The Premier himself knew settled districts where water was as scarce as on the prairies of the North-west. On the Darling Downs there was a very bad water supply. The Treasurer should bear those facts in mind when he was considering how to appropriate that £245,000, or whatever it was. He hoped the hon. gentleman would take the hint and not devote the money to roads and bridges among his own supporters, but deal it out fairly. Let him hand the money over to him (Mr. Thorn), and he would undertake to provide water wherever it was required. With regard to the British-India Mail Service he thought the Premier had talked bunkum; he had not understood him, and he should like to know who had. If he recollected aright the rule made by the Imperial Government was that they would deliver letters free at certain points for all the colonies. They were delivered free by the Indian boats as far as Galle, and by the Chinese boats as far as Singapore, and the Imperial Government were not likely to go the roundabout way round Gibraltar when they could get letters so much quicker. Nor was the Imperial Government likely to submit to the Premier's dictation for a differential rate. Why could not the Premier look at the matter from an Australian point of view—soar a little higher than he had done, and try to please the mercantile community more especially? The hon. gentleman ought to withdraw the letters he had sent to the Imperial Office on this subject. It was quite possible, with such vessels as the new steamer "Austral," that letters could be sent that way from Brisbane to London, and replies received before a letter sent by the British-India steamers reached London. An eight-knot service was not sufficient as a mail service, but it might do for a cargo service. The Premier intended it to be a mail service, and they were told that it was to become a fast service; but it was just the same now as it was in the beginning, and there was more contention now than there was then. He did not believe that any fines were imposed on the company for not keeping up to time. He again hoped that the Premier would withdraw his obnoxious proposals to the Imperial Government, and not exact differential rates. With regard to the Transcontinental Railway, he was opposed to it, and he did not believe that they would ever hear anything more of it. He had heard from London that the Premier was bound to keep faith with General Feilding; but it would all end in smoke—the Premier had not the least idea of bringing the question on. He was astonished that the hon. gentleman had tried to deceive a gentleman of General Feilding's stamp. He noticed that the Government proposed to make a line from Rockhampton to Port Alma. If so, all he could say was that it would be the death-knell of Rockhampton. He wondered the people of Rockhampton were not alarmed, and that the members for that town did not see that its interests were about to be jeopardised. He had predicted that there would be a waste of money in clearing the river, and so there had been, as was the case in the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers. He could cut a channel that would be sufficient for all purposes for less money than had been wasted on the Fitzroy. Then, as to the port of Maryborough, he contended that Tin Can Bay was the proper port instead of Hervey's Bay. The Wide Bay bar should be deepened, and the harbour made inside the bar, instead of vessels having to go round Break Sea Spit. If the bar was removed the mail steamers might then enter.

Mr. H. PALMER (Maryborough): Why did you not think of that when in office?

1882—D

Mr. THORN said he always thought of it, but it had never been brought under his notice. There might be a magnificent port at Maryborough, and he hoped the member for the district would be alive to the fact. The Government ought not to neglect this work; nor ought they to neglect important works at Townsville. If a Liberal Ministry had been in power there would have been a good jetty there long ago. The Minister for Works was member for Townsville, and yet he was the sole cause of the jetty there not being completed. The Government had deceived the people in the North, or they would have given Townsville a jetty. Instead of that, the money had been wasted in Ross Creek. Townsville was the most important town in the colony next to Brisbane, and he thought the Government ought not to neglect it. He hoped members of the House would not assent to the proposal that the line be constructed by a private company or person, with the example of the Hobson Bay line before them. As was rightly said by the leader of the Opposition, the line between Rockhampton and Port Alma would be the best paying bit of line in the colony, and if the proposal were entertained the owners of the private line would reap the benefit of the whole traffic. It was also stated in the Speech that—

"The Public Works of the colony have been very much retarded by the extraordinary and unprecedented demand for labour in every part of the colony. My Government have taken exceptional steps to increase immigration; and to supply the existing demand no efforts on their part will be spared."

Whose fault was that? It was the fault of the Government, who, during the first part of their reign, turned hundreds—he might say thousands—of skilled workmen out of the colony, including some of the best men from the best workshops in London. The majority went over the border, and others by sea route to the other colonies, where they soon occupied leading positions—many of them as foremen and overseers. Those were the men driven out of the colony, and the Government had only themselves to blame. Then he found it stated:—

"The low cost at which railways have been lately constructed, and the increased settlement in the various districts of the colony, will, I think, justify my Ministers in submitting to you during the session proposals for the construction of several lines."

With regard to the "low cost" he would warn the Minister for Works to look out. Some of the low-cost lines would most likely become very dear in the end. He had letters—which he would show to the Minister for Works—from engineers in the North, complaining that the hon. gentleman had taken up on himself to allow ash or poplar to be used for sleepers instead of hardwood. The timber substituted was inferior, and only lasted from twelve to eighteen months; but because it was cheap it was allowed to be used. He was informed that the works were suspended for a time because the engineer and his foremen would not allow the timber to go in.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not true.

Mr. THORN said he would show the letter to the hon. member, who ought to see that none but the best material was used. The hon. member should not be Traffic Manager, Locomotive Superintendent, and Minister for Mines altogether, as was stated by the Premier last night. He did not think it necessary to say anything more on the Address in Reply; and as for the coolies, he would be prepared to speak on that question when the proper time arrived.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Pope Cooper) said he did not rise with any desire to add anything to the debate, which had become very dreary, but to make a brief explanation about

a matter mentioned by the hon. member for Toowoomba on the subject of friendly societies. The hon. member asked whether any reports had been laid before him (Mr. Cooper) by the Registrar of the Supreme Court, who was the Registrar of Friendly Societies, relative to returns to be furnished by those societies; and to that question he (the Attorney-General) answered "No." The hon. member (Mr. Groom) pointed out that the Friendly Societies Act made provision that the Registrar of the District Court should be Registrar of Friendly Societies, and he also mentioned what were his duties. Now, the duties of the Registrar of the Supreme Court were contained in the 8th section of the Friendly Societies Act, which enacted that the Registrar should—

"Prepare and cause to be circulated for the use of societies model forms of accounts, balance-sheets, and valuations.

"Collect from the returns under this Act and from other sources, and publish and circulate either generally or in any particular district, or otherwise make known such information on the subject of the statistics of life and sickness, and the application thereof to the business of friendly societies, and from time to time publish generally or in particular districts such particulars of their returns and valuations, and such other information useful to the member of or to persons interested in the friendly or other societies registered, or which might be registered under this Act, as the Registrar shall from time to time think fit.

"Cause to be constructed and published tables for the payment of sums of money on death, in sickness, or old age, or on any other contingency forming the subject of an assurance authorised under this Act which may appear to be calculable. Provided, nevertheless, that the adoption of such tables by any society shall be optional.

"The Registrar shall every year lay before the Governor a report of his proceedings, and of the principal matters transacted by him, and of the valuations returned to or caused to be made by him during the year preceding."

That Act was copied from one in force in Victoria.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No; it is founded on the English Act.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that, whether it was founded on the English Act or on the Act in force in Victoria, the individual who was required to perform the duties thrown on the Registrar was an officer who had the appliances in his office to carry out the duties. But the Registrar of the Supreme Court had no such appliances. He was not a skilled accountant or a statish, and he had not the machinery for doing the work thrown upon him by the Act, and the consequence was that the duties were not performed. In fact, they never had been performed under the several Attorneys-General who had held office since the Act came into force in the colony. The hon. the leader of the Opposition had held office since the Act was passed, yet he had not seen that the provision was carried out. The member for Moreton was Attorney-General for some time, but he did not see the provision carried out—neither did Mr. Malbon Thompson, Mr. Justice Pring, or Mr. Beor; in fact, that was why no returns had ever been laid before the House relative to those societies.

Mr. NORTON said he would detain the House for only a short time, in order to refer to one or two subjects in connection with the debate. He was surprised at the remarks that fell from the Premier last night with regard to the railway management. Knowing the determination of the Minister for Works, and the way he went at hard work without hesitation, he had hoped that a reform would have been effected in his department before now. But it appeared that the Minister for Works had tried his best and could not work a reform. He did not believe that the hon. gentleman would listen to such a

word as "can't"; and between the statement made by the Premier and that made by the hon. member for Northern Downs, the matter became confusing. The Premier said that, however much the Minister might try to carry out reforms, he was deterred from doing so by his subordinates; while the hon. member for Northern Downs—he did not know how far the statement could be trusted—said that the reason was because the Minister tried to be everything himself. He (Mr. Norton) thought the Premier went a little too far: he did not think the department could be in such a disorganised state as might be inferred from the statements made. At the same time, there were matters which demanded some sort of reform. A short time ago he came by train from Toowoomba to Brisbane, and while at Ipswich he witnessed a most disreputable scene on the platform. The conduct of two drunken men was so gross and disgusting, and that of the station-master so weak, that he (Mr. Norton) felt himself bound to make a formal complaint. Next morning, after his arrival in Brisbane, he went to the Railway Department and made a formal complaint to the gentleman acting for Mr. Herbert, who was absent at the time. He mentioned the names of two gentlemen who travelled in the same carriage, and undertook to obtain their evidence in the matter, but was told that his own word was sufficient. He did not know whether the complaint had reached the Minister for Works, who was away from town at the time, but he (Mr. Norton) had never heard of it since, and he mentioned the matter now to bring it under the hon. gentleman's notice, because he did not intend to let it rest. The leader of the Opposition, in speaking of the Stanthorpe line, stated, as a reason for its being carried on at once, that the New South Wales Government had called for tenders for their line to the border.

Mr. GRIFFITH: To Tenterfield.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member first said to the border, and afterwards corrected himself. But they might say, in a general way, that the Queensland line ran to the border now, because it ran a great deal nearer the border than Tenterfield was to the border on the other side. The distance from Stanthorpe to Tenterfield was forty miles, and he knew the road well. The border was only four or five miles from the railway from Stanthorpe, or where the railway would be; and if the New South Wales line were completed to Tenterfield, the Queensland Government would have ample time to call for tenders for a line to the border, and have it completed as soon as the New South Wales Government had theirs completed. The country on the Queensland side of the border was much easier than that on the other side, on which occurred several abrupt ranges. Before leaving the subject of railways it might be as well—though he did not intend to say much now—to refer to the overland railways, or rather to the proposed agreement with the syndicate to carry the line overland to the Gulf of Carpentaria. He was not one who felt very strongly on that subject. At the time the Preliminary Bill was passed through the House he expressed his sentiments pretty plainly, and he had not seen any reason to change his views very materially, and, therefore, it was unnecessary for him to dwell on the subject. When the proper time arrived he should be prepared to speak fully on it, and act in accordance with his convictions. With regard to the construction of private lines, he thought hon. members on the other side had scarcely dealt fairly with the Premier. Instances had been brought forward where mismanagement had been the rule in connection with private

lines in other colonies, more especially in Victoria and Tasmania. He believed there had been a great deal of mismanagement, but hon. members when referring to the subject might have remembered that there was, in one colony at least, an instance of a private line being highly successful. He referred to the Deniliquin and Moama Railway, which he understood had been the cheapest and most payable line yet constructed in the colonies. He could not speak positively, but from the reports that he had received there was every reason to believe that such was the case. In connection with that matter he might say that the terrible accident in Victoria which had been referred to, although it took place on a line which was constructed by a private company, was not owing to the bad construction of the line, as the hon. junior member for Enoggera had said, but to the defective rolling-stock which the Government of Victoria used months after they had taken over the line from the company. The bad construction had nothing at all to do with it, and if it had the Government had been in possession of the line so long that they ought either to have repaired any defects which existed or stop the trains from running. Here was the quotation he referred to from the speech of the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge):—

"What did they see in Victoria? It was in that colony where the only disastrous railway accident had taken place for many years, and he did not think there was any desire to imitate them. In addition to that, Mr. Bent, the Minister for Railways, had had a succession of actions by persons injured in these accidents, and such a state of things had existed that lately one of the officials, in his evidence, stated that when he examined the rolling-stock on the suburban lines his blood ran cold. Those were the sort of results they got from private enterprise."

Now, it was perfectly absurd to refer to private enterprise as the result of that accident, for it was shown that it had nothing to do with it.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that was not quite a correct report, as what he said was that, if that was the result derivable from the Government taking over railway works from private companies, private companies ought to leave railway construction alone.

Mr. NORTON said that the explanation of the hon. member did not alter the facts of the case at all. He did not remember one single instance where an accident of any importance had occurred on a private line, and, as he had pointed out, the example set by the Deniliquin line was such as any Government might imitate. If the line was well and economically conducted, it was one of those cases that the Government could with advantage imitate. Private enterprise had nothing to do with the Victorian affair, else why had the actions been brought against Mr. Bent, the Commissioner of Railways? The whole affair was the fault of the Government, or of their officials; and, even if the same rolling-stock had been used by the private company, there was not the slightest excuse for the Government, when they took the line over, not renewing the rolling-stock. Reference had also been made to the line from Rockhampton to Port Alma. He dared say some hon. members imagined that he objected to the proposals of the company to construct that line. He did not do so at all. He had pointed out some time ago that the works on the Fitzroy River ought to be suspended, with a view of carrying out a railway from Rockhampton to Gladstone. If that line was ever carried out—and he had not the slightest doubt that it would be in a very short time—it was not likely that he would object to it, and he did not object to the line going down to Port Alma. He did not forget that, in carrying out that line, it would be necessary to go in the direction he proposed two years ago. The hon. member for

Northern Downs—Mr. Thorn—made a very good hit when he said the line would be detrimental to Rockhampton, as no doubt it would be. He was very anxious for the suspension of the works on the Fitzroy River, as he had stated at the time they were proposed that they would be an utter failure. When up there last year he saw the measurements that had been taken of the river, and he was bound to admit that, to a certain extent, they had been successful. He was told by the captain of one of the steamers, who had been opposed to the works, that he was obliged to admit that, to a certain extent, they had been successful, and that they had in the river a depth of 9 feet 6 inches at low water. At that time there had not occurred one matter which he had pointed out as likely to have a damaging effect upon those works; there had not been a flood of any great volume in the river; but lately there had been a flood, and when he went to the Northern ports a short time ago he was told by the captain of the steamer that the river was as bad as ever. He did not mean to say that he meant it was quite as bad, but instead of there being 9 feet 6 inches of water there was only 4 feet 6 inches. He had also heard from other sources that the flood had formed mud-banks near the wharves. He did not know what the effect would be, but, at any rate, what he had foreseen had been carried out, and the works had been suspended. He proposed that in place of those works a railway should be constructed from Rockhampton to Port Curtis. That line was not to be constructed at once, but he thought that in all probability, from what he had heard, it would be constructed about half-way to where he wanted to see it; and when that was accomplished he would take his chance of getting the whole distance. The hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Ferguson) had referred, like a good many others, in very high terms to Port Alma. He believed a ship could go there at any tide, but there were two things required to constitute a good harbour. There must not only be plenty of water, but there must be good land in the neighbourhood. In this instance they had the water, but no land. The water was surrounded by mangrove mud-flats for miles, and at the back of that there were plains. He was sure the hon. Colonial Treasurer, when he was owner of Raglan Station, remembered putting up a fence along that marine flat to make a paddock. That fence ran along the Port Curtis and Rockhampton road, and he (Mr. Norton) remembered at the time that it was the wonder of the people that the hon. gentleman did not put it a little higher up, as, if there were any heavy floods such as had taken place previously, the cattle would not have been able to find a dry place. The whole country for miles around was subject to inundations; and if the railway was constructed there he believed that it would be found necessary to take it up again. With regard to the effect it would have on Rockhampton, it was not to be supposed that the people who lived up the line would consent to their goods going into Rockhampton simply to be handled by Rockhampton merchants and levied toll upon. It was probable that, if that line was carried out, stores and shops would be built along the line at Emerald and elsewhere, and the dealers could act as well as the men in Rockhampton for the people in the neighbourhood. The goods they required could be landed on the wharf at Port Alma, put in the train, and taken away to Emerald, or wherever it might be; and, instead of Rockhampton reaping the benefit, they would find that the goods passed by there altogether. And not only that, but other people would establish themselves along the line, and would take the business for themselves. He knew the cry would then be that the port was of no use,

and that they could not have their stores and offices there; that it was a mistake to put them there at all, and that they should go to some place where there was room for building. He did not pretend to have any prophetic foresight as to the future, but when that Bill came before the House he should not be one to oppose it. Whether it was desirable that it should be carried out by a private company or by the Government was not a question with regard to which he was prepared to speak now. There were some reasons why he would rather see it carried out by the Government, and some why he would rather see it made by private enterprise. With regard to the mail service, he was glad that one hon. member on the other side of the House had the courage to speak up for it—that was the hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Groom). If hon. members were prepared to do justice to other parts of the colony than Brisbane, they must admit that the service had been successful, not merely as a trading service, but as a mail service. He did not say it could not be improved, or that it could not be faster than it was; but there was not one town from Keppel Bay northwards that had not benefited by it as a mail service. At Rockhampton the time was about the same as other routes. North of that the benefit was greater, and, when the number of people who were settling in the Northern towns was considered, he thought anyone who took a reasonable view of the case was bound to admit that, whatever might be the cost, the service was a great benefit to the colony generally. Reference had been made to the immigrants brought out by that line. One hon. member objected to it because three people had died by sunstroke, but many people had died from sunstroke in Sydney and Melbourne. Then it was represented that some of those who came were not satisfied to stop in Queensland, and said it was too hot for them, and raised other objections. But it had always been so; there were complaints continually that immigrants were going away to the southern colonies in dozens and hundreds. The object in bringing immigrants out here was not for the Government to employ them, but that they should find employment for themselves. If they were brought out simply that the Government might employ them, they had better stop away; but since the public did not employ them there was no inducement for them to stay. The Government complained that there was a dearth of labour, and it was said that they ought to have foreseen that and introduced immigrants in larger numbers. If they had foreseen that, they would have done so probably. If they had foreseen capital pouring in from the southern colonies in hundreds and thousands of pounds, and seen gentlemen in Victoria and New South Wales buying up all the runs in the market, and the rush there had been for land in the North, they would have seen that a larger amount of labour would have been required. It was all very well to say that they should have seen that, but they could not always see things. There was not one hon. member there who could say that he foresaw it, and that if he had been in a position to do so he would have made arrangements accordingly. When the present Government first came into office they stopped immigration, as immigrants were coming out in large numbers and could not get employment, and the result was that there was a good deal of grumbling and discontent, and they flocked to the southern colonies; in fact, it was useless bringing out immigrants when there was such depression in the colony that they could not get employment. They ought to have seen that that would have occurred, but they did not. The colony lost, most undoubtedly, where immigrants were brought out at the expense of the colony and

then were not wanted. That was of far more consequence than the absence of labour, which was not foreseen, and which could hardly have been foreseen. With regard to the differential postage duties, if the colony proposed to have them he could not see why the Government at home should not consent to them. Queensland would not be the only colony that had done so. In New Zealand, in Tasmania, he believed, and also, if he was not mistaken, in South Australia, for some time they had been adopted. Under the circumstances he thought the Government were quite right in imposing them here. In regard to private letters, it mattered very little whether they were a fortnight sooner or later in delivery, or which way they went home. For himself, he knew that it mattered little whether he got his private letters now or a few days hence. To business men it was no doubt of importance; but what was the tax put upon business men, except perhaps a few pounds in the whole year. Was that all they were complaining of? When the Premier pointed out on the previous evening the object of those duties he (Mr. Norton) did not know whether the hon. gentleman made himself clear to hon. members. But he was quite sure that if they took up the last Post Office Report they would find statements in it giving the clearest explanation possible. He had had discussions on the subject, and was not only convinced himself, but had heard others who had spoken to him acknowledge that their complaints were, to a large extent, unfounded, and that, instead of blaming the Government here, the blame rested on the Imperial authorities. That was his own opinion and that of many others who had once blamed the Government here. He had one other remark to make with regard to the commercial aspect of the mail contract. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) had made some rather peculiar remarks upon it, which he would quote. The hon. gentleman said:—

"He (Mr. Rutledge) did not want to depreciate the cargo service to the Northern ports; and if it was to meet the just demands of those ports, no doubt it was a good service. But he took it that before many months were passed the Brisbane merchants would be able to tell about the results of the cargo service as far as they were concerned. The fact was that the service would diminish by about one-third the trade done with the storekeepers in the Northern ports. They were becoming direct importers; and while they paid cash to the English manufacturers, the Brisbane houses would have to take paper for goods sent to the North; and when those northern people required accommodation the Brisbane merchants would have to find it."

Hon. members would note the expression "just demands." If the hon. member went up the coast and visited some of the rising towns he would be astonished at the progress they had made. He (Mr. Norton) thought that, instead of the Northern ports having to come and ask accommodation from the Brisbane merchant, if they went on long as they were doing now they would in a very few years be able to dictate to the Brisbane merchant as to the terms on which they would have anything to do with them. This might seem a bold remark to make, but during the recess he had paid a visit to Cooktown. He did not go to Mackay, but he went to every other port on the way. The prosperity that existed all along the coast would hardly be credited in Brisbane by people who had not been up there. He was aware that when the mail service started there was an idea that it would interfere with the trade of the southern part of the colony, but the result had been the very opposite. Since the mail service had started every ship had brought cargoes for the Northern towns, and each ship larger cargoes; but, notwithstanding that, steamers came from the South still full, and the

companies had to put on extra ships to enable them to carry their Northern cargoes, and even then they could not carry it all. Apart from that, on every steamer he had travelled in he found that at every port commercial travellers got in while others got out. They even sometimes composed half the travellers on a steamer. They were not commercial travellers from home, but from Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne, and that they did business was amply shown by their coming in such large numbers, and by the satisfaction they expressed at the treatment they received and the success they met with as far as remuneration went. Their trade had not only increased, largely but was still increasing, and would increase; and if Brisbane, or Brisbane merchants, did suffer by the establishment of the mail service, all he could say was, if the merchants in Sydney and Melbourne were already sending immense quantities of cargo to these ports, why could not Brisbane do the same? If Brisbane could not do it, the sooner she was blotted out the better, and the merchants with it, perhaps. He had spoken of the profitable trade of the Northern towns. To what had they to attribute that prosperity largely but to the desire exhibited by Southern capitalists to get a footing in the colony? Some honourable members said that the land ought not to be given up, but ought to be reserved and sold to selectors in small pieces—in such small pieces that they could work it themselves. Hon. members seemed to have an idea that the land they were speaking about was a little peninsula, and that they were talking about one small scrub which ought to be cut up into small blocks. They seemed to forget that there were millions upon millions of acres that were of no earthly use but for sugar-growing or some other kind of tropical agriculture, and which were now only inhabited by hordes of blacks. Those blocks of land were useless until the scrub was cleared, and the ideas of the hon. gentlemen on the subject were absurd. And what did it all amount to? Time after time they heard that what they wanted in the colony was men coming from home, or from the other colonies, bringing capital with them. But now these men had come it was said they must not have the land, but that the land must be reserved for people to take up—in 10 or 12 acre lots he supposed, or 100 acres at the outside. By so doing the prosperity of the North would be retarded, and the Brisbane merchant, he supposed, might continue to exercise a great influence on the Northern districts. Was it to be supposed for a moment that the people in the North would put up with that? In every boat he had travelled in, and every town he had visited, he met men with capital to invest which they had brought from the other colonies. Were they to prefer the people who came out from home to those who were already here, acclimatised, able to go to work at once, ready to invest their capital, and who were sure to become good colonists? The thing was an absurdity. It was true that if the Government could have seen the rush there was going to be for the land they might have got higher prices for it. When it was seen, and when it was noticed that speculation was being indulged in, then the land was withdrawn from sale, and the price increased very materially. But, in spite of that, the men would come; and were they to be told that they were not the men that were wanted, but rather men from home who knew nothing about sugar-growing? And, depend upon it, the voices of those new-comers would be heard just as loudly before many years were past as the voices of residents in the southern portion of the colony. He should not at that time refer to the Coolie question. It was mixed up with the question of

the land in a very decided manner. He had no interest in sugar lands, or sugar-growing in any way. He had expressed his sentiments with regard to the employment of black labour pretty decidedly before that night. He detested it, and would rather avoid having anything to do with sugar-growing if, in order to carry it out, he were bound to employ that kind of labour. Although he held those opinions, he should not allow himself to be so influenced by his own views or his own prejudices as to say that no other man in the colony should be allowed to employ coloured labour under any circumstances whatever. It was to some extent because he held strong opinions and was only partly informed on the subject that he had undertaken his recent trip to the North; and he had there learned much that would enable him when the right time came to express his views more strongly than he could otherwise have done. As the subject was likely to come on for discussion shortly he need not refer to it at greater length at present. He had a word to say, however, with reference to two of the amended Bills mentioned as likely to be brought forward this session. With regard to the Bill to amend the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) said the Government were very ready to bring in any measure for the protection of their squatting friends. That hon. member was probably not aware when he made the remark that the lands included under that Bill were lying idle and bringing in no rent whatever. People could use them as they were doing now, and the State could demand no rent whatever. Had the hon. member been aware of that fact he would probably not have referred to the Bill as he did on the previous night. The other Bill he would allude to was the Bill to Amend the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Act of 1876. He had himself introduced a short Bill on the subject last year, and he was very glad to see that the Government had taken the matter up. His only regret was that it was not placed higher on the list, and he hoped that though last there it would not be the last Bill to be brought forward. As he had stated last year, the effect of the Act of 1876 had been to drive all labour from the settled districts. Personally he never spent one shilling more than he could help on the Crown lands held by him on lease, and dozens of other lessees acted in the same way. Only two days ago a gentleman told him that if the Bill became law, and any sort of tenure were given, he would put up ten miles of fencing at once. The lessees in the settled districts at the present time had to pay enormously high rents, and had no tenure. At the end of five years their runs were put up to auction, and they were apt to be blackmailed by anyone if they desired to retain them. The runs in the settled districts were thereby made unsaleable, whilst those in the outside districts realised large fortunes for the owners. He regarded it as one of the most iniquitous Acts that had ever been passed. Within the last few days he had heard of one case where a gentleman whose run had been forfeited wished to buy back at the auction sale. He had heard that a man had been looking over the run who intended to run the price up; and he knew that he must either be run up or pay blackmail. If the lessee went out he would be at enormous loss, because it would be impossible for him, under the Act, to remove his stock in time, except at great expense. The result was that he made an arrangement by which he paid the man £50. The effect of such an Act was utterly demoralising, and he was glad that steps were to be taken to amend it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he should only occupy the time of the House by referring to

one or two points. With regard to the British-India Mail Service, he would point out that the opposition to the service that came from the Opposition side of the House was not so much to the mail service as to the particular service to be employed. Hon. members considered that it was too slow for the amount of money to be paid. As one who had participated in the advantages, he could testify to the usefulness of the service as a freight service; and it had also proved a success as an immigration service. Seeing that the colony was paying £55,000 a year to the company, and the Government were supplying them with immigrants, and the merchants were patronising them so well, he thought it might be possible to make a re-arrangement by which a part of the subsidy now paid should be devoted to obtaining a quicker mail service. Both North and South would then be benefited. Another advantage might be obtained for the colony if the supply of coal for the steamers were obtained from the pits of the colony. Granting that the steam-producing quality of the Queensland coal was not quite equal to that of the Newcastle coal, it was not right that the colony should be denied the profit of supplying the coal because if it were used the steamers would have to carry a few extra tons. If the coal were obtained here hundreds of miners would be employed, and the colony would reap an advantage which now accrued to New South Wales. He could understand the matter if it were true, as he had been told, that a very near relation of the Postmaster-General was either a partner or manager, or had some interest, in the company that now supplied coal to the mail steamers. He had expressed his views on the Transcontinental Railway when the Preliminary Railway Bill was before the House, and it was not needful for him to recapitulate them. The matter appeared to him to be in a nutshell. If the Government would survey along the proposed route the quantity of land they were willing to give to a syndicate, and sell it by auction or lease it on long terms, they would get sufficient money to make the line, and when made it would belong to the Government. The present Government were, however, so fond of big things, and things benefiting a few at the expense of the many, that they preferred to give the land away rather than make the line themselves. With regard to the management of the railways of the colony, he was inclined to think it was not what it ought to be. The Minister for Works, whilst working hard and doing the best he could for his department, appeared to take into his hand low and insignificant matters which should be left to the officers of the department. By delegating to others some of those little things, the hon. gentleman would have more time to devote to the higher and nobler branch of the department over which he presided. On a recent occasion three or four persons were disabled on account of an accident caused by the breaking down of a truck which was being taken to the works at Ipswich for repairs. In such case it would have been better to send the damaged truck by luggage train instead of attaching it to a passenger train and thereby endangering the lives of the passengers. Had it gone by the luggage train, as it ought to have done, very likely but little damage would have ensued. He was afraid there would be many more breakdowns very soon. Many of the trucks made under the new system had proved great failures. He had been informed by persons who ought to know that some of the trucks made during the last two years had cost more for repairs than trucks which had been running upon the line for the last ten years. There was evidently bad management somewhere. The machinery in the shops was standing idle, and

the foremen were comparatively idle because the Minister for Works had chosen to adopt a new system. That Minister had quite sufficient power to prevent the mismanagement that had taken place, and he (Mr. Macfarlane) hoped he would exercise it. On the subject of coolie immigration he would only at present observe that the Premier himself appeared to have been converted to black labour, for he had not always been in favour of it. He even believed that the Premier was not really in favour of it now. What, then, had forced him to stand up for it? In the session of 1877, during the debate on the Polynesian Labourers Bill, the Premier declared that he believed the country would be far better if there was not a black man in it, and that the contact with Polynesians in the interior had tended to the great deterioration of white labour. The hon. gentleman also said—

"If black men were taken off the plantations to-morrow the white man could put such a price on his sugar product by reason of the import duty that it would actually pay him. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had always been a protectionist, and he believed the first protection we would have in this colony would be to protect the farmer, among others, by doing something that would discourage an inferior class of labour from competing with them."

Those views had apparently changed materially since 1877. As the subject would come up again, he would make no further remarks upon it at present. The Minister for Lands had it in his power to do a work for the colony possessed by none of his colleagues. Much had been said about large sugar estates, and selling land in great quantities to capitalists; and the complaint of the Opposition was that similar energy had not been displayed in the disposal of small portions of land to small selectors. He did not object to large capitalists and large estates—the more of each the better; but why could they not have the two working side by side—the men of small means and the men of large means? The Minister for Lands had it in his power to do a great work for the men of small means. But that Minister had run away from his work twice; and he feared that if he went away a third time, and another storm arose, the sailors would throw him overboard, and there might be a great fish there to swallow him up. He (Mr. Macfarlane) would suggest to the Minister that some of the finest land in different districts should be set apart ready for immigrants when they arrived. That important provision had been neglected, not only by the present but by all previous Governments. If it was begun now a class of people would be settled upon the land who would be of great usefulness in the colony. He hoped the Minister for Lands would see to its being done without further delay. Amongst the nineteen Bills promised was one for the storage and distribution of water. He looked upon that as the Bill of the whole nineteen. It was not a party measure, and could be easily carried if the Government chose. If the whole of the surplus which the Treasurer had in his possession were devoted to the storage of water, it would be the best thing he could do for the colony. The greatest good would then be done to the greatest number. The only other measure to which he would refer was an old friend, the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors. It would be very useful to consolidate those laws, but, as to amending the liquor traffic, that could never be done, and to attempt it would be a waste of time. The system was rotten, and to amend the liquor traffic was impossible. In Great Britain there were over 400 amendments to the liquor laws, and the traffic was as bad as ever. The only way to amend it was to abolish it. He would conclude by saying that if, among the

nineteen Bills, the Government only succeeded in carrying the one for the conservation of water, they would do the best thing that had ever been accomplished for the colony.

Mr. BROOKES said he did not rise to make a speech, but simply to introduce himself to the Assembly as a new member. There were many speakers to follow, and it was desirable to close the debate that night; still it seemed to him to be his duty to put himself right before the House at the earliest possible opportunity. Hon. members were aware that he was elected by the constituency of North Brisbane mainly on one question, and that was the Coolie question. On that question he carried not only an overwhelming majority of those who lived by wages, but a very large number of those whose warehouses and places of business would cease to exist if the number of those who lived by wages was seriously diminished. He would say to the Ministry that they need have no misunderstanding about him. He was there to use all fair and honourable means to turn them out. They must clearly understand that, while disdaining to use any improper means, he was there for the express purpose of turning them out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Try it on.

Mr. BROOKES said that, although he laboured under some disadvantages, yet he possessed one advantage over many others. He had not the parliamentary experience of some hon. members, nor the same acquaintance with the columns of *Hansard*; but he had the advantage of knowing the opinion of the outside public of the present Government, and he might at once say that every succeeding session increased the public distrust of them. Excepting on such an occasion as the debate on the Address in Reply, his remarks might be considered irrelevant; but on such a debate he could speak on any subject under the sun. He would tell them in a few simple words what he thought of the Address. He had lived in Queensland ever since Queensland was a colony, and nothing had taken place in Parliament that had escaped his observation. He had noticed in the Address the old squatting paragraphs and the old disregard for the interests of those who formed the large majority of the population. He noticed particularly the perpetual recurrence of those two terms so familiar in all Australian politics—capital and labour; as though they could not do anything in this country without borrowed money. It was a sad state of things, and he intended to do his best to put an end to it. He believed they ought to make their own money. He had also noticed in the speech of the Colonial Treasurer—and it was very excusable on the part of that hon. gentleman—that he said that every immigrant who came here had to work for wages for somebody. That was the Australian theory—that land must be put up at such a price that the new arrival must work for somebody unless he was able to pay the price.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in explanation, said the hon. member was misquoting him, though, perhaps, not intentionally. What he said was that men who came here got high wages and could save money to establish themselves as employers of labour, or they could save money and become independent farmers.

Mr. BROOKES thought the Hon. the Treasurer had made matters rather worse by his explanation. What was the position of the colony? They did not seem to have arrived at the idea of governing the colony, as its administration now was perfectly absurd. They had an immense colony, the gem and pearl of all the Australian colonies; and yet, with only 200,000 people, they were told some little time ago that

there was a surplus of labour. Was not that contrary to common sense? Look at the old country and the Continent, and what did they see there? They saw a stream of emigration such as had not existed since the Irish famine. They also saw all kinds of arrangements being made to attract people and take them to Canada, the Cape of Good Hope, and the United States. In the meantime, what was being done in this colony? Why, the heaviest indictment that could be made against the colony—and it was an indictment that could be made against every Government that had existed here—was that it had never seriously undertaken the great paramount question of immigration. It had been his intention to have told the House something about what took place when the colony was founded; but there would be an opportunity of doing so on the second reading of the Bill to make better provision for the regulation of immigration. He did not like that phrase, because he believed, as the last speaker had said with regard to the Liquor Bill, that there was no regulating it. He had been told by Mr. Ward—whose name he would be excused for using—that, if there were only rational arrangements in England, Queensland might at the present time get the pick of the agricultural labourers in the south of England by thousands. With regard to the lands of the colony, they were dealing with them exactly as a spendthrift dealt with his estate. The colony was twenty-three years of age, and he would ask whether a young man twenty-three years of age, with good prospects, if he was a spendthrift, was not likely to be on a friendly footing with all those who had money to lend him? What were they doing with the colony? They were doing exactly what a young spendthrift did when, for the sake of having ready money in his pocket, he gave *post obits* that would eventually ruin him. As he had said before, there would be no misunderstanding between himself and the Government as to the position he intended to take up. If it had not been that the people of Brisbane thoroughly detested the Government he would not have been there. During the recent election for North Brisbane the Government had permitted his opponent to canvass the Government offices; it was a mean, shabby advantage to take, yet his opponent was a long way behind on the poll, and he (Mr. Brookes) was a member of the House. He was there to represent the working classes of Brisbane fairly and honourably, and yet not them alone, but of all the colony: that was his duty. If he believed that the Premier was one-tenth as clever and astute as he seemed to be, he would have to speak with bated breath; but he thought it was beyond what was human for anyone to be half as clever as the hon. gentleman made himself out to be. As to the Premier's remarks about the postal rates, nobody seemed quite to understand them. The hon. gentleman had got himself into a mess over the matter, though he was such a great financier and so clever at figures; in fact, the hon. gentleman never made a greater mess in any statement than he had done on the previous night in trying to explain that eighteenpence. Then, the idea of putting in the Governor's Speech a complaint against the General Post Office. The cheek of him! But it was characteristic of him. If the hon. gentleman tried any of it on him he would get as good as he gave. He (Mr. Brookes) had often sat in the gallery, and he had noticed that the hon. gentleman had such influence over other hon. members that they dared not speak. While he (Mr. Brookes) was in the House he would listen to the hon. gentleman respectfully, and bestow the best consideration he could on what he said;

but, at the same time, he should look with great suspicion upon everything he did. He should suspect there being something underneath everything the hon. gentleman proposed, whether it was his Transcontinental Railway, his Port Alma Railway, or his Mail Service; in fact, he should suspect that whatever the hon. gentleman proposed there was something hanging to it which would be to his own personal advantage, or that of his friends and relations. If the hon. gentleman thought that the memory of the last three years was obliterated from the minds of the people of Queensland he was very much mistaken; it would remain there as long as he lived. It was no use anybody whitewashing him; the logic of facts was against him. That was how the matter stood as far as related to himself, as the junior member for North Brisbane, and the present Government. Respecting the Coolie question his opinions were well known, but he would take an opportunity of putting them before the House when the Immigration Bill came on for its second reading.

Mr. BLACK said he felt some diffidence in addressing the House after the able manner in which the hon. member for Port Curtis had referred to the several matters in the Address, but there were a few points upon which he should like to speak. He did not intend to shirk that question which hon. members on the other side seemed so careful to avoid—viz., the Labor question. He did not know why they should be so reticent; probably it was because they had not yet matured their views. At all events they had given him an opportunity to lay his views before the House, and he should do so in an honest and straightforward manner. According to nearly all the members on the other side, the Ministry and their supporters were monsters of evil, whilst hon. members on the Opposition side were angels of virtue—not quite fledged yet. But he would rather be a follower of a Ministry which could show an honest, straightforward surplus of £245,000 on the year's transactions, than be a follower of any Ministry that had existed before. That surplus had not been achieved by any doubtful means, such as carrying money forward which stood to the account of Railway Reserves in previous years, but was due, in his opinion, to the good management of the Government, in addition to the great tide of prosperity that had lately been flowing into the colony. If the result had been different, and a deficiency had appeared in the Treasurer's statement, that hon. gentleman would have been blamed; and it was only fair, when he showed such a magnificent surplus, that he should get credit for having managed the affairs of the colony with ability and success. His Excellency had commenced by congratulating them on the increased prosperity of the country, and he could safely do so; but that the country had not suffered from drought, he (Mr. Black) was not quite so certain. He believed that it had suffered to a great extent, and he hoped that a large portion of the large surplus would be devoted to securing water in the far West—notably, by boring. If the question was once solved as to the presence of large supplies of water by boring artesian springs, the value of the Western lands would be enormously increased; and the consequence would be that the Crown tenants, though holding their land on long leases, would be prepared to make a considerable addition to the revenue in the shape of assessments. With regard to the immigration service, the leader of the Opposition said that the Government offered no inducement to the farming classes to come to the colony; he also said "Let land be reserved—let them be carried to it." He (Mr. Black) did not know what inducements the Government could offer more than they did at present. The

homestead selector had a great advantage over the conditional selector which several hon. members did not seem to understand. The homestead selector was able to go on any of the lands up North and select 160 acres and had preference of selection over the conditional selector. The homestead selector paid 2s. 6d. an acre and had five years to pay; that was 6d. per acre per annum, while the conditional selector had to pay 15s. and £1 an acre. If a man could not afford to pay 2s. 6d. an acre for what other people were willing to purchase at 15s. or £1 an acre they were not wanted as immigrants. Besides, there was no such thing as confining the homestead selector to homestead reserves; he could go and select all over the country; he could take up land alongside the finest mill in the North, provided the land had not been already selected. He (Mr. Black) should have preferred to see the way in which the surplus of £245,000 was to be spent more definitely specified; and he should like to see a considerable portion of it returned to the people in some shape. The schools of arts and hospitals in different towns in the colony were probably entitled to more liberal endowments. He could understand when the finances were not in so satisfactory a state that it was the duty of the Government to reduce all those charitable allowances as much as they could; but now it would be only a fair recognition of the people who contributed to make the surplus revenue to give them some return in the manner he had suggested. There was also another way in which some of that money might be spent. The Divisional Boards Act was very severe upon some districts that were not wealthy and had to keep a considerable length of main roads in order, and some of those boards might fairly be considered to be entitled to something by way of special grant for keeping the main roads in order. He did not want any of the money for his own district, because they were able to maintain their roads, but for others which were not in so good a position. He considered that the mail service was, without exception, the most satisfactory service both for mails and cargo that the North ever had. He believed it might be improved; the improvement, however, would be for the benefit of the South. Most hon. gentlemen on the other side, in speaking on the subject, looked at it too much from a Brisbane point of view. It seemed to him that they rather regretted to see that the North had at last participated in some of the advantages previously exclusively enjoyed by the South.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: No, no!

Mr. BLACK said it seemed to him that their whole complaint was that the Brisbane people were not getting their letters quick enough, but he was glad to hear hon. gentlemen say "No," because he hoped to see a liberal spirit prevail, and the whole colony considered as one. He should be the last to hope for a difference of interests between North and South. As long as they remained one, he believed Queensland was destined to become the greatest of the Australian colonies. He would rather see the federation of the colonies than separation, which he considered unnecessary. At the same time, should the time ever come when it would be necessary for the protection of the rights of the North that it should separate, the North would have nothing to lose, and the South everything, as all the progressive industries were in the North, in his opinion. However, he was not, and hoped he never would be, an advocate of separation. With regard to the mail company not getting their coal in Brisbane, but in Sydney, he would ask why should they not get their coal in Sydney if it could be got better there? Was it possible for the House to

legislate to compel the company to take bad coal in Brisbane when they could get good coal in Sydney? They might just as well tell him (Mr. Black) that he had no business to send to England for goods, but ought to send to Brisbane. To say that the mail service was not a success because they went to Sydney for coal was most ridiculous. With reference to what the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) said about the Brisbane merchants having to take paper for goods sent North, it seemed that the Northern "paper" was not so bad after all—at all events, Brisbane seemed to think it could not get enough of it. With regard to the Transcontinental Railway, to a certain extent he disagreed from the remarks made on both sides of the House. When he first read the paragraph in the Speech he must confess that, to his mind, it appeared to mean, "Vote for the Transcontinental line and you shall have coast railways." Probably that meaning suggested itself from the vague wording of the paragraph. But after the explanation made last night by Ministers, that the question of coast railways would be considered quite irrespective of the Transcontinental line, he must own that he found he was mistaken. He should have preferred to see the matter put thus: "We consider the prosperity of the colony generally is so decided, and settlement is taking place so rapidly along the coast, that the necessity for coast railways is paramount." He should have preferred the Government to have said that the question of coast railways was the question of the session; that they were to be discussed solely on their merits, and that those railways having been constructed—as he considered them of paramount importance, far better than a Transcontinental Railway in his opinion—that those being settled on a satisfactory basis, they should then be asked to consider the question of the Transcontinental Railway. He thought that, perhaps, they had gone too far in carrying their trunk lines to the West. He did not know exactly how many miles they went out now, but they went a very long way. They went to tap the vast western lands which were not giving them a proportionate revenue in return for the eight millions that had been already spent in developing them by means of the trunk railways. He thought the time had arrived when they might safely say that they had gone far enough, and that they should now devote their attention to the coast districts that had a large population already settled upon them, and the districts which were, he might say, almost languishing for the want of means to get their produce to the shipping ports. With regard to the management of their railways, he was very sorry to hear the admission made by the Premier that the head of that department was not boss of his own house. He could hardly credit it. He could only say that if the Minister of Railways was unable to carry out those judicious alterations, which he was perfectly certain were necessary in that department, the first thing he should do was to sack his Under Secretary; and he was perfectly certain that no disadvantage to the colony would result by his taking that action, and any difficulty resulting would be looked upon very favourably and be very leniently dealt with by both sides on his laying it before them. With regard to the matter of the contrary actions of under secretaries or subordinates in the departments, he had another little thing to refer to—and that was in connection with the Harbours and Rivers Department. He had had no conversation with any hon. members of the House upon the subject, and did not know that any of them had got any grievance against Mr. Nisbet on other grounds. He referred to the extremely tardy way in which he was carrying out the harbour works at

Mackay, notwithstanding the quantity of assurances he (Mr. Black) had received last session from the head of the Government, that those works would be prosecuted with the greatest vigour possible under the circumstances. He was quite prepared to admit that the difficulty of procuring labour had something to do with the slow progress those works were making. He had had nothing to do with the placing of the sum of £30,000 on the Estimates for that particular work. That was done before he had the honour of a seat in that House; but his duty was to see that the wishes of the House in that respect were carried out. The contract for the work was let with great difficulty, in consequence, he believed, of the very difficult terms in which the original contract was worded. It was, however, eventually given to a man at a starvation price. It was not in the interest of any constituency to have their works done at such a price that it meant ruin to the contractor and a great difficulty in getting wages for all the men employed. However, the conditions were that one thousand tons should be excavated per week as an experiment, to see that the stone on Flat-Top Island was suitable for the construction of the breakwater. Notwithstanding his remonstrances upon the delay, he was always told to wait a little longer and everything would go on lovely and straight. Instead of 1,000 tons a week they did not get 1,000 tons a month. Up to the present time 5,000 tons of stone had been excavated in about six months at a price which was ruinous to the contractor, and which the Government voluntarily increased from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 3d., when it was well known it was worth 7s. 6d.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the contractor's fault.

Mr. BLACK said that, if so, the Government should step in and enforce the provisions of the contract. The man was losing money over the work, and he expected every day to get a telegram saying that the works were again suspended, as they had been a short time ago, in consequence of the inability of the contractor to pay his men. At the present rate of going they need not be alarmed about the expenditure of the £30,000, as it would take about fourteen years before that small sum of money was expended. When he was told by a member of the Government that a work in his district would be prosecuted with vigour he took the hon. gentleman at his word, and he did not care to have to tell his constituents that the work was going to be done, and have them saying, "Oh, yes! it's all very fine." Some reference was made to the fact of the sugar lands having been withdrawn from selection last year and put up at a higher rate. The price at which they had been selected previous to the withdrawal was 5s. an acre, and that price was raised for good sugar lands to 15s. to 20s. an acre, and, notwithstanding that rise in price, the area selected was greater than ever. It was a matter of some difficulty to decide what steps the Government should take at present about the remaining lands. When he said "remaining lands," he might mention that the area already selected was not one-fiftieth part of the area still open to selection. It was a mere spot. He believed the Government were not deriving that revenue from the lands in the North which they were entitled to get. He said that from a disinterested point of view, at the same time knowing that some political opponents might say, "Oh, yes! you have got all you want and now you want to raise the price of the land." He was of opinion that the country was entitled to a very much increased price than they were now getting for the rich sugar lands—that was

for lands suitable for all sorts of tropical productions—in the North. About 20,000 tons of sugar would be turned out in the North this season; but next year the produce of the Queensland sugar estates would be about 45,000 tons at the least calculation, and the sugar industry was as yet only in its infancy. He thought the time had arrived when selection could be better promoted by withdrawing those lands from selection, and after surveying them and dividing them into suitable blocks of various sizes—large and small—to suit all classes of purchasers, putting them up to auction. He believed that would be the means of checking to a very considerable extent the speculation going on in land. There was another matter which he should like to see the Government bring forward, and that was some measure for removing the conditions in connection with the selection of land. At present a *bonâ fide* selector with £300 or £400 of capital took up 300 or 400 acres of land, and was handicapped in the most severe manner by the land regulations, which compelled him to pass perhaps the best three years of his life and expend his capital in fulfilling what were called the conditions of selection. He had no wish to see the conditions relaxed in any way in so far as the amount of money to be expended on the land was concerned; at the present time the selector was supposed to spend 10s. an acre in improvements. Why should he not be allowed—supposing he had the money—to spend £200 or £300 on the land in three months? No one benefited by the selector being obliged to waste his time in living upon his selection for three years and putting up temporary improvements. In many cases he was obliged to live on his capital, and at the end of the three years, when he applied for his certificate of fulfilment of the conditions, he was worth nothing. An attempt was made last year by the hon. member for Burnett (Mr. Baynes) in the direction to which he now referred. That hon. gentleman, he believed, wished to have fencing considered as a sufficient improvement. He had not given the matter very much consideration at the time, but he remembered that it was considered that any alteration in the land regulations of the colony ought to be made by the Government. However, the Government had not put that down as one of the measures they contemplated considering this session. Certainly, from what he knew of the feeling of the House upon this subject last session, he hoped the Government would give it their best attention, as he thought that it was better to allow the selector to take up land and spend the necessary amount on it at once if he chose, than to compel him to spend three years of his life in doing it. A good deal had been said lately about speculators—that they were monopolising all the lands of the colony, and, in fact, they were held up as rather objectionable people. He did not know exactly where the speculator was to end or where he came in. So far as his opinion went, and he had had an experience of over thirty years in the different colonies, the speculator was about the very best colonist they could have. Let them look at the case of a man, for instance, who took up a mineral selection in a coal-mine. He suddenly found, perhaps, that he had struck a good vein of coal. He suddenly acquired wealth, and he was told that he was a speculator. The pioneer squatter who, with little or no capital, wasted years of his life in developing the undeveloped resources of the colony suddenly got rich, and he too was told that he was a speculator. He must say that he would much rather see some of these people coming here to develop new industries than the man who stopped in Brisbane and sucked the life-blood out of his clients. The men who came into the colony and took up

thousands of acres of land to develop agriculture were the men who deserved the thanks of the community, and were not the men who should be denounced as speculators. In regard to the Labour question, he must refer to an error that the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) made on the previous night, when he attributed certain figures which he quoted to him (Mr. Black). Those figures which the hon. member referred to were not his, but they were taken from a letter published in the newspapers, and signed "J. E. Davidson." Although they were not his figures he, to a certain extent, agreed with them, and he considered the letter a remarkably sound and clever one; he therefore would not take to himself the credit of it. He thought the figures that the hon. gentleman must have had in his mind referred to a report laid on the table of the House last session, headed "The Sugar Industry at Mackay," which applied only to sixteen estates then working at Mackay. The figures to which the hon. member referred were compiled by Mr. Davidson, the Chairman of the Mackay Planters' Association, and referred to the whole sugar industry of Queensland. He (Mr. Black) had watched the rise and progress of that grand industry for the last thirteen years. He had seen a district which at that time was nothing but cattle runs, which gave a support to not more than fifty Europeans, develop until it was admitted to be the greatest sugar-producing district of Australia. That result had been arrived at by the judicious engagement of European and coloured labour. At first the introduction of coloured labour was looked upon with great suspicion, and it was considered necessary to protect the interests of the coloured labourer by the Polynesian Act. Since then that Act had been amended, and was now known as the Pacific Islands Labourers Act. It regulated the introduction of coloured labour, and it protected the interests of the labourer and confined it strictly to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture. Under those restrictions he had seen the productions of the district of Mackay increase to the value of a quarter of a million. Formerly the exports were little or nothing; at present the value of the industry at Mackay was a quarter of a million, and of the whole colony half-a-million. In the course of a few years the value of the exports alone would be not less than one million in money. It was a most remarkable thing that in fifteen years they should see an industry suddenly spring up in their midst, doing no harm to anyone, developing to the value of something like a million sterling, and adding to the agricultural wealth of the colony. Had it deprived the working man of his means of subsistence; had it brought about the aggrandisement of the rich, or so-called rich, to the detriment of the poor? It had not. It had been the means of securing abundance and wealth to every man, woman, and child who had settled down in the districts in which sugar cultivation was carried on. Those statistics which he laid on the table last session showed clearly that by the expenditure of £1 on a kanaka the sum of £10 12s. 6d. was expended on a European. If that was the case—and he could vouch for the accuracy of the figures—if the expenditure of £10 on coloured labour meant the expenditure of £90 on European labour—where did the hardship come in? He endeavoured to avoid all sentiment in the matter. He was not going to say that a man because he had a black face had no right to come into this country. If they could secure well-being to the community by giving them a description of labour which would be of real assistance in their work—if they could secure comfort to thousands by this means—were they not justified in doing so? If it could be shown to him that the introduction

of coloured labour was going to deprive Europeans of their legitimate employment, he would be one of the first to put his foot down and stop its introduction; but if it could be shown that, by the judicious combination of the two, the success of everyone engaged in the industry would be almost assured, then it would be a most suicidal policy, by any hasty legislation, to put a check on an industry which promised to be one of the brightest in Queensland. What were they doing in South Australia at the present time? They had got a Coolie Bill before the House now which would be passed, and at the same time they were about to construct their great Transcontinental Railway as well. He could imagine them laughing in their sleeves. They were not only going to introduce coolies for plantations, but were going to put them on the railway works. But he did not go as far as that; he said confine them strictly to tropical agriculture, compel them to go back to their country at the expiration of their term of service, forbid them to mix with the European portion of the population. It was nonsense to say they could not do that—the Legislature could do anything; and he said it was only under the strictest regulations that they would be justified in allowing the introduction of coolies. Why were they wanted? Because of the large influx of capital. He considered it was a good thing—the best thing that could happen to the colony, in fact—to have an influx of capital. Hon. members opposite seemed to think the reverse, but he maintained the more capital they could introduce the better it would be for the country. They found the supply of kanakas falling short. Those that were coming here now were not equal in physique to the men originally introduced, and the planters must have labour in order to employ a certain number of Europeans. They naturally looked to India as possessing millions of their own fellow-subjects which the British Government had been proud to let fight for us but whom we were refusing to allow to work for us. That was not consistent. He believed he was right in what he said, and he gave the hon. gentlemen opposite credit for thinking they were studying the interests of the colony also; but he believed he, by his action, was seeking to elevate the labour of the colony, while the action of members opposite would tend to degrade it. He would read what the junior member for Enoggera said on the Labour question:—

“If the Government were to introduce European immigrants—Germans and Italians—men who did not require to be acclimatised, and who were capable of developing into the highest condition of humanity—it would be a step in the right direction.”

Now, he might say that the Germans were the best of settlers. They were steady from their arrival in this country, and within three years the majority of them possessed small homesteads of their own, and possessed comforts which they never experienced in their own country. But what were these men to be introduced for? This was what the hon. junior member for Enoggera said about them:—

“After they had passed three or four years in a servile capacity they would be ready to take their places among the superior classes of the colony, and fitted to be taken up, absorbed into, and amalgamated with our own people.”

That was the gentleman who wished to elevate labour. That was the gentleman who considered that the German was on a par with the kanaka. The hon. member for Toowoomba wanted Germans introduced, and he (Mr. Black) hoped he would express his opinion whether Germans were to be introduced in that servile capacity which the junior member for Enoggera would wish to see. He should never suggest such a thing, and his idea was to elevate labour,

not degrade it, as suggested. He would say to the English and Germans, “Come out here, settle on our magnificent sugar lands of the North, and we will give you a description of labour to do your servile work for you.” He could imagine the immigration agent at home, in his lectures in the different agricultural districts of England, telling the people to emigrate to Queensland and work in the canefields, as it would not be possible to procure coloured labour any more. It was not likely they would get immigrants under those conditions.

Mr. BROOKES: I say yes.

Mr. BLACK said they would not come, and he, for one, would be ashamed to try and entice English immigrants to work on their canefields, and do a description of labour which was at present carried out by their coloured population. He might add that 500 immigrants had been landed in Mackay during the last five months, and if that 500 had been 1,000 the whole of them would have been absorbed in that district. That did not look as if the employment of coloured labour was shutting out the employment of Europeans. He was sure that if the Government chose to land seventy or eighty immigrants every month for the next six months every one would be absorbed. It was a wrong idea that coloured labour deprived white labour of a source of employment, as the judicious use of coloured labour led to the employment of white labour. He did not know if the hon. member for Enoggera was connected with a paper called the *Tribune*.

Mr. RUTLEDGE: I have nothing to do with it.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to hear it, because there were certain figures which the hon. member used which were identical with some quoted in that paper. If the hon. member was not connected with the *Tribune* it was an extraordinary thing that there was such a similarity.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: An undesigned coincidence.

Mr. BLACK said he found that that paper, which professed to be the working man's organ, and a journal which was to elevate labour, made a statement to prove that European labour could be judiciously and very well employed on plantation work and went on to say that large numbers of Europeans who could be got to work upon sugar plantations could be hired in other countries at £1 5s. per month. If they did that they would deserve the contempt and execration of the whole people of the colony. They were to give a free passage, and were to be supplied with clothes and rations to the value of £15 per year—which was the same sum as a coolie or kanaka cost—and wages 6s. per week, or altogether £31 4s. per year. If that was the opinion of hon. members on the opposite side—especially the junior member for Brisbane, who believed that no man with a black face should be allowed into the country—he (Mr. Black) could only say that he never would agree with them on that point. He preferred employing a judicious quantity of coloured labour to do the inferior work, and paying Europeans a good honest wage; and that was what had been done up to the present time in the North. There was one more point which he should refer to. The question of coolie labour would not come on for some time, and the opportunity was therefore offered to him of making a few remarks upon it for the consideration of hon. members. Hon. members must not suppose that planters up north were dependent upon coolie labour, as they were not. But he maintained that, whatever labour was introduced, it would be better to have them introduced under more

stringent regulations than to have a mixed description of labour coming into the colony without any regulations at all. Hon. members must not suppose that because the supply of kanakas was falling short there were no other fields for recruiting labour. One hundred Cingalese were on their way down in the mail steamer, and unless hon. members passed a Bill that no one with a black face was to come into the colony they could not keep them out. Kanaka labour was not cheap labour, and it was a mistake to suppose it was. Hon. members often alluded to it as such, but it was not; it was, however, reliable labour, and the coloured man undertook the labour that was distasteful to a European, and which Europeans, having seen coloured men doing, would not think of attempting. They had never heard of sugar plantations being successfully worked with European labour in this colony, or in any other part of the world.

Mr. GRIFFITH: In New South Wales.

Mr. BLACK said he would rather see coloured labour doing the inferior work than see the women and children on their selections working hard to get a subsistence. It was his endeavour to elevate the condition of the working man and not to degrade him. Another point was to study the influx of Chinese to the North. That was a labour which was being used in consequence of the scarcity of kanakas. They might tell him that there was a £10 poll-tax—

Mr. GRIFFITH: Make it £20.

Mr. BLACK said they might make it £50. That description of legislation always brought its reward in time. They could not import kanakas under £16, and the consequence was that an objectionable labour was forced upon the planters. If anyone had an objection to the employment of coloured labour in the whole of Queensland he respected that opinion, if the gentleman had anything consistent to back his opinion with. He would let them draw the line at the tropics if they liked, if the Brisbane people wanted to be conservative; but let them not by hasty legislation destroy what promised to be the greatest agricultural industry in the whole of Australia.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said that after the able manner in which the Governor's Speech had been criticised he should not attempt, in the few remarks he intended to make, to do anything in that way beyond saying that he agreed with the second and third paragraphs, having reference to the failure of the attack on the life of Her Majesty, and the death of the late Sir Joshua Peter Bell. He would only refer to one or two matters which were proposed to be introduced during the present session. The first was the Divisional Boards Amendment Bill, which he thought was most necessary, and when it came before the House he hoped to have something to say about it. Another point was the Mineral Lands Act, which was to be introduced, and which was also a most necessary measure, especially now there were large discoveries being made in the North. One thing appeared to him to be rather curious, and that was that the mineral lands were under one department and goldfields were under another. He thought they should be both under the same department. He hoped, if the Bill passed, there would be a clause to prevent the alienation of mineral lands, and adopt a plan by which they should be leased at a reasonable rent with working conditions, and thus prevent them being taken up for speculative purposes. He would also suggest that the amount of land allowed for mining licenses should be larger than at present. He offered those suggestions hoping that they might be embodied in the Bill.

The next matter was immigration, and there was a Bill on that subject also. He did not know whether it was possible to introduce into that Bill some clause which would prevent immigrants coming to Queensland for the benefit of the neighbouring colonies. Living on the border as he did, he knew that during the last month six immigrants, who arrived in the "South Esk" on the 27th of May, went to Stanthorpe at the expense of the colony, and from there they crossed the New South Wales border on the 30th, being only three days in the colony. He had the names and knew the facts. One was a woman of twenty-six years of age, and her brother of twenty-eight, both were Scotch. The others were a father and mother, fifty and forty-eight years of age respectively, and a son and daughter about twenty years of age each. On the question of the mail contract they were all pretty well agreed that as a mail contract it had been a failure, but that otherwise, as an immigration service and a freight service, it had been a success and a benefit to the colony. In connection with that subject, he would allude to a remark which had fallen from the senior member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane), who had alluded to the Postmaster-General, and had said that he had heard that the coals necessary for the steamers of the British-India Service were procured from Newcastle in consequence of some relative of the hon. gentleman referred to being connected with a coal-mine in Newcastle. He (Mr. Tyrel) had it on the very best authority—in fact, from the Postmaster-General himself—that although it was a fact that a relative of his was connected with a Newcastle mine, yet the mine with which he was connected had never supplied a ton nor an ounce of coal to this service. The hon. gentleman told him himself that the relationship had in no way influenced the supply of coal to the company. The hon. gentleman could not answer for himself in that House, and so he (Mr. Tyrel) had made the explanation for him at his request. In respect of railways they were promised several lines, but the Premier had stated on the previous evening that he did not think the time had come yet for an extension to the border of New South Wales. Now, he (Mr. Tyrel) knew that the New South Wales Government had called for tenders for the extension of their railway to Tenterfield. He believed the tenders were to be sent in in August, either on the first or the last day.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The 1st September.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said that they carried on their railway work much more rapidly in New South Wales than they did in Queensland, and Tenterfield was only twelve miles from the border of Queensland—in fact, close upon it—so that unless action were taken here the trade they hoped to catch for Queensland would be taken away down to the port of Newcastle. The sooner something was done to prevent that the better. He admitted that he was not quite sure whether the route at present laid down would be the best one for the construction of the railway. The present terminus was at Stanthorpe, and was actually only about three miles from the border. The present proposed route for the railway followed the border of the colony from Stanthorpe at a distance of from three to seven miles for about twenty-eight miles, to Accommodation Creek, which was the point twelve miles from Tenterfield. The proposed route would tap no traffic, and, he believed, if a fresh survey was made, a route could be found running seven or eight miles to the border at the outside. That would be an easier route too, with very little work on it—very little cutting—in fact, sidelong more than cuttings; so that it

could be made at very much less expense, and a saving, he believed, of something like £200,000 could be effected thereby. The country through which the other route ran was very hard—as hard as the celebrated tunnel on the Stanthorpe line, on which Messrs. Overend and Company lost from £8,000 to £10,000. Another suggestion he would make also. They all knew that a break of gauge must take place somewhere on the border, and he thought it would be possible to lay down a third line, or, at any rate, make provision for it here, as the land could then cost nothing. He had seen a similar thing done in England where the trains of the Great Western and Midland Companies ran over the same line. The New South Wales trains would then run into Stanthorpe, and would obviate the necessity for forming a new township within a few miles of Stanthorpe.

Mr. GARRICK: New South Wales would never stand that.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said that he should delay dealing with the Coolie Labour question until the Bill was before the House. He might, however, state that he agreed very much with what had fallen from the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. HENRY PALMER said that after the speech of the hon. member for Mackay he should not be put to the necessity of saying very much on that question. He would only make allusion briefly to some subjects in the Speech which had occupied the attention of the House for more than a day. He would commence by saying that with regard to the sympathetic clauses in the Speech he cordially agreed with the feelings expressed by all the members of the House. In regard to the congratulatory clause in which the Ministry congratulated the House and the country on its prosperity, they must all agree that they ought to be very thankful to find the country in such a prosperous state, and they should also wish that the prosperity might continue. That must be the feeling that pervaded every member of the House. Whether that was brought about by the action of the Ministry solely he could not say; but he was rather inclined to think with the hon. member for Rockhampton, who spoke yesterday, that it was not altogether owing to the present Ministry or to any other Ministry preceding them, but that it was largely attributable to the individual exertions of members of the community, to the enterprise of the colonists generally—taken, of course, in connection with the fact that money could be got on such easy terms nowadays. Whatever the cause might be, they were all aware that prosperity did prevail, and they should be thankful for it and hope it might continue. Whether the large amount of legislation which appeared necessary had anything to do with it, it was hard to say. If anything might retard it it was possible that such a number of Bills would have this effect on it. But it was quite possible, also, that no great number of these Bills would be passed, or at all events only such a number as would not interfere with the prosperity which had been brought under their notice. They were told that the Divisional Boards Act would be brought before them with a view to amendment. He cordially agreed with the working of these boards, and he should give his support to any measure that might be brought forward to amend the Act. He had had some small acquaintance with the working of it. He had served a small apprenticeship of twelve months to it, and found the working of it very good, indeed—especially so in large districts. The leader of the Opposition pointed out yesterday that it had not given satisfaction in many districts; but what else could be expected from it? From the first inauguration of it, it was

never expected to work well in sparsely populated districts. The question to consider was, whether it was working well in large and populous districts. He (Mr. Palmer) said it was. He could speak for the district he was concerned in and for several others, in all of which it was working admirably. He believed, however, that it was capable of amendments, which would make it more workable if they were of a simple kind. He attributed the good working of the Act to its simple character and phraseology. It was from the very first an Act which avoided legal technicalities, and so it was suited to the style of the men who had to work it. It therefore almost necessarily became workable and successful. It was a well-known fact that in many divisions this Act was worked by simple-minded men who knew little of the legal nature of the Act, and who could only bring a practical knowledge to it, and that made it a success. He hoped the amendments to be proposed in the Act would include the rating of property, which he thought was susceptible of improvement, as well as the voting powers given under the Act. He contended also that justice had never been done to the boards in the previous administration of the Act by the Government, for it was always intended that the maintenance of main roads by the Government should be included in the Act. He hoped that, whatever alteration was made in the distribution of money, those divisions through which main roads ran would receive an additional amount of subsidy to assist them in carrying out such maintenance works. He knew of cases where the roads had been utterly neglected by the boards through which they ran on account of want of means to carry out the necessary works for their maintenance. With regard to the mail service, he agreed that it was not equal to the requirements of the colony as a mail service; but he remembered that at the time it was initiated the Premier stated that he did not feel confident of its success as a mail service. As a carrying and passenger service the Premier then spoke of it with more confidence, and in both those capacities it had answered admirably. It would, no doubt, be necessary to increase the speed at which the mails were carried, and that might be done either by the employment of a special steam service to bring the mails down the coast, or by increasing the speed of the steamers from the start. He had understood that the former plan was to have been tried, and he had no doubt that it would have been sufficient to meet the objections of those hon. members who had spoken against the service. In connection with the postal service, it seemed to him a very great grievance to the people of Brisbane particularly that additional postage should be charged on letters sent *via* the other colonies, and he was not at all satisfied with the explanations given by the Premier. Even at the cost of a small extra subsidy it would be justifiable to enter into an arrangement by which the southern routes might be used until the Queensland service had become more efficient; so that the community might not be saddled with additional expense if they required speedy communication. The matter had been the subject of animated discussion in the Chamber of Commerce at Maryborough, and the feeling then expressed was very hostile to the differential tariff. The Transcontinental Railway was a subject upon which hon. members might soon be called upon to vote, and he, like other hon. members, did not hesitate to give an expression of his views with regard to that matter. Although he had supported the Government in most of their measures, yet, from the first time that the subject was discussed, he had always hesitated very much about speaking favourably of this undertaking. His opinion was then that time should be allowed so that the

project might become matured, but after the lapse of time his view was still that it was not expedient to enter upon such a gigantic work. It was too heavy a work for a young colony to enter upon—particularly with a company about which so little was known. The illustrations which had been given of the workings of American syndicates appeared to him to be very much to the purpose; and if the Government persisted in carrying out such a measure they need not, unless circumstances altered very much, expect his support. He told them that candidly, in order that they might know who their supporters were. The country did not require such a railway, or, at all events, not at the present time. The trunk lines were being fast pushed out into the interior, and in a few years would be within 150 to 200 miles of the Western stations. In the early days when he (Mr. Palmer) first came to the colony, station-owners were very thankful to send their wool 300, 400, and 450 miles by the road; and now they had mostly a railway three parts of the way to the port, carrying their wool at a very cheap rate. The fact was the Western districts were getting enormous advantages, and paying very little in return. They had splendid country and no rate assessments, and the time was coming when those gentlemen must be called upon to pay more for their advantages. In connection with railway-making, he noticed that the proposed railway between Rockhampton and Port Alma was mentioned in connection with a company or syndicate. The term "syndicate" he abominated; he never liked it, because it was always connected in his mind with the gigantic American swindles about which he had heard so much—though he did not wish to insinuate that it was so in this case. He was sorry to learn that the Government had accepted the offer of a company to construct this line, because he believed it would be far better for them to keep such a railway in their own hands even if it were necessary to borrow additional money for the purpose. It would not do to let a short line of twenty or thirty miles pass into the hands of a company, particularly if, as had been represented by the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Ferguson), it was likely to be highly remunerative. Should the Transcontinental line never be undertaken, this would then be the only line in the colony of any importance not in the hands of the Government. He regretted to hear the Premier express doubts whether the railways of the colony could be carried on as efficiently by the Government as by private companies. In nearly all cases that he remembered, railways owned by private companies in the colonies had eventually fallen into the hands of the Government. The line between Sydney and Parramatta was a complete failure; it cost an enormous sum of money, and in a year or two passed into the hands of the Government. The same had been the case in every instance of private railways in the colony, with the exception perhaps of the line from Moama to Deniliquin, which had only been in existence a short time, and had yet to be tested. However, whether the line from Rockhampton to Port Alma was made by a syndicate or not, and whatever it might cost, he hoped the Government would for ever abandon the enormous, extravagant, and useless expenditure that had been going on on the Fitzroy River for many years past. He had wished to speak on the subject last session, and he was glad that the opportunity had now arisen for him to protest against such a complete waste of public money. An admission to that effect, perhaps unintentionally, was made on the previous day by the mover of the Address when he said that when once the dredge was taken away the channel immediately silted up as bad as ever. If that was the case dredging operations would be re-

quired to the end of time to keep the channel open, and three dredges would be required for the purpose. It was the opinion of the hon. member for Port Curtis, to which he attached great weight, that the Fitzroy River would never be made complete by dredging or building retaining walls. So much money having been wasted on the work, it would be far better for the Government to incur the much larger expenditure of making the railway from Rockhampton to Port Alma and have done with the dredging business. There was nothing to show for the vast expenditure on the Fitzroy River—unlike the Brisbane River, which had been so improved that the large mail steamers were now able to come up to the wharf. On the question of immigration great diversity of opinion existed, for it was a question which changed its aspects with every change in the condition of the colony. Some had complained of the Government not foreseeing when immigrants were required, so as to have them out to order. In his opinion the Government were not to blame in any way whatever. So recently as twelve months ago immigrants were not greatly in demand. Maryborough and Wide Bay, which absorbed a large number of them, were fully supplied with two ships a year. On the demand increasing the Government willingly, at his request, put on an additional vessel. Those three ships arrived in the early part of this year, and so wonderfully had the demand increased that the immigrants were absorbed into the population almost as soon as they landed. Since then the cry had been for more, and four or five ships would hardly supply the requirements of the district. He remembered the time when the colony was vastly overstocked with immigrants. They were brought in in such numbers that employment could not be found for them, and they were literally at starvation point. At Rockhampton they had to work for 3s. or 4s. a day, and at Maryborough the state of things was so bad that the Government had to dole out sufficient to keep them in bread, at the rate of 15s. a week. During those years, 1866 and 1867, thousands of immigrants left the colony, and the Government knew perfectly well they were going and were not sorry for it. It was the duty of the Government so to regulate the influx of immigrants as not to reduce too much the current rate of wages or to interfere with the regular employment of the settled inhabitants of the colony. On the Coolie question he would defer what he had to say until the introduction of the important Bill promised by the leader of the Opposition. When the proper time came he should not shrink from giving his opinion on the subject. He might say, however, that he trusted the leader of the Opposition would modify his views on the subject, and take into consideration the momentous consequences that might ensue from the passing of his Bill. Not the least of those would be that capitalists who had spent enormous sums on large tracts of land in the faith of getting coloured labour would have a direct claim on the Government for compensation. There was a close analogy between that and the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, where they were granted millions as compensation for the loss they sustained. There was another momentous question that might also arise in case the existing Act should be removed from the statute-book, and one which would be felt at the southern end of the colony very severely, and that was that there would be a general cry in the North for separation, for which they would have very good grounds. There was another important matter alluded to in the Speech on which there was no difference of opinion on either side of the House, and that was the conservation of water. He hoped the

Government would proceed with the measure, for valuable portions of the colony were rendered useless now through want of water. The late dry season, and the consequent heavy losses of stock, had taught all the colonies a severe lesson; and it behoved the Government to see that steps were taken to conserve water in those important districts, not only for stock but for travellers on the public roads. That expenditure would undoubtedly enhance the value of the land, and he did not see why it should be an exact gift to the district. He thought the people there should be called upon to pay interest for that money, the same as municipalities had to do in other cases. Some hon. gentlemen when talking on the question had spoken of it as if it would be a special grant to each particular district, but he did not see why it should be so. If it could not be managed by the divisional boards, then special trusts might be formed and interest charged on the money given. He hoped that on no other terms would the expenditure be made; because they knew that the work, which would have to be carried out by boring or by dams, would be expensive: that it would be profitable to the country he had no doubt whatever—more profitable, in fact, than any proposal made in this Speech. With regard to the pastoral lessees, he had already said that the lessees in the Western district did not pay enough for the advantages they derived from their runs; and he hoped that they would be called upon to pay something like an equivalent for those advantages, especially considering the high prices recently realised for these runs. The proposed expenditure on railways, and also the conservation of water, would greatly increase the value of those runs; so that it was not at all unreasonable to ask the lessees to pay a little more rental than they did now. The next subject mentioned in the Speech was one which no member had yet addressed himself to, and yet he believed it to be a very important one: he alluded to the abolition of light dues, and the reconstruction of the pilot rates. He was glad that such a proposal had come from the Government, because it would entail a loss of revenue. He believed it would be a great benefit to the colony from a commercial point of view. He did not know what might be felt in Brisbane, but he knew that in other ports it had been a great grievance for many years that those charges had been so exorbitantly high. Owing to those charges, vessels very often shunned their ports. He thought the Government had, therefore, taken an enlightened view, and he hoped that the intended alterations would, to a large extent, abolish the charges altogether. He admitted that there had been a large expenditure for light-houses and other works, and that there ought to be some return, but the charges ought not to be so high as to drive shipping away from the ports. If they were greatly reduced he believed that the shipping coming into the ports would be greatly increased, especially now that the colony was about to largely export coal; and that in every port in the colony the change would be looked upon as a boon. The hon. member for Port Curtis had made allusion to the proposed alteration in the Settled Districts Pastoral Leases Act. He (Mr. Palmer) was one of those who moved in the matter last year, and if it had not been brought forward in that way he should certainly have moved in it again. He did not know, of course, what the alterations would be, but any at all would, he thought, necessarily be in the direction of easing off the lessees, whether by giving them some additional tenure or some security in regard to the improvements they contemplated making. The time had arrived when some concession should be made to the

pastoral lessees, and he was glad to know that something in that direction was about to be undertaken.

Mr. BAILEY moved that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

EXPLANATION.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he desired to make an explanation. While speaking about the mail service, he made a statement to the effect that he had been informed that the Postmaster-General had a partner who was in some way interested in the supply of coal to the mail steamers. He found that that was not the case, and he was glad, therefore, to withdraw the statement. He did so with as much pleasure as he had experienced pain in making it. No relative of the Postmaster-General supplied any coal for the mail service.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

Legislative Council Chamber,
Brisbane, July 5th, 1882.

MR. SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council having come to the following resolutions, viz:—

1. That the President, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. Morehead be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee.
2. That the President, Mr. Heussler, and Dr. O'Doherty be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms.
3. That the President, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Turner be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the Management and Superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings.
4. That the foregoing Resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message, requesting that they will be pleased to nominate a like number of members from their body, with a view to give effect to the 8th Joint Standing Order.

Beg now to intimate the same to the Legislative Assembly.

A. H. PALMER,
President.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was resolved to take the message into consideration next day.

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