

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 1883

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QUEENSLAND
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SIXTH SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF JUNE, IN THE FORTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN
OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1883.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 26 June, 1883.

Vacancies during Recess.—Members Sworn.—Elections and Qualifications Committee.—Bill *pro forma*.—The Opening Speech.—Address in Reply.

THE House met at 12 o'clock, a few minutes after which hour a message was conveyed by the Usher of the Black Rod, that His Excellency the Administrator of the Government requested the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly in the Council Chamber.

THE SPEAKER, accompanied by hon. members of the Assembly, accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council, and, having heard the Address of His Excellency, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past 3 o'clock.

VACANCIES DURING RECESS.

THE SPEAKER announced that since the termination of last Session the following vacancies had occurred in the House, namely:—

1. By the resignation of the Hon. Pope Alexander Cooper, Esq., Member for the Electoral District of Bowen.
2. By the resignation of Albert Norton, Esq., Member for the Electoral District of Port Curtis.

That, upon the occurrence of each of the said vacancies, he had issued his writ for the election of a member to fill the same, and that such writs had been duly returned to him, with certificates respectively endorsed thereon of the election of the following gentlemen, namely:—

1. The Hon. Charles Edward Chubb, Esq., as Member for the Electoral District of Bowen.
2. The Hon. Albert Norton, Esq., as Member for the Electoral District of Port Curtis.

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MEMBERS SWORN.

The following members having been presented and sworn, subscribed the roll:—

The Hon. Albert Norton, Esq. (Minister for Works), Port Curtis; the Hon. Charles Edward Chubb, Esq. (Attorney-General), Bowen.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS
COMMITTEE.

THE SPEAKER, in accordance with the Legislative Assembly Act, laid on the table his warrant appointing the Committee of Elections and Qualifications for the present session.

BILL *PRO FORMA*.

THE PREMIER (Sir Thomas McIlwraith) presented a Bill to provide against Personation and other Frauds at Elections, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

THE OPENING SPEECH.

THE SPEAKER reported that the House had, in the earlier part of the day, attended the Administrator of the Government in the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy, which he would now read to the House:—

“HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“I have much pleasure in meeting you for the purpose of submitting to your consideration and decision various weighty matters affecting the interests of our country.

“I am sure you will join with me in an expression of sorrow and regret at the death of our late Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy, whose long and useful life in the service of his country has ensured for his memory well merited appreciation.

"I have been advised by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies that Sir Anthony Musgrave has been appointed Governor of the Colony, and will leave England for Brisbane about the middle of August.

"I have to congratulate you upon the very propitious season with which the country has just been favoured. Our agricultural and pastoral pursuits have been conducted with more than common success; while our mining industries have held their own. The rapid influx of population has beneficially stimulated production and trade; while the manner in which immigrants, as well as large accessions of experienced colonists from other parts of Australia, have been absorbed into our varied industries affords undeniable proof of the soundness of our prosperity.

"An Agreement has been made with a company for the construction of a line of railway from Charleville to Point Parker, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, under the provisions of the Railway Companies Preliminary Act of 1880. This Agreement will be submitted for your approval and ratification. Your ratification of an Agreement under the same Act for a line from Charleville to the New South Wales border will also be sought, and I trust both agreements will commend themselves favourably to your calm and dispassionate judgment.

"For some time past the imminent danger of annexation by a Foreign Power of the adjacent island of New Guinea has caused my Government much concern and uneasiness. Ultimately it was determined by a formal act of annexation to establish permanently British claims to the possession of that country. Accordingly that portion of New Guinea east of the one hundred and forty-first meridian and the adjoining islands up to the one hundred and fifty-fifth meridian were annexed on the fourth of April last. This action has not yet received the sanction of Her Majesty; but there can be no question that, however distasteful to some of our countrymen at home further extensions of territory may be, New Guinea and the adjacent groups of Pacific Islands must form part of the future Australian Nation. The course taken by my Government has, in my opinion, furnished the best possible security against future embarrassments, and I am happy to state has received the hearty endorsement of the several Australian Colonies. I may add that at the instance of the Victorian Government concerted action has been taken with the object of inducing Her Majesty's Government to annex those Islands in the Pacific whose interests are deemed in many respects identical with those of Australia.

"Correspondence has been continued with the Indian Government in reference to the Regulations under which eligible labourers from that country may be introduced for the more effectual prosecution of tropical agriculture in this colony. The difficulty has been to frame Regulations which, while meeting the views of the Indian Government, would furnish ample safeguards against injurious competition with European

labour, and secure the return of the labourers to their own country. These objects, my Government considers, have been at length secured, and the Regulations will be submitted for your approval.

"In the event of these Regulations being adopted and the labour wants of the Colony being thus adequately supplemented, a happy solution of the embarrassing questions arising out of the employment of Pacific Islanders and a still more objectionable class of labourers—the Chinese—will have been provided. Although my Government believes that recruiting by Queensland labour vessels is, as a rule, legitimately and humanely conducted, and that the islanders are invariably well treated in the Colony, it is unfortunately too true that recruiting is not entirely free from abuses, and that insuperable difficulties are encountered in endeavouring to legally establish the guilt of offending masters of vessels. These occasional abuses have seriously but unjustly compromised the reputation of our Colony abroad, and my Ministers are confident that every well-disposed colonist will participate in the satisfaction they feel at the prospect that ere long the possibility of such abuses will have ceased to exist.

"The report of the Under Secretary for Lands, which will be laid before you, shows that the desire to acquire land in almost every district of the Colony continues unabated. While a greater area has been selected during the past year than during any year since 1877, it is not gratifying to find that the quantity under cultivation still forms a very small proportion of the amount alienated.

"During the past year the progress of Public Works has been accelerated. Plans are being prepared for important Public Buildings for which money has been already voted, and contracts have been let in England for the Gunboats provided for in last year's Estimates for the Defence of the Colony.

"Plans and sections of various lines of Railway will be submitted for your approval.

"An accident on the Sandgate Line having excited strong doubts in the public mind as to the safety of our railways, a Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into and report upon their management.

"The Government of Victoria having invited a Conference of Delegates from the various Colonies to consider the advisableness of Australasia joining the Postal Union, a series of meetings was held in Sydney last month, at one of which an affirmative resolution was carried, Queensland dissenting; but the terms of the proposal as agreed to by the other Colonies are, in the opinion of my Ministers, such as to preclude hope of their offer to join being accepted.

"Arrangements have been made for expediting the future transit of English Mails by way of Torres Straits, so as to ensure their delivery at Brisbane from London in forty-four days, or simultaneously with the mail received by the Peninsular and Oriental Service. A new and

more advantageous contract for coastal mails concluded some months ago with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company also takes effect on the first of July.

"The increasing prosperity of the Colony, the attractions of the Torres Straits Route, and the special means adopted by the Government for disseminating trustworthy information in the Mother Country, have combined to make Queensland more popular than heretofore among the emigrating classes. The demands for passages have been of late so numerous that the Agent-General has been obliged, by the want of means of transit, to reject many eligible applications. Arrangements have therefore been made with the British-India Company for a fortnightly service up to the end of the present year, without any additional expense beyond the guarantee of emigrants at contract rates. My Ministry are much gratified at this condition of affairs, and have good grounds for hope that the increased facilities for reaching our shores, together with the fuller knowledge of the attractions of the Colony, now obtained by intending emigrants at home, will result in an increase of immigration and a decrease of cost.

"Correspondence has been renewed with the Imperial Government with the object of making arrangements to complete the survey of our coast.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The finances of the Colony are in a sound condition, and my Ministers expect soon to place before you an account of the operations for the year, which will disclose a gratifying surplus.

"At the close of last Session, the Loans authorised by Parliament which had not been placed on the market amounted to £3,733,000. Of this amount, £2,500,000 was sold in London on the 9th May. The price realised was £97 1s. 2d. per £100 debenture. Before this portion of the Loan was floated a promise was given by the Government that an Act for the Inscription of Stock in London should be passed. A Bill in fulfilment of this undertaking will be submitted to you at once.

"Provision will require to be made to augment certain Loan Votes for Public Works and Immigration purposes, which are or will shortly be exhausted.

"Provision for the redemption of Debentures to the amount of £1,019,000, issued in 1864, will require to be made this Session, and a Bill will be introduced for the purpose.

"The Estimates for the ensuing year will be only submitted, and will, I think, be found to be framed with due regard to efficiency and economy.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"Owing to the rapid but unequal settlement of population a Redistribution of the Electorates has become essential to secure more evenly balanced representation of the various districts and interests in the Colony. If the business of the Session will allow time for passing a Redistribution Bill, my Ministers will submit such a measure in due course for your consideration.

If not, an Additional Members Bill, providing for the more glaring inequalities of representation, will be introduced as soon as practicable.

"The following other measures will also be submitted to your judgment:—

"A Bill to Consolidate and Amend the Laws regulating the Sale by Retail of Intoxicating Liquors within the Colony of Queensland.

"A Bill to Consolidate and Codify the Laws relating to Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes.

"A Bill to Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to the Insane.

"A Bill to Amend the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869.

"A Bill for the Protection of Oysters and the Encouragement of Oyster Fisheries.

"A Bill to Amend the Law relating to Juries.

"A Bill to Amend the Law relating to Leases and Sales of Settled Estates.

"A Bill to Amend the Oaths Acts.

"A Bill to Amend the Law relating to the Rights and Liabilities of Married Women.

"A Bill to provide for the Construction, Maintenance, and Management of Works for the Storage and Distribution of Water.

"A Bill to Amend the Customs Act of 1873.

"A Bill to Amend and Consolidate the Laws relating to the Distillation of Spirits.

"These various measures I submit for your consideration with the greatest confidence in your judgment, believing that you will be guided to your decision by a desire for the happiness and prosperity of the people of Queensland."

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. BLACK moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Administrator of the Government in opening the sixth Session of the eighth Parliament of Queensland, and that the said Committee consist of Mr. F. A. Cooper, Mr. R. A. Kingsford, Mr. J. S. Jessop, the Colonial Secretary, and the mover.

Mr. COOPER seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

The Committee retired, and, having returned, brought up the following Address, which was read by the Clerk:—

"To His Excellency Sir ARTHUR HUNTER PALMER, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, President of the Legislative Council of the Colony of Queensland, and Administrator of the Government thereof.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Person and Government of Our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have opened the present Session.

"We join with Your Excellency in an expression of regret at the untimely death of our late and much-esteemed Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy.

"We receive with satisfaction the assurance that the various industries of the Colony are in a satisfactory condition.

"We shall give our careful and serious consideration to the various measures submitted by Your Excellency, and we trust that our labours may result in promoting the advancement and prosperity of the Colony

Mr. BLACK, in moving—

That the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted—

said he believed it was customary, on occasions like the present, for a supporter of the Government to move the adoption of the Address in Reply, and the fact that the moving of the resolution had fallen to his lot that evening gave him great satisfaction. At the same time, he reserved to himself full power to criticise anything that he considered deserving of criticism in the action of the Government, either in their administrative or legislative capacity. At the outset he might be permitted to express his sincere regret at the death of the late Governor, Sir Arthur Kennedy; and that regret, he believed, would be endorsed by hon. members on both sides of the House and by the colony at large. In Sir Arthur Kennedy they had lost, he might safely say, a true friend of the colony—a gentleman who, had he been spared to reach home and enjoy that rest which his faithful labours in the service of Her Majesty had earned for him, would have been able to advance the interests of Queensland in a very important degree in the old country. He also begged to tender his sincere expressions of sympathy with Miss Kennedy, a lady who had especially endeared herself to all classes in the colony. It was to be hoped that Sir Arthur Kennedy's successor, when he arrived in the colony, would give the same satisfaction that he had given. That the administration of the colony was at present in able hands he was sure they would all admit. He could only say that had his voice any weight in those matters, he would be very glad to see the time come when a gentleman of such high abilities and strict political integrity as the present Administrator of the Government would be allowed to retain that office as long as he lived. One of the first paragraphs in the Opening Speech referred to the continued prosperity of the country. No doubt, at first glance the colony might be considered to be in a fairly prosperous condition. At the same time, he did not think it would be wise to shut their eyes to the fact that although a huge amount of capital had during the last few years been introduced and invested in the colony, yet up to the present time no corresponding return to that large amount of capital had been received by those by whom it was provided. As to their mines, although it was stated that they were fairly holding their own, yet when they came to analyse the position of the mining industry they found that a decrease in the out-put had undoubtedly taken place—a decrease to the extent of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the returns of the previous year. The copper industry seemed to have entirely collapsed, but its place seemed to have been taken by an industry which he believed would be of still greater importance to the future of the colony—namely, tin. Throughout the mineral districts of the North the people were devoting their energies to the development of the tin-mines, and there seemed every prospect that the tin industry would prove a financial success. Turning to the pastoral interests, from which they had been led to expect so much, they found that notwithstanding the assurance that they had had a season of almost unexampled prosperity,

the increase in the out-put of wool was so slight as to be hardly worth mentioning. It amounted to only about 2 per cent. on the previous year. He was referring, of course, to the value of the wool exported, and the increase was only about 2 per cent. With regard to agriculture, especially tropical agriculture, from which great things had always been expected, he regretted to say that the returns of last year did not come up to those of the previous year by 25 per cent. No doubt a huge amount of capital had been invested in that industry, but it certainly behoved them to take care that they did not, by bad legislation, destroy an industry from which so much was expected, and into which so much capital had been introduced. Taking it on the whole, he considered that although they might fairly congratulate themselves on the prosperity of the country, still that prosperity was one which should not lead them recklessly to destroy any one industry unless they were prepared to show how they were going to replace it with another. There was one significant fact he might allude to, and that was the enormous increase in the imports over the exports. He hoped that later on some hon. gentleman more accustomed to figures than himself would be able to explain that fact, but he could not help pointing out that during the past year their imports had been nearly £2,000,000 more than their exports. The exact figures of the excess of imports over exports were £1,909,411—a sum equal to £7 14s. 2d. per head of the population. That meant that every man, woman, and child in the colony had incurred a debt of £7 14s. 2d. more than they produced to compensate for it. No doubt a very considerable portion of that two millions had gone into the sugar industry—certainly £700,000 of it had been thus expended—a fact which showed that capitalists had confidence in the industry. Several hon. gentlemen had taken the opportunity during the recess to take a tour in the North and judge for themselves what that industry really meant to the colony. The gentleman whose visit gave him greater satisfaction than any other was the leader of the Opposition, who went up to Mackay at his invitation, and not only saw for himself what the industry was, and what it was capable of, but placed himself in a position to determine what was likely to be the best solution of the very vexed question—the Coolie labour question. Owing to the large amount of capital which had been invested in that industry, and owing to the large European population which had been already employed in it, a very serious difficulty had arisen, and it was now found that the supply of labour which they maintained in order to carry on that industry must be supplemented by coloured labour of some sort. The supply from the islands which had hitherto furnished the labour was becoming limited in consequence of the great demands made, and not only that, but the men they were now getting were physically inferior to those they had been receiving for some years past. Frequent charges were made as to the way in which those men were recruited, and he was free to admit that coloured labour, to be satisfactory to the colony at large, must be introduced free of all those suspicions and charges which had been made against coloured labour. If the colony—and he was speaking from a general point of view and without any regard to his own personal interests in the matter—was to be liable at any time to be charged with encouraging slavery, kidnapping, or any of those abuses of which they so constantly heard, and if an industry could not be carried on without the colony being liable to have those charges brought against it, then the sooner they put a stop to that industry the better. He for one would never stand up in the House

and advocate a system which could be proved to entail the abuses which were said to accompany the Polynesian traffic. He believed, however, that many of those charges, when they came to be investigated, would be proved to be unfounded. The supply of labour was, however, falling short, and at the end of last session it was pointed out that Cingalese were coming to the country. They did arrive, and turned out to be a perfect failure; but it must be borne in mind that those men came without any regulations at all for controlling them when they arrived. Then, again, as to Chinese labour. In his opinion that was the most dangerous description of labour it was possible to introduce into the colony. He was given to understand that one of the alternatives suggested by the leader of the Opposition—though the hon. gentleman did not refer to it in any way when at Mackay—was that Chinese labour was preferable to coolie labour. He was prepared to say that Chinese labour was a labour against which they should undoubtedly set their faces. It was a labour that they could not control when the labourers were once in the colony, and when their agreements expired they would undoubtedly mix with the European population, and the result would be arrived at which he had always deprecated—of allowing inferior labour to come into competition with Europeans in those branches of employment properly belonging to our own countrymen. But another alternative had been suggested by the leader of the Opposition when he was in the North, and in referring to it the hon. gentleman no doubt conscientiously believed that he had found the solution of the labour question, though he (Mr. Black) regarded it as an even more injurious policy not only to the working men of Mackay and the North, but the whole of Queensland—namely, the introduction of an underpaid European population. It was proposed by the hon. gentleman, although he admitted that he was at present unable to fathom the question properly and solve it as it should be solved, to introduce such a stream of Continental labour to take the place of Polynesians in the canefields that a solution of the labour difficulty would be arrived at. A more ruinous policy to the interests of the working men of the colony could never have been devised, unless it were possible to pass regulations compelling those Europeans to work on the plantations, and prevent them from coming down south and lowering the wages of the whole of the working men of the colony. It would not be possible to have a low-paid European population working alongside a properly paid one; the undoubted tendency would be not to raise the underpaid labour, but to lower the wages of all the other working men in the colony. There was not a sugar-growing country in the world where the planter was able to successfully compete in the markets of the world in which a certain proportion of coloured labour was not employed. He maintained that to bring out white men, no matter where from, and expect from them the work that was now done by blackfellows on plantations, was the way to degrade white labour all over the colony.

Mr. BROOKES: That's a mistake.

Mr. BLACK said he had not the least doubt that the hon. member regarded it as a mistake, but he had no intention of ever trying to convert that hon. member. The hon. member had started from Brisbane on a tour of inspection, and it was to be regretted that the hon. member did not make a better use of his time and visit one of the sugar-growing districts of the North. As far as he could make out, the hon. member went about like the ostrich, which buried its head in the sand and did not want to see anything.

Although he was in the North, and steamers going towards the sugar-growing districts were passing by, the hon. member never set his foot on a single plantation. He was quite prepared, however, to hear the hon. member get up and give hon. members a dissertation on the labour question, and say that he had been in the North and seen for himself. The leader of the Opposition, when at Mackay, said that if coolies were introduced into the colony the result would be that in fifteen years there would be a million of coolies on the coast. If such a thing as that were possible, then it would certainly be a matter for very serious consideration to the country; but he found by returns furnished by the Agent-General for Emigration at Calcutta that the whole of the coolies recruited for Demerara, Trinidad, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Mauritius, Natal, Surinam, and Guadeloupe—the whole of the sugar-growing countries of the world—during the five years ending 1881, amounted to only 65,000, and the number recruited in the year 1881 for the whole of the colonies was 12,185, being \$40 less than the number for which requisitions had been sent in to the Government. Therefore he maintained that such a thing as over-populating this colony with coolies was out of the question. At most he believed the number obtained would be only 2,000 or 3,000 in the course of the year. If the whole of the sugar-growing countries of the world only got 12,000, or nearly 1,000 less than they wanted, was it likely that anything like 1,000,000 would arrive here in fifteen years? The thing was utterly impossible. Whilst paying all deference to those gentlemen who thought differently from himself on the subject, he held that the sugar-planter himself was in as good a position to judge the merits of the question as any man. He repeated that sugar was not grown successfully in any country in the world without a proportion of coloured labour. The introduction of Polynesians was gradually drawing to an end; he admitted that, and for many reasons he thought it a very good thing that it should draw to an end; but the introduction of Chinese or labourers from Singapore, the Malay Peninsula, or Java—a nondescript lot of men, coming without any regulations whatever for controlling them—or the introduction of cheap European labourers, was a source of real danger to the working men of the colony. If it were once allowed that coloured labour was a necessity for tropical agriculture, the colony could only look to the Indian Government to supply it with coolies under proper regulations. Those regulations were that the men should be recruited in India, with the Indian Government at one end to see that there was fair play and that the labourer understood his agreement, and with the Government at this end to see that on their arrival in the colony their agreements were faithfully carried out, and that after the termination of their agreements they must go back to their own country.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. BLACK said he was not discussing the matter now, but simply stating his own views. If the hon. gentleman could prove that it was impossible to send them back to their own country, then he for one should say, we won't have them; but he was expressing his own views, and he said that if they came at all they must come under regulations which would effectually prevent them from interfering with the legitimate employment of our own countrymen. Without them it was impossible that the industry could go on. It cost at the present time £25 per head to introduce Polynesians, and it would probably cost £18 per head to introduce coolies. The introduction of 1,000,000 of coolies

would therefore mean the investment of £18,000,000, or £2,000,000 more than the total debt of Queensland. Was such a thing possible? It would require an investment of £18,000,000 to carry out the idea expressed by the leader of the Opposition at Mackay. If the planters were convinced that white labourers were able to do the work that kanakas were now doing, nothing would be easier than to send home and introduce them. Under the indenture clauses of the Immigration Act immigrants could be introduced at £2 per head; so that they could introduce Europeans from Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries where labour was comparatively cheap, and the colony itself would bring out the men and pay their passages. It stood to reason, therefore, that unless the sugar-planter were thoroughly convinced of the soundness of his case he would get that labour at £2 per head instead of that which it was impossible to introduce at less than £25 per head. It was not a case of preferring black men rather than white, but a case of considering the description of labour to be provided in a case where Europeans in a tropical climate were physically unable to do the work. He had pointed out that as a mere question of economy cheap Continental labour would undoubtedly be the description of labour the planter would select. He maintained it would be an act of downright cruelty and injustice to recruit labourers on the Continent and put them on our tropical canefields to do the work now done by Polynesians. That was where the question stood as he understood it. The proposition of the leader of the Opposition was either to make the best use of the labour now in the colony and coming to the colony—Chinese, Polynesians, any labour picked up without regulations at all, and which would undoubtedly take the bread out of the mouth of the white men as soon as their time expired—or else to introduce cheap Continental labourers and put them into the canefields. If that alternative were adopted and the labourers would not do the work they would certainly not stop in the North, but would come down south, and the working men of the colony would be assisting to introduce a low-class European population into the country which would undoubtedly lower the wages of the working men throughout the whole of Queensland. There was another matter in connection with that which was worth the consideration of the House. He wished to point out that, notwithstanding the fact that there were 3,000 coloured labourers employed in the Mackay district, there was no district in Queensland which had such a fascination for the homestead selectors; there was no district where the homestead selectors during the last twelve months had been so numerous. Out of 443 homestead selectors in the whole colony no less than 127 had elected to settle in the sugar-growing district of Mackay, where there was black labour enough to get a good return for their industry. Further than that, he might point out that he had done as much as laid in his power to introduce European labour there. The leader of the Opposition had had an opportunity of seeing the people there in their holiday attire, and he would appeal to that hon. gentleman to say whether he had seen in any district such evident marks of prosperity and success on the part of all classes as he had seen there. No less than 1,912 immigrants had been landed in the district during the last twenty months, and unless the working men of the colony knew that it was a district in which they could succeed they would never go there. Although he had referred to Mackay, he knew that Mackay was merely a speck of the tropical agricultural land of the colony; and what had been done there and done with such un-

doubted success during the last sixteen years, could be done elsewhere with their magnificent scrub lands with the experience of the last sixteen years, and with a proper combination of the two descriptions of labour. That experience had led to the coast lands being settled by a European population, and to the establishment of an industry which had gone far, he maintained, to aid in floating the loans in London. It showed that they possessed in Queensland what was rarely seen in any other country, and certainly not in any of the other colonies—a prosperous agricultural industry benefiting the whole colony at large, affording employment to working men at a good rate of wages—an industry having ramifications so wide-spread that a blow struck at it would be felt all over the colony. What gave employment to the foundries? Where did the shipping trade of the coast go to? If hon. members asked the merchants of Brisbane, they would be told that it was the wonderful success of the sugar industry in the North. Therefore, it would be an act of downright insanity to strike a blow at an industry which had done nothing but good to the colony up to the present time for a mere matter of sentiment. He hoped the House would see that the matter was properly put before it insisted on having European labour, or on having Chinese coming into the country under any regulations at all. He hoped also that the country at large would insist on the introduction of coloured labour under such strict regulations as would confine it to those pursuits for which it was essentially adapted—that was the inferior description of cultivation which Europeans would not do. Coming to the question of land-grant railways, he did not profess to have the same personal interest in that as he had in the question he had just been referring to. At the same time, he might perhaps be able to take an impartial and independent view of it. Although he was not then prepared to admit that the policy on that question was the best that could be adopted, or to admit that the particular line indicated was the best that could be made, he thought that the construction of railways on the land-grant principle would undoubtedly have to be adopted in regard to the Western lines. There was a largely increasing population on the coast, and the people were getting further and further away from the town, so that coast railways would be an absolute necessity. The coast districts were contributing the bulk of the revenue. There was more revenue derived annually from the 3,000,000 acres held under conditional selection on the coast than from the whole 435,000,000 acres in the settled and unsettled districts of the colony. The question to be decided, therefore, was whether the time had not arrived when railways out west should be constructed on the land-grant principle, or whether further construction should not cease altogether. He might be told that that time had not arrived; but, until they got a proportionate revenue from the western lands, he thought the Western lines had gone far enough. From the opposition raised against the land-grant principle, it seemed to him that a few of the leading squatters were simply making scapegoats of the rest. He could not imagine any squatters being within 50, 60, or 100 miles of the proposed railway opposing it unless, as he said, they were being made scapegoats of by a few others. He might be wrong in that opinion; but he expressed it. Those squatters had got their leases; very few of them expired before 1890, and the colony had no right to tell those lessees that they should pay higher rents. That proposal should come from the lessees themselves. If they wished security of tenure in the future, which would give an increased value to their

properties, they ought to make a proposal to surrender their leases, and get a renewal at a higher rate of the proportion not required for land-grant railways; then the colony should have those railways. A letter had recently appeared in the papers from a war correspondent, Mr. Forbes. Although he (Mr. Black) had the pleasure of meeting and entertaining that gentleman, he did not attach an atom of importance to the arguments he made use of in that letter. Mr. Forbes pointed to America, and, according to his showing, it was the most demoralised country in the world. He (Mr. Black) did not believe a word of it. He believed that America, and American institutions, and the enterprise shown there, would be a good example for Queensland to follow. No country in the world had progressed in a similar ratio to America; and what was the reason? In his opinion it was the land-grant railway system which had led to such prosperity. There was no State immigration to America, nor were there any State railways. All the railways were land-grant railways, and it was the syndicates which introduced the population. He had heard the question asked—why did they not do something to bring more people to Queensland? Every year they took 720,000 more people in America. Queensland had a debt of £71 per head. What had Canada got? It had ten times the population and only a debt of £9 per head. Surely there must be some limit to the borrowing powers of Queensland. He did not consider that the loan was well floated at all; in fact, it only got through by the skin of its teeth. What had Canada done in the way of railways? It had five times the area of Queensland, ten times the population, and a debt of £9 per head; while it gave 10,870 acres per mile for railways, and also £2,170 for every mile that a syndicate constructed. And then the railways did not belong to the country, but to the syndicates. What was the value to the colony of the western lands in Queensland? Not a farthing per acre. What the country at present derived in the way of revenue from those lands, represented at 5 per cent. on the capital value, was 5d. Yet they were told that some of those lands were worth 5s. per acre and others 10s. He was delighted to hear it, and he hoped the time would come when such legislation was adopted as would insure the country getting a fair revenue from those lands. The point in the remarks of the leader of the Opposition at Mackay which gave him (Mr. Black) the greatest satisfaction was that in which he showed how he could secure £500,000 a year more from the squatters than they at present paid. When that policy was carried out—when the squatters were made to pay half-a-million a year more than under the present rentals, then the time would have arrived to carry on the extension of the Western railways on the land-grant principle. Until that time came, however, with population settling on the coast, with a huge debt, and with the coast districts insisting on the construction of coast railways—until the time had arrived when the rent of the pastoral lessees should be enormously increased, not doubled or trebled, but increased to 3d. or 6d. per acre, according to the value they themselves fixed on the land—he did not see how the Western extensions were to be made out of loans. With regard to the annexation of New Guinea, he thought that every hon. member would hold that the Premier had done a grand action. The danger that would accrue to the colonies by that island being held by any foreign power, and by being made by it into a depot for convicts, was not to be entertained for a moment. The annexation of that island, no matter what form of government was adopted—and he could assure hon. members that he did not say that because he believed they could

get coloured labour from there, because he did not think so—would be advantageous to the whole of Australia; and he hoped that the proposal to annex other islands, such as the New Hebrides, would also be successfully carried out. The Speech said that “during the past year the progress of public works has been accelerated.” He did not at all agree with that. He considered that the progress of public works had not been accelerated. Two years ago he had heard it said that the different departments were unable to get through the work. Any complaints that were made about railway surveys were always met by the statement that it was impossible to get railway plant. He thought the time had arrived when some of those public offices should get swept out. A number of them contained some antiquated old fossils whose only recommendation was that they had grown grey in the Public Service. He believed it would be to the interest of the colony at large if those gentlemen were pensioned off or got a retiring allowance.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Sent to New Guinea.

Mr. BLACK said it seemed monstrous that when that House voted sums of money for public works they should be met year after year with the old complaint, that they were unable to get the contracts carried out. He knew that if he wanted machinery he had only to send home for it and he got it, and he could not see why the Government should not be in a far better position than he was, because they had a great deal more money at their disposal than he had. One particular piece of work to which he took especial exception was the harbour work at Flat-top Island. Two years ago he was told that matter was under consideration; but it was in the same position now as it was then, and, unless some radical reform was made in the Harbours and Rivers Department, the works were now in the same position as they would be five years hence. That, at all events, was his opinion. There they had a district returning a large revenue to the colony; they had settled a large population upon the land, and were receiving ships direct from home, and he did not know whether hon. members would credit it when he told them that one of those direct ships was eighty-nine days discharging her cargo, and then had to go thirty-nine miles away for safe anchorage, and, after all, the owners were obliged to pay no less than £32 for demurrage, because they could not get any safe anchorage there. He considered that if that Flat-top Island work was a good work it should be gone on with; but if it was a bad work, let it be admitted that it was a bad work at once, have done with it, and devise some other scheme. When they found that they were paying an Engineer for Harbours and Rivers the highest salary, he thought, paid in the Government Service, the time had arrived when they should either have an efficient man, or if the present man was efficient he should be retained, or they should devise some better and more payable system. Hydraulic engineering, he admitted, was most difficult for anyone to understand, but he considered the time had arrived when some amendment should be made in the working of that department. They had an immigrant ship up there which landed her passengers on one day, but it took four days before they were able to get their luggage, and the country had to pay for keeping them in the depot during that time; and the reason assigned was that, there being a slight swell outside, the smaller vessels were unable to come alongside the ship. That was no inducement for ships to come direct to Mackay from home. The hon. Treasurer was up there some time ago, and said that after mature consideration

he had come to the conclusion that the Flat-top scheme should be gone on with. That House voted the money for the works: he (Mr. Black) had had nothing to do with its being passed. The work was commenced, and £2,500 was pitched into the sea. Then the works were suspended. He would not say anything about their suspension, because the man who took the contracts took them at a price ruinous to himself and to everyone who worked with him. Still, the works were now suspended; perhaps it was owing to some faulty design, but they should either be gone on with or else some other scheme should be devised to give those facilities to that place which other places along the coast undoubtedly possessed. He noticed that arrangements had been made by which the English mails by way of Torres Straits would be delivered in Brisbane from London in forty-four days, or in the same time as by the P. and O. boats. He thought it time some alteration of the sort was made. He had never admitted that, for Brisbane, the British-India Mail Service was a good service; but he did maintain that, for Queensland generally, a better immigrant service, carrying service, and one that did more good to the colony as a whole, was never initiated by any Government that was in power in Queensland before. If by any means they could expedite the delivery of letters to people in Brisbane, he thought the time was not far distant when the people of Brisbane would also regard it as even a good mail service. He was sure it would be a matter for congratulation to the country that a Royal Commission was sitting to inquire into the working of the railways of the colony. He thought it was a great pity that a Royal Commission was not also appointed to examine into the working of the whole of the departments. He thought the work of the Railway Department was entirely outgrowing the staff, and that it would be far better to divide the railways from the Works Department in such a way that the work of the country would be carried out much more expeditiously than it was at present. He noted that it was proposed, if possible, to bring in a Redistribution Bill. He did not think there was any question agitating the public mind more anxiously than that question. In the northern districts especially they knew that the representation they had was utterly inadequate to the growing population. He hoped that, no matter what course political events might take during the next two or three weeks, the time would be spared to bring in that Bill, so that it might come into operation before next session. He regretted exceedingly that the Bill to amend the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 was not passed before the Transcontinental Railway project was discussed, because if that Bill were passed it would enable the members of the House to express by their votes at what value they estimated those lands. If that Bill were passed—and it would have to be passed during the present session or next—it would undoubtedly fix the value of those lands falling in before the year 1890, and give them some idea as to the probable value of the land still further west, and which was said to be far superior to the lands proposed to be dealt with by this Bill. There was a number of other Bills proposed to be brought in, but he did not think that House was likely to live long enough to get through many of them. There were some old friends which he saw on the annual list of Bills to be brought in, and he thought it would have been just as well if they were left out and not introduced at all. The Bill to provide for the construction, maintenance, and management of works for the storage and distribution of water, if they had only the time to get through it, was one which he was sure would meet

with the hearty support of both sides of the House. Those were Bills for the benefit of the colony at large. The principles of them were approved by both sides, and they had only to consider the best means of carrying them out. He had great pleasure in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech. He considered that the legislation of the Government had undoubtedly done more to promote the welfare of Queensland than that of any previous Government. At the same time he had pointed out several matters where he considered the administration of the departments was very much at fault. In any case the present Parliament must expire very shortly. A new set of men would come into office; and it was to be hoped that at all events they would set the example, whoever they might be, of sweeping out some of the Augean stables of the Civil Service.

Mr. F. A. COOPER said that, in rising for the purpose of seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, he found his task very considerably lightened for him after the very able, lucid, eloquent, and, he might say, exhaustive speech of the gentleman who had just preceded him, the hon. member for Mackay. The two most important topics in the Governor's Speech, and those which would most exercise the minds of the constituencies at the coming election, were undoubtedly those which had been so ably dealt with by that gentleman. The first paragraph in the Speech referred to the death of their late Governor; and he was sure that they all must endorse the eulogy that had been passed upon that late lamented gentleman by the hon. member for Mackay. He, in common with the rest of the colonists, shared in the generally expressed sorrow and regret at the news of the late Governor's death. There was no doubt that the Press, speaking as they did on that occasion, only said that which met a hearty echo in the hearts of people throughout the colony. Reference was also made in the Speech to the advent of his successor. Some little time would elapse before that event, but they could not look upon that as a matter for regret, because they had in Sir Arthur Palmer—a gentleman eminently qualified by his long parliamentary career to well discharge the duties appertaining to that position—a guarantee that the rights and privileges of that high position were not likely to be abused by the present holder of the office. The next paragraph of the Speech to which he should refer—and he should only refer to a few of them—was a congratulation upon the propitious season with which the country had been favoured. It said:—"Our agricultural and pastoral pursuits have been conducted with more than common success, while our mining industries have held their own." It was certainly a matter for extreme congratulation that they should have had so favourable a season, and they had also had very substantial evidence of the fact in the amount of land taken up. The pastoral industry, too, had advanced, as in the numbers of sheep in the colony they read of an increase of something like 50 per cent. They found that within last year the number had increased from 8,200,000 to something like 13,000,000. From those figures it would be seen that the next wool clip would tend immensely to the advancement of the material progress of the colony. Concerning the large area of land selected he found, on reference to the report issued by the Lands Department, that there was no less than 830,040 acres taken up, of which 127,601 were homestead selections and 711,439 conditional purchases; that was the best evidence they could have of the confidence which the people of the colony had in the permanence and stability of the colony. Further, reference was made to the rapid influx

of population, and its beneficial distribution through the country. It was a matter of great congratulation that the enlightened works policy of the Government had been the means of bringing a great number of immigrants to the shores of the colony without interfering with the wages earned by the labouring class within it. He did not suppose there was a greater demand for labour in any part of the Australias, or a higher rate of remuneration paid for it, than in Queensland. Australia had often been said to be the paradise of the working man; and there was no doubt that their Garden of Eden was in Queensland. Let them contrast the state of the working classes of the colony to-day with what it was at the advent of the present Government. At that time there was a loud cry against immigration, because there was no use bringing people into the country to live upon those already settled in it, when it was hard for the latter to sustain themselves. Then there was the fact of people leaving the colony in hundreds to obtain employment elsewhere. Now, with facilities of immigration, it was found hard to meet the demand for labour. That was owing to the sound policy of the present Government in having public works and immigration going hand-in-hand. So great was the demand for labour that many of the railway works of the colony were stayed for want of hands, in spite of the fact that advertisements for large numbers of men wanted were appearing daily in the papers. The greatest credit was due to the Government for the vigorous works policy which they had initiated upon entering office and had carried out since. The next matter referred to was the agreement between the Government and the company formed for the construction of the land-grant railway from Charleville to the Gulf of Carpentaria at Point Parker, under the authority of the Railway Companies Preliminary Act. The gentleman who had preceded him had dealt so exhaustively with that subject that it was only necessary now to refer to the fact that the Government had received two tenders for the construction of the Warrego Railway and two for the construction of the Transcontinental; and that they had adopted what they thought the better of those agreements, and had presented them to the House. He did not see that the House had anything whatever to do now with the question of the principle of the construction of railways by land grants. That had already been determined upon by that Parliament in 1880, when the Railway Companies Preliminary Act was passed. Hon. members on the other side of the House spoke warmly in favour of the principle during the second reading of the Bill. The hon. leader of the Opposition spoke out his mind on the point, and said "he would agree to any scheme by which the colony would secure a railway in exchange for our waste lands," and "whether the line so constructed became the ultimate property of the Government or not was a matter of minor consideration." Now it was a matter of debate amongst the great statisticians of the day whether the railways should or should not be in the hands of the Government of a country. M. Leon Say, in an exhaustive article in a late number of one of the reviews, referred to the fact that the cost of railway construction in England was £40,000 per mile, and in France £26,000. He then cited amongst others the railways in Canada and the United States, and pointed out conclusively that the whole of those lines were the properties of syndicates, and also that in England, France, and Germany railways were wholly so; but that where the railways had fallen off was in Belgium, one of the few countries in Europe where the railways were the property of the State. Hon. members knew the enormous

success and prosperity that had attended the extension of railways in Canada and the United States, and the enormous expenditure on the lines tapping the prairie lands, and settling people upon them. In the same way, if this colony could push its railways out to the interior, whether by companies or by State loans, it would be with the same result. They had untold wealth in the enormous interior of the colony, and they had only to tap our extensive pastoral and mineral resources to insure their being brought to market. The question arose how they should do it. Were they in a position to do so by borrowing money? The Premier on a former occasion pointed out their indebtedness, which amounted to-day to £73 per head. In Canada it was the fact that the railways were constructed by land-grants, with large bonuses in addition, and the public debt was only £9 per head. When they reflected that the railways in Queensland out west were not paying, that from Dalby especially, westward, as it was shown conclusively by the return moved for by the hon. member for Clermont last session, that the line was only paying 1 per cent. over working expenses, what possible gain could be expected to accrue to the country from the borrowing of more money for the purpose of pushing those lines out west when the country was saddled with that deficit on the cost of construction; for the taxpayers of the country had to pay all the interest beyond that 1 per cent., and what benefit to the people at Cook or Burke was such a line? It had been proposed the other day that a railway rate should be charged against the gentlemen holding runs out west. It was strange that the colony never knew the enormous value of those western lands until quite lately. The gentlemen holding them now told them that the lands were worth 10s. per acre, yet now they paid only 5 per cent. on a capital value of 2d. to 5d. per acre. But if the value be taken for the first period of seven years in the twenty-one years' lease at 5s. per square mile, the rent was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a farthing; for the second seven years, at 10s. per mile, it was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a farthing; and for the third period, at 15s. per mile, it was $1\frac{1}{2}$ farthing. Five per cent. on that capital value, which they told them they would pay, would be $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. for the first period, $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the second, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the third period of the lease. He submitted that, if the land was worth 10s. per acre, they owed the gentlemen forming the syndicate their best thanks for having pointed out that they had such a magnificent source of revenue to draw upon. What did the lessees propose? They said those lands were worth 10s. per mile, but did not want the Government to dispose of them for 10s. or for its equivalent in a railway. They were willing to pay a railway rate of 5 per cent. interest on a capital value of $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. on all runs within seventy-five miles of either side of a railway line, and of $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. on runs extending fifty miles beyond the seventy-five miles boundary. That was an additional 15s. per square mile on runs within seventy-five miles of the line, and 10s. per square mile on all runs within fifty miles of the seventy-five miles boundary, or interest on a capital value of $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. and $9\frac{3}{4}$ d., though admitting the land was worth 10s. per acre— $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and $2\frac{3}{4}$ d. being 5 per cent. on the capital value of $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. and $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. The position taken up by those gentlemen was this: They said, "Don't let the syndicate have that land; let it stay with us; we are willing to pay you interest on less than a shilling an acre to enable you to construct the railways, but don't part with the land to the syndicate though they do give you 10s. per acre for it." That was about what it came to. He need hardly occupy the time of the House in referring to the fact of the action taken by hon. members at the

passing of the Preliminary Railways Bill. One of the greatest opponents of the agreement was the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles), and he spoke very strongly in favour of the Bill on its second reading. He saw "no objection to the principle of the Bill." The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson), who was now away from the House, and for whom all entertained the greatest respect as a man whom no one could remember to have given expression in any of his speeches to anything personal or injurious to any hon. member, referred to it as followed:—"He believed that the principle of the Bill was one that must be accepted in the future." His colleague (Mr. Rutledge), a foremost member on the other side of the House, said he "had been from the first a consistent advocate of the principle of constructing railways by private enterprise." All those gentlemen were advocates of the principle; but the moment the principle was to be put into force they turned round and said, "No; the syndicate are getting too much." Those who were the head and front of the opposition were four great squatting firms who held between them 10,263,683 acres. Their names were Wilson and De Satzé, who held in Gregory North 5,119 square miles of country; Jones, Green, and Sullivan, in the Warrego, holding 4,176 square miles; James Tyson, in the Warrego, 3,600 square miles; and Edward Wienholt, in Gregory North, 3,142 square miles of country—in all, 16,037 square miles or 10,263,683 acres. That was the area those gentlemen held in the unsettled districts, to say nothing of the enormous areas they held in the settled districts also, and also the liens and mortgages they held in other estates. They knew exactly where the shoe pinched, and cried out when it did. They held those lands too cheaply. At the lowest computation they were worth 7s. per acre. Those lessees paid 40 per cent. less for what they rented than they should do, as they paid for 340,833 square miles, when they held 461,124 square miles. That 10½ million acres should pay, at 4 per cent. on 10s. per acre, £200,000, whilst they actually paid only £1,041. Yet the money for the railways was to come out of the taxpayers' pocket for the enhancement of the pastoral lessees! The hon. member for Darling Downs, when addressing his constituents the other day, referred to the fact that one station carrying 20,000 sheep had lately changed hands for £60,000, or at the rate of £3 per head. But that sum was paid for grass lands and not for the sheep. The sheep were worth only 6s. or 7s. per head, and the rest of the price paid was for the grazing capabilities of the runs. No wonder that the gentlemen who were reaping those benefits should be the first to cry out when they thought their runs were in jeopardy. It was only the other day that a great outcry was made against the Minister for Lands for selling land on the Peak Downs at 10s. an acre. But that was a forced sale, and ought to establish the fact that any future legislation in regard to those lands when the leases fell in ought to insist on the payment of a rent commensurate, at all events, with the great advantages derived by the lessees. As was ably pointed out by the leading journal of the colony, the squatters had no equitable right to the renewal of those leases, which were obtained under the most favourable circumstances when the price of wool was low and the country in anything but a prosperous state; and as the country was in a far better condition than when the Act of 1869 was passed, and the price of wool was likely to keep up for some years, it was only fair that the pastoral lessees should pay something to the State for the benefits of post and telegraph and railway communication—benefits which had brought the inhabitants of the "Never-Never" country within the limits of civili-

sation. The supply of labour for the sugar-planters was another important topic. It was said that the Government would have considerable difficulty in framing regulations which would secure the return of the coolie at the expiration of his term of service; but he thought that a very easy matter, as they could, by legislation, control and restrict the labour in whatever direction they desired. Hon. members would no doubt recollect that when the Mineral Lands Act was passing through the House he sought to insert a clause excluding Asiatics from the goldfields and tinfields of the colony. On that particular occasion a division took place, when there were 14 "Ayes" and 14 "Noes," and had the leader of the Opposition been sincere in his desire to keep out Asiatics he would have recorded his vote on that occasion. If hon. members looked at page 303 of last year's *Hansard*, they would find that the speaker who immediately preceded him when he moved that clause was the leader of the Opposition, who was not, however, present to record his vote. They had undoubtedly the power of keeping those people off the gold and tin fields of the colony. Under the Mineral Lands Act they had prevented Asiatics from becoming licensees and likewise from being lessees, but there was nothing to prevent the holders of leases from giving them employment, and it would have been wise if hon. members had allowed the amendment he suggested to pass, because it would have set at rest for ever the right of coolies to work in mineral districts. It was his intention to introduce a European Miners' Protection Bill, which would prevent Chinese and coolies from working on the gold or tin fields of the colony, and in the event of that Bill being passed there would be little or no prospect of any European miner having to work shoulder to shoulder with those people at a low rate of wages. Judging from what appeared in the Press, the leader of the Opposition seemed to think that Chinamen were preferable to coolies; but there was really no class of people more hateful or detested by the European miner than the Chinese. They came into competition with Europeans in every direction. They were the storekeepers and the packers; and in addition to that, most of the furniture used in Brisbane and a great deal of that sold in Victoria and New South Wales at the present time was manufactured by Chinamen. If they took those men away from the colony, there would be no competition with European labour; and instead of the artisans of Melbourne receiving 8s., 12s., or £1 a week, as hundreds of them did at present, they would receive fair wages. The work, such as it was, could be done very much cheaper by Chinamen, and that was the reason for the present low rates. The great objection to the employment of Chinamen was the fact that, whatever money they got, they hoarded it up and took it out of the country with them. It was different in employing kanakas, for the colony not only got his labour, but his money also—as soon as he got his cheque he went straight to the storekeeper and purchased such articles as he fancied. The Chinaman came to the colony with no wife and no children to support, and entered into competition with the European, and did not contribute in any shape or form to the revenue; and it was altogether unfair that the European should be so terribly handicapped in the race for obtaining a living. The hon. member for Mackay had made reference to another solution of the difficulty mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, and that was the introduction of cheap European labour. Did the hon. member know at what rate of wages skilled European artisans could be obtained? The best artisans in Germany worked for 9s. per week of ninety hours; and skilled artisans in Italy

worked at 5s. a week and their food. If there was any doubt on the subject, hon. members had only to take up the *Economist*, where they would find that the fact was as he had described. The Germans worked ninety hours a week, at the rate of fifteen hours a day, at the low rate he had mentioned, and he did not think that they could anywhere find a more active, enterprising, sober, or industrious class than the Germans; and what would be the consequence of such magnificent labour being obtainable at such a price if the planters were under the necessity of getting their employes from Europe? They had spent something like £2,000,000 already on their properties, and they were not going to stand still and be ruined when, under the Immigration Act, they could indent labourers at £2 a head, and pay them nominal wages. They would have to bring out that cheap European labour, and then what was to become of the labourers who now earned their 10s. or 12s. a day? The upshot of such action on the part of the planters would be that people would be seen skeddaddling out of the country, just as they did at the time the present Government took office. He trusted such a state of things would never occur in the colony, but that the planters would see some other way of getting their work done than by flooding the country with cheap European labour. If they were to be paid at the rate that was paid in Europe at the present time, then the sooner the labourers of the colony get notice of the fact the better, so that they may make tracks before the introduction of people who will work at such a low rate of wages. That was not a solution of the difficulty which would be accepted by the working men of the colony. One other matter arising out of the Speech to which he would direct attention was with regard to the redistribution of electorates. He did not think it at all likely that during the present session they could pass a Bill dealing with that subject, but he should very much like to see an Additional Members Bill passed if possible. It was well-known that the North did not send to Parliament anything like the number of representatives it was entitled to send in proportion to its population. If they took the basis of Northern Downs, of Carnarvon, and of Dalby, the North would send almost as many members as would fill the whole of the benches now occupied by the Government and their supporters. In Dalby there were something like 520 electors, in Canarvon 516, and in the Northern Downs something under 500; and in the same ratio Cook would return considerably more members than at present. Townsville also should have another member, and Herberton might form an electorate holding the same position with regard to Cairns and Port Douglas that Charters Towers holds with regard to Townsville. He did not think there was very much in common between Herberton, Port Douglas, Cairns, and Cooktown, and therefore he should like to see an Additional Members Bill passed. Such a measure would be hailed with satisfaction by those people in the North, especially as they would then be able to return members whose interests were identical with their own, and who understood their wants and requirements. The coast towns required commercial men to represent them; but if the miners at Herberton, for instance, could outvote the electors of Townsville, they might send to the House as their representative a man who never saw Townsville, and who had no feelings in common with the inhabitants of the place. That was one of those electorates which unquestionably should receive additional representation, as also the electorate which he had the honour to represent. He would conclude with a word

regarding the plans and sections of the various railway lines. It was his duty the other day to bring before the Minister for Works the matter of the delay in the construction of the Cooktown railway, and the answer he got was similar to the one he received on a former occasion, that it was the difficulty of providing surveyors that had caused the delay. There must certainly be plenty of efficient surveyors obtainable outside the colony, and it would be a wise and judicious policy on the part of the Government to employ as many of them as possible. The present system of making small sections was absurd, like the one of thirty-two miles at Cooktown. Lines should be taken from Cairns and Port Douglas, both of which were entitled to railways. The one going from Port Douglas would take in a vast area of rich agricultural land and be self-supporting, and the line from Cairns should be opened to Herberton. There was no doubt that people were very dissatisfied at the vast delay that existed with regard to those railways, and he trusted the Government would see its way to push on those surveys, so that tenders might be called for, and the lines for which money had been voted constructed with as little delay as possible.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH said there was one matter mentioned in the Speech in which all parties in the House would agree, and that was the expression of regret for the death of the late Governor on his way to England. They had all hoped that Sir Arthur Kennedy would have lived to reach the old country to enjoy there the rest he had so well earned in Her Majesty's Service. He could only say he hoped Sir Arthur's successors would be as good as he was, as earnest in their desire to serve the colony, and as impartial as he always tried to be. With that exception, there was not much in the Speech with which he could agree with hon. members opposite. They had met there at last. When the House adjourned last year they were given to understand that this year Parliament would be called together at the proper time, which, the Premier said, would be early in the year; and yet they had been compelled to wait till within three or four days of the end of the half-year before they were able to meet. What excuse was there for that? None, as far as he could see. If ever there was a time when the Government ought to have met Parliament early it was this year, considering the circumstances under which they left the House last year. On that occasion they were not in a position to carry their measures, and they knew it. The Premier had said, "We are men of honour"—a fine-sounding phrase which they might probably hear again this session—"and if we cannot carry our measures we will not hold office, and we must have a new Parliament or a new Government." The hon. gentleman could not carry his measures, and the Premier knew perfectly well, long before he soothed his conscience or salved his wounded honour with a majority of two, that the Bill would go no further. It was never intended that the Bill should advance beyond the second reading.

The PREMIER: I deny it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was no use the Premier denying it, because it was an "open secret" before the division took place, and it had been frequently stated since on authority which no contradiction from the Premier could do away with. It was notorious that before that Bill went to a division several members who supported the Government knew that it was not going any further.

The PREMIER: Knew it from the Ministry?

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not suppose the Premier would go about telling it. What he (Mr. Griffith) insisted on was that it was well

known on both sides of the House that that Bill was not going to be passed. The Premier would deny it, of course; but what happened afterwards showed that he never intended to pass it, for he caught at any pretext to escape from the position he found himself in. He (Mr. Griffith) did not complain, from his point of view, of what the Premier did, and he said so at the time. The Premier might call himself a man of honour, and say that if he could not carry his measures he would not hold office, and yet hold office after he was defeated, and he (Mr. Griffith) did not object. He remembered saying at the time to the Government that the cup of their iniquity was not filled; and he was very glad they had retained office a little longer, because the eyes of the people had since been opened a great deal wider, and they had been enabled to see the Government in their true character. He did not intend that remark to apply to all the members of the Government, but to what he might call the ruling members of the Government. The people now knew what kind of men had been governing them for the past four years. There had never been such an opening of eyes in any of the Australian colonies as to the character of a Government they had been suffering under as there had been in Queensland during the past eight or nine months. Therefore he was glad that the Government had had an opportunity of going on a little longer, and were at last compelled to submit their measures to Parliament. Under present circumstances the delay in meeting Parliament was entirely inexcusable, and not calling them together before the end of the financial year was reprehensible in the extreme. Unless opinions in the House had changed since last year very materially, the Government must know that they had not the remotest chance of carrying their measures through the present Parliament; and yet, knowing that, they had deliberately kept the House out of session until the end of the financial year; and they were really bringing about the result that there would be no parliamentary government this year at all. Unless the Premier intended to run away from his word again, and hold a more humiliating position still, he must know very well that his measures stood no chance of being carried; but he gave him credit, with all sincerity, for more spirit and pluck than that. But unless the Premier adopted that course, which he could not believe he would adopt, he was putting the colony in the position that there could be no legislation at all this year, and that was most reprehensible and indefensible. Before referring to matters mentioned in the Speech he would allude to a few things that had happened during the recess. One had reference to the Postal Contract, and the action of the Government in that matter was very singular. Hon. members who were here last year would remember that he charged the Government with endeavouring to foster their pet Mail Service by making charges on correspondence received from Great Britain which were supposed by some persons to be illegal. He himself refused to pay, and challenged the Government to enforce the charge if they could. The Government promptly accepted the challenge, and immediately afterwards a letter was brought to him which the postman refused to deliver until he paid what he considered to be the extortionate charge made by the Government. In answer to a letter, he was informed that this was done by the authority of the Postmaster-General. He (Mr. Griffith) immediately commenced proceedings against the Postmaster-General, and was met, as a law attorney would meet an action for debt brought against his client, by every possible delay that could be thrown in his way. The

matter was put off from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, until the very last day, when they could hold out no longer, and then they caved in—threw up the sponge. All that was done by instructions from the Government. The Crown Solicitor was instructed not to accept service of the writ because the Postmaster-General happened to be outside the colony—nothing but personal service would do. Then he was instructed to take advantage of every form of law to prevent the matter being brought to an issue, and by that means they managed to keep it back from December till March, and that was how the Premier had accepted the challenge he had thrown down against the enforcement of that illegal charge. Another letter was brought to him under similar circumstances, and in order not to put the country to the expense of fighting two actions on the same question he had offered to give any guarantee to pay the amount if it were held to be legal. But the Government insisted on putting the country to that useless expense. The idea of the Government seemed to be to obey no law that could not be physically enforced against them. There was another case which had just been suggested to him, that of Mr. P. F. Macdonald. That gentleman was as much entitled to the money awarded to him by the Supreme Court as the public creditor was entitled to the interest on his debentures every January and July. The Government defied the law, and that was the position they had taken up in matters of administration generally. They defied any law that could not be enforced against them.

The PREMIER: We shall defy Mr. Macdonald as long as we are here.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he believed the Premier was incapable of seeing any obligation to obey the law unless he was compelled. He had met other men similarly constituted, but they did not hold such a prominent position as the Premier of a great colony. Then he might mention the unblushing abuse of advertising by the Government. The Premier laughed again, and probably he did not see anything wrong in it; he did not perhaps see the harm of paying the public moneys to his supporters in the Press, and keeping advertisements away from others who were not supporting the Government. But he was speaking, he hoped, to some who did see harm in such things, and who believed that to spend the public moneys in subsidising friends and supporters in the Press was wrong. Another thing which he must refer to was what he might call the system of subsidised falsehood which had been in vogue during the last few months. Deliberate falsehoods had been started in one part of the colony, sent on to another part, and returned to the place whence they came—falsehoods which in many instances had been clearly and distinctly subsidised. There were many persons who regarded those things as wrong; he for one did, and should always expose them.

The PREMIER: You are not going to stop at "subsidised falsehoods," surely? Where are they?

Mr. GRIFFITH said the caps fitted the heads intended to wear them, and he need go no further. Another step which the Government took during the recess was that described as the annexation of New Guinea. His Excellency the Administrator of the Government said that a certain portion of New Guinea had been annexed on the 4th of April last. He doubted, however, whether that correctly described what had happened. It was true, no doubt, that Mr. Chester, the Police Magistrate of Thursday Island, went

to New Guinea at that date, hoisted the British flag, and said he took possession of the place on behalf of Her Majesty; but he believed that a gentleman in Her Majesty's Navy had previously done something very similar. The action taken might lead to annexation—he hoped sincerely it would—but before expressing any opinion about the boldness and pluckiness of the Government he should like to see all the correspondence on the subject before and since. Before expressing a definite opinion it would be well to learn how the matter came to be known in Berlin in February last, two months before the annexation. The Imperial Government had apparently had the annexation of New Guinea under consideration for some time; and when the correspondence was seen, hon. members would be better able to form a conclusion as to what credit the Government deserved in the matter. At the same time he wished to say distinctly that it was most important that the country should be annexed. The time had arrived for such a step, and he was certain that, whether the Government had taken action or not, the matter would undoubtedly have formed the subject of discussion during the present session. The hon. member for Mackay had made a very able speech from his own point of view, and had dealt at considerable length with the labour question. The hon. member had also referred in one part of his speech to the prosperity of the colony, which the hon. member feared was not altogether upon a sound basis. He would give no opinion now as to the soundness of the basis, though he did not think there was any reason for alarm. In his opinion the fatal error in the policy of the Government in the steps they had taken to settle the country was that they could only see one thing—capital, capital, capital—nothing but capital. People were their least consideration. They said, “Never mind the people, let us get money, money, money.” The Premier, and those who were with him in the administration of the affairs of the colony, kept that one thing in view—get money into the country. But it was quite possible to get more money into the colony at one time than could be profitably employed. It was no use bringing money in unless people were also brought. To that the Government had never seriously set themselves. What increase had there been in the population during the last four years in proportion to the amount of money brought into it? Remarkably little. During the last twelve months, or a little longer, there had been a spurt in immigration, but the immigrants had been almost entirely of one class. What proportion of men had the Premier brought out who were likely to become employers and assist others in settling upon the land? He had done absolutely nothing in that direction. His attention had been directed to the one object of introducing large capitalists. He (Mr. Griffith) liked to see large capitalists coming to the colony, and should prefer that they should live here; but he had not the same amount of regard for those who lived far away and sent their capital here to earn a large interest to be spent in another part of the world. For those persons he did not feel the consuming admiration which the Premier appeared to feel. That was the fatal mistake that underlay nearly all the acts of the Premier's administration. In connection with that he could not avoid referring to the labour question. The hon. member for Mackay had expressed his views to the House that afternoon concisely and forcibly. He gave the hon. member credit for being perfectly sincere in his views, and no doubt the hon. member would give members of the Opposition credit for being equally sincere in theirs. It was a matter

upon which there might be the most extraordinary divergence of opinion, each party holding their own to be the correct and only sound one. Perhaps on that more than any other question a difference of opinion might be expected from intelligent honest men seeking only the best for the country. But he believed that the magnitude of the question was not recognised—it was much greater than the hon. member for Mackay fancied. It was such a large subject that it was impossible to deal with all parts of it on one occasion. The hon. member for Mackay said sometimes that black labour was absolutely necessary for tropical agriculture. If that were so, it settled the whole question. If the industry could not be carried on except by black labour there would have to be black labour. There was no doubt about that, but the hon. member assumed that it could not be so carried on, and that was a very great assumption. The hon. member asserted that there was no place where the industry was carried on except by black labour. That was true to a certain extent; but had the experiment been tried? It had been tried a little in New South Wales and in Queensland, and he believed successfully, but it had not been tried very much. But had the experiment ever been tried of black inferior labour—regulated labour—working side by side with white labour permanently? That had never been tried in the way it was proposed to try it now, though a very similar experiment was tried in Mauritius and for a time in Jamaica, with results different from those desired by the hon. member. Before referring to the position of the Coolie question as it existed now, he wished to refer to one or two matters mentioned by the hon. member for Mackay. The hon. member said he should like to see the immigration of kanakas ended partly on account of the ill-name brought by it upon the colony of Queensland. No doubt it had brought an ill-name to the colony, but he was happy to think that it was to a great extent undeserved. The kanakas, with few exceptions, had been extremely well treated, and though there might have been some instances of bad employers treating their labourers unkindly, the assertion that such cases had occurred was not sufficient reason for rushing to the remedy proposed and introducing coolies. The hon. member had asked him what remedy did he propose. That question had been asked of him over and over again through the Press, in the House, privately, and publicly, and some persons had asserted that he proposed as a remedy the introduction of Chinese. No person in the colony had ever thought that he said anything of the kind. The persons who had made the statement and circulated it industriously, deliberately, and in some instances for money, had stated either what they did not believe to be true or what they knew to be false. He (Mr. Griffith) never made any such proposal as that as a solution of the labour question. He had said that he regarded the immigration of British coloured labour as more dangerous to the colony than even the Chinese, but he held that opinion upon very different grounds. No one in the colony had done more than he had to restrain the immigration of Chinese.

Mr. MACROSSAN : Nonsense.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he took as active a part in the passing of Bills on the subject through Parliament in 1876-1877 as any man in Parliament. He did not mean to say that he did more than anyone else, but he took a very prominent part in that discussion both inside and outside the House, and he fought the battle as hard as anyone. No man then or since had been more sincere in trying to restrict and practically prohibit the introduction of Chinese.

Mr. MACROSSAN : What did I do?

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. member for Townsville also took a prominent part.

Mr. MACROSSAN : Before you took it up.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not think the Government at that time received much assistance from the present Premier, and the then Opposition fought the Bill strenuously. He remembered well the speeches that were made in the House at the time, the protests that were made against the Chinese legislation, and the various epithets that were used. He had taken this opportunity to contradict a statement which he had not taken the trouble to contradict before.

The PREMIER : You deliberately said that I opposed you in bringing forward your Chinese Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he stated that the then Government did not get much assistance from the hon. gentleman, and that they got the strongest opposition from the then Opposition in Parliament. The hon. member for Townsville, who sat in opposition, certainly supported the Bill, but he did not remember that the present leader of the Government gave it much support. If the hon. gentleman did so he was very glad to hear it. The Chinese were now entirely under the control of the colony, and if Parliament chose to impose a poll-tax of £100 a head, the Imperial Government would not refuse their assent to the measure. In New South Wales they had done more; they provided that not more than one to every 100 tons of a ship's burden should be introduced. The matter was entirely in their hands, and immigration could be stopped in a moment if too many came. Nor was there the slightest fear of Chinese labour creating a vested interest in the colony too strong to manage. If more than a few arrived, the House would almost unanimously insist upon passing stringent regulations for excluding them. He had already said that the Government which carried the Bills relating to the immigration of Chinese did not receive much assistance, as far as his memory led him to believe, from the present Premier. He had since the adjournment for tea had an opportunity of refreshing his memory, and he found he was not mistaken. The first Bill brought in on that subject was the Gold Fields Act Amendment Bill of 1876—the Bill to which Mr. Cairns refused his assent. That Bill was carried on a division by 17 to 7, and amongst the "Noes" was the name of Mr. McIlwraith. That was the first serious attempt made in Queensland to restrict the number of Chinese. In the same year a Bill was brought in to put an additional duty on rice, and that also related to the Chinese. The division on the second reading was taken on the 15th August, 1876, and the present Premier voted against that also. Lord Carnarvon having refused to assent to the Gold Fields Bill, it was brought in again. The Government also brought in the Chinese Immigration Regulation Bill now in force. He found that the present Premier took no part whatever in the debate on it, and the second reading was carried without a division; but in committee there were two amendments, each of which was in favour of the Chinamen, and two divisions taken, but the present Premier took no part in them whatever; so that his (Mr. Griffith's) memory had not deceived him—they had received no material assistance from the hon. gentlemen. He was very glad, however, to learn now that the hon. Premier disapproved of Chinese immigration, and it would be satisfactory to the people of the colony to know that he disapproved of it. As they on the Opposition side disapproved of it, and the Premier disapproved

of it, the people might rest assured that there was no danger to be feared from it; but the Coolie question was a very much more difficult one, and was a very different one from what many hon. members appeared to think it was. He purposed that afternoon to refer to some of the arguments brought forward by the hon. member for Mackay, who stated that if additional European labour and Chinese labour were introduced it would enter into competition with the labour at present in the colony, and would necessarily tend to reduce the standard of wages in the colony. He quite agreed that Chinese labour would compete with white labour, but he also thought that coolie labour would compete with white labour, and it was no argument to say simply that it would not. What was the work that white men could not do on a plantation? He had asked that question a great many times, and it had been differently answered. Sometimes it had been said that a white man could not cut the cane, sometimes that he could not plant it, sometimes that he could not do the trashing, and sometimes that he could not cultivate it at all. But, in one place and another, they found white men doing all those things. Even at Mackay itself they found white men growing cane and taking it to the mills. They found them growing cane and taking it to the mills on the Clarence, where white labour was entirely employed in its cultivation; at Maryborough, at Bundaberg, and at Mackay itself. He certainly failed to see that cutting cane was not work in which a white man might be engaged; and if they were reduced to that argument—that a white man could not cut the cane—he thought the subject was exhausted. The hon. member for Mackay said at Mackay, where he spoke remarkably well on the subject, "It was no use comparing the colony of Queensland with countries like Demerara and Mauritius, because in those countries there was this difference; that white men could not work in the field." There was no doubt that that difference did exist, but he thought it led to a very different conclusion to that which the hon. member for Mackay appeared to draw from it. The hon. member said that they could not draw the inference that in Queensland white labour would be ultimately driven out of the country from the fact that in Demerara and other countries it had been driven out, because those countries were countries where white labour could not work in the field; but he (Mr. Griffith) contended that that argument was the strongest argument that could be used against the introduction of coloured labour into this colony. This was a country where white labour could work in the field, and would come into competition with coloured labour. Some people thought that white men should not do hard work in the field, and others thought there was no reason why they should not.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : They won't.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that so long as they found hon. gentlemen preaching that working in the field was degrading labour—that agriculture of that kind was degrading to a white man—there might be some difficulty in it; but he had yet to learn that the cultivation of sugar-cane was any more degrading than the cultivation of turnips, cabbage, or maize was. It might be harder work, and more costly perhaps. The hon. gentleman talked about white labour in connection with the sugar industry as underpaid labour, but he could not see what there was in the cultivation of cane to require that the labour which grew it should be underpaid. It seemed to him to be assuming too

much. The experiment, as a matter of fact, had not been tried, and the cultivation of sugar-cane was yet but a young industry. The experiment of cultivating cane with white labour had not been tried except in Australia, and it had as yet only been begun here. The question undoubtedly would have to be solved one day, and it must be solved in one of two ways—it would be a question as between white labour or black. He believed the idea of the two existing side by side—although it might prove a temporary expedient as it was doing now, and they had to submit to many temporary expedients because they could not get at once what they wanted—he believed that the idea of the two races permanently existing side by side could not be entertained, and that in the end one race must go. The country about Mackay—in fact, hemight begin at Bundaberg or Maryborough and say the whole of the coast districts—would some day have to be the heritage of a white race or of a black; it could not be the heritage of both. If nature had decreed that it should be the heritage of an Asiatic race they should have to bow to that decree; but until that was proved, he for one would not admit they would have to bow to any such decree. Of one thing, however, he was sure: it could not be the heritage of both. The Premier the other day, when speaking at a banquet, spoke of a white man's country as a country owned by white men and influenced by white men. He did not accept that definition of a white man's country. Demerara, according to that definition, was a white man's country, as it was owned by white men and influenced by white men; and so was Mauritius and other countries like them. This country would be the heritage of one race or the other. The question was, was it to be the heritage of Europe or of Asia, for it could not be the heritage of both. That view of the matter, he maintained, really underlaid all arguments upon it. If they took the arguments of the hon. member for Mackay—that the industry must be carried on and that it could only be carried on by black labour—then he was right in his views; but if they took the view that this country was destined to be peopled by white people from Europe, then any step they took towards the introduction of another race would defeat that object and would be permanently damaging to the country. That was why he did not regard kanakas as very dangerous, because it was quite certain that this country was not going to be inhabited by them. They were not going to be the race of the future, and it was equally certain that the Chinese were not to be the race of the future, for they did not intend to allow them to come here. But if they introduced coolies from British India he foresaw, as he thought, that it would be impossible to get rid of them. They would come, vested interests would spring up, and it would be impossible to drive them away. As to making any law to compel them to go away, he believed it was the merest nonsense to speculate upon the possibility of making such a law. The hon. member for Mackay thought it could be done, and said he would not have them come here if he was satisfied that they could not be sent away again. He thought, before he sat down, he would be able to make that hon. member waver very much in his belief as to the possibility of their remaining here only temporarily. He was sure that if once introduced here they could not be compelled to leave the colony; and he regarded the permanent settlement amongst them of an alien race as a very great danger indeed, and believed that to permit it would be almost a political crime. The hon. member for Mackay had said that he (Mr. Griffith) had stated that within fifteen years the population of coolies in the colony, if they were

allowed to come here in sufficient numbers, or as the planters wanted them, would reach 1,000,000. The hon. gentleman quoted some figures to show that only something like 12,000 coolies had been absorbed by Demerara, Mauritius, and other colonies in a year. But the hon. gentleman seemed to forget that in Mauritius there were something like 250,000 coolies already and that 50,000 of them were native-born Mauritians, the children of coolie parents coming from India. He had referred in the course of his speech to Mackay as being merely a speck in the area of sugar lands on the northern coasts. That was right; it was a mere fraction of the parts available for sugar-growing on the northern coasts; but what was the proportion of those lands to Mauritius, which supported 250,000 coolies? Why, the land available in the Mackay district alone was many times more than that available in Mauritius for sugar-growing. If it was half as good as Mauritius, or was capable of producing per acre half what Mauritius could, it would carry an enormous number of coolies. Let them look at the position they were in. There were men of the greatest enterprise coming to the colony with money—not themselves, but sending managers with their money—who demanded coolies from British India. If the demand continued, and the supply was equal to the demand, in the next fifteen or twenty years the colony might expect to see 1,000,000 of coolies there. But if half that number came, did anybody think that legislation would be able to drive them out? They had seen lately what self-willed men could do when the reins of power were in their hands. No Legislature could be got to pass a law to expel those coolies when a powerful interest was opposing them. The statute-book had been full for hundreds of years of laws which could not be enforced. Were not sumptuary laws passed in Great Britain regulating what wages men should earn or what prices they should pay for what they ate; and they could not be enforced? He quite believed that the employment of white labour on sugar plantations would not allow of such large profits, and he was afraid that had a great deal to do with the arguments against it. He would rather see the profits less than that a white population should not be there. He had taken into consideration the arguments about an inferior white population being introduced, and he entirely failed to see their force. He wished to see along the northern coast a population not of tenants, not of a servile race, but of men living on their own lands, growing their own sugar, making not large fortunes but fair incomes, bringing up families respectably and well, and selling their produce to the mills. That was the prospect one might look to there. The man who brought that population to the northern coasts would deserve the thanks of posterity, rather than the man who settled big capitalists with large gangs of a servile population along them. Another argument often talked of was the regulation of the labour. Some hon. members and others outside the House believed there was an advantage in having labour regulated. Now, in his mind the regulation of labour was something entirely alien to the genius of the British race. Regulated labour was only another name for servile labour. It meant labourers not as free as the rest of the community; compelled by penal laws to do their work, to do an allotted task for a fixed period. In very few essential particulars were they different from slaves. He was not talking sentiment; but regulated labour really involved the idea of an inferior class, bound down by chains of law, if not of iron, to serve their task-masters. He hoped not to see any regulated labour in the colony, as it was unsuited to their institutions. If they were going to have half their popula-

tion regulated by laws of that kind, grave evils would result. Any country with a large proportion of its population regulated or servile labourers must be governed on different principles from those of this colony. It must be a Crown colony; despotism must exist there. He was confident that if in the future, as he hoped never to see, part of the colony was populated by hordes of Asiatics, so soon as it came about that part of the colony must lose its political privileges. The members who advocated that must look forward to such a result with confidence; when they got their servile population they must give up their political franchise and must become a Crown colony, dependent upon Queensland, but unrepresented in that House. In the meantime, if it should come to that—he trusted it would not—he confessed it impossible to regard that question without great regret. He could not but have sympathy with the planters—not with the people who did not live in the colony, but with men who had come there, like the hon. member for Mackay, and had embarked their all in the industry and were sincere in all they advocated. It was with regret he differed from them, but he thought it was advisable that the two sides of the question should be stated and understood. The hon. gentleman had stated his side with great ability, and he (Mr. Griffith) now endeavoured to state the other side as well as he could. He had referred to the matter at such length because he did not think there would be another opportunity of discussing the question this session. Until it was settled the planters must do the best they could. But how did they find the Coolie question? What position was it now in? At Roma, the other day, the Premier said it was only within the past week or two that he had received intimation that the Indian Government had assented to regulations under which coolies could be brought here from India, confined to the plantations, and under which it would be certain they would be returned to India after their engagements had expired, and that they would not contaminate the white population outside the plantations. And in the Speech delivered that morning the following passage occurred:—

“Correspondence has been continued with the Indian Government in reference to the Regulations under which eligible labourers from that country may be introduced for the more effectual prosecution of tropical agriculture in this Colony. The difficulty has been to frame Regulations which, while meeting the views of the Indian Government, would furnish ample safeguards against injurious competition with European labour, and secure the return of the labourers to their own country. These objects, my Government considers, have been at length secured, and the Regulations will be submitted for your approval.”

Would not anybody understand from that passage that regulations had been approved by the Indian Government and were ready to be submitted to Parliament? The Premier had laid on the table correspondence from which it appeared that only on Thursday last draft regulations were sent to the Indian Government for their consideration. How that was to be reconciled with the statement made by the Premier at Roma, and with the passage he had just quoted from the Opening Speech, he did not know, but he never had believed that any regulations framed by the Queensland Government had been approved by the Indian Government. There was very little correspondence on the subject, and he would call attention to it now, as there might not be another opportunity. Last session there were laid on the table regulations under which the coolie, at the expiration of five years' service, was either to re-engage immediately, to take ship for India, or to go to gaol for six months; and those regulations were submitted to

the Indian Government. The Premier must have had his tongue in his cheek when he signed his name to the covering letter—as if he thought any Government worthy of the name would assent to such regulations! But they served their purpose. They were laid on the table, and they blinded the eyes of some hon. members in that House, and of some persons outside; but that the Indian Government would ever assent to them no one who understood the subject could for a moment imagine. The answer was sent on the 16th October from the Indian Government, and of course they declined to assent to anything of the sort, as the Premier very well knew they would. The reply said:—

“I am, however, to express regret that the alteration made by the Queensland Government with the object of restricting the employment of Indian immigrants to tropical agriculture cannot, in its present form, be accepted by the Governor-General in Council, who is unable to acquiesce in the proposal under which a British-Indian subject should be exposed to the punishment of imprisonment for engaging himself in service other than that on account of which he was imported.

“I am, at the same time, to explain that the objection of the Governor in Council is limited to the specific penalty proposed; and I am to intimate that the Government of India is willing to receive and consider any other suggestions which your Government may think fit to make, for the purpose of confining emigrants from India to the special class of labour for which they are imported by the colony.”

And let hon. members who regarded Queensland as a colony governing itself without interference from anyone else bear the following in mind:—

“With respect to the Protector of Immigrants, the Government of India is unable to withdraw the conditions under which the appointment of a protector is required, who shall be responsible for the general well-being of the coolies to the Government of India, and shall be under its general control.”

In that letter the Indian Government insisted on having a protector under their control, and responsible to them. In fact, Queensland was to be in the position of a suppliant to the Indian Government, asking that the subjects of that Government might be sent to the colony on condition that the Indian Government sent someone as protector, who might be recalled if the Indian Government were not satisfied with him. In the letter dated the 6th May, which was probably written on the 6th January, the Premier wrote to the Indian Government expressing his regret that the Indian Government could not agree to the suggestions made by the Government of Queensland, and inviting the Indian Government to suggest some mode of recruiting coolies in India under such terms as would make their return compulsory. The answer to that letter, dated the 5th April, he would read:—

“I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 6th January, 1883, inquiring whether this Government can suggest any measures which would have the effect of restricting immigrant labourers recruited in India for service in Queensland to tropical agriculture, or of compelling them to return to India on the termination of their engagements.

“In reply, I am to say that this Government considers that the object of the Queensland Government would best be attained by slightly altering the draft Regulations as drawn up in this office, so as to make it clear that no application for immigrants can be entertained except for the purposes of tropical agriculture. This would necessitate the revision of schedule A. Further, the Regulations should prevent any engagement of an immigrant, or any transfer of his services, which is not reported to and ratified by the Protector of Immigrants and the Police Magistrate, and no such re-engagement or transfer should be allowed if the labourer is not to be employed in tropical agriculture.

“If the Regulations were thus amended, it may be suggested that the Queensland Government would, by passing a separate regulation, make it illegal for any inhabitant of the colony to employ any Indian immigrant except on an agreement ratified by the Protector of Immigrants and the Police Magistrate. No penalty, however, should, in the opinion of this Government, be

imposed on any Indian immigrant who may have been induced to evade the law. It will be sufficient to confine the penalty to the employer.

"In conclusion, I am desired to state that the Government of India will be glad to learn the final decision of the Government of Queensland on the points, and on the proposals put forward in paragraph 3 of my letter No. 216, dated 16th October, 1882, in connection with the appointment of a Protector of Immigrants."

No penal laws would be admitted by the Indian Government. No penal laws were to be made affecting the coolie, who was to be free to go where he liked and to do what he liked. That was the only condition on which the Indian Government would allow the coolies to come. Then on the 21st June—last Thursday—the Premier sent some draft regulations, which were to be submitted to Parliament for their approval; but they would not be assented to by the Indian Government because they provided that the Immigration Agent should be the chief protector, and the Indian Government insisted on having their own protector. And there was not a word in the regulations which would have the effect of compelling the coolies to return home. All that was provided was that the original employer was to give a bond to pay his passage home if he wished to go. If he did not want to go there was an end of the matter, as there was nothing in the regulations to compel him to return. There was nothing about their going home, except that the planter was bound to provide them with a passage if they wanted to go. Such were the draft regulations submitted to the Indian Government, and that was how the matter stood at present. Such regulations would not even meet the views of the hon. member for Mackay, for the Indian Government had refused to assent to any regulations which would be penal upon the coolie. He had dealt with the subject at some length because there might not be another opportunity now of dealing with it, as he did not think those regulations were likely to be submitted for the approval of Parliament. Reference was made by the hon. member for Mackay to the working of the Railway Department, and he was inclined to think that it was as bad as it could possibly be. The extraordinary deficiency of rolling-stock was unaccountable. The hon. gentleman had stated his opinion that there ought to be a Royal Commission appointed to investigate the working of all the Government departments. The best Royal Commission would be a Royal Commission selected from the Opposition side of the House to replace the gentlemen who were now engaged in conducting in some way or other the various departments. It was quite time that something of that kind was done. He was certain that five years ago the departments were in a very different condition from what they were in now. They were conducted on a different principle.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Lands Department especially was conducted on a very different principle. He was glad to see that something was to be done to make the Mail Service more satisfactory. The mails, he believed, were to be brought from Cooktown to Brisbane by steamers that would not stop quite so long on the road. But they had also to be assured that the mail steamers themselves would get to Cooktown at the right time, and that was almost beyond the power of the Postmaster-General. The service might be a good one for the colony in various ways, but as a mail service it was the most preposterous thing ever known anywhere. It was no use trying to bolster it up as a mail service. The time had arrived when the people of the colony should be allowed to choose their own mail service without being forced to bolster up the Premier's

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pet project. There were six mail steamers every four weeks leaving Sydney for the old country, each quicker than theirs, and yet their people were not allowed to make use of them without paying a heavy fine for doing so. He was sorry the papers relating to the recent postal conference were not on the table, for he was not in a position to say anything about the refusal of Queensland to enter into the postal union. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, who directed the policy of the Government in that as in most other matters, took such a warm interest in his mail service that he could not see the interests of the general public in getting frequent and speedy communication with Great Britain; he could not see that they ought to be placed in the same position as people in the other colonies, and enabled to send their letters by the quickest route. They had at present a purely artificial state of things, but he had no doubt that before very long Queensland, with the other Australian colonies, would join the postal union. He was glad to see that immigrants were coming by the line, although he did not think much of the new arrangement with the British-India Company, who were already sending frequent vessels to the colony because it paid them to do so. Considering the rate they got for bringing out immigrants, it was no great concession on the part of the company, and no doubt plenty of people would be found willing to do the work for less than £16 per head. He fancied, however, that the flow of immigrants would be much lessened when they heard that on arrival here they would find themselves alongside of a shipload of Indian coolies, which would no doubt be most industriously advertised in Great Britain the moment any step of that kind was taken. He was glad to find that the Government were going to bring in a Bill for the inscription of stock, and such a Bill would probably meet with no opposition. Then there was the question of the Transcontinental Railway. As far as one could judge, it appeared that they were really going to have a definite proposition submitted to them on that subject. He hoped so. It occupied a prominent place in the Speech, and as the agreement had been laid on the table of the House, he supposed they might look in course of time for a Bill. He supposed the matter would be definitely brought forward by the Government some time during the session, probably early.

The PREMIER: To-morrow, if I can.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was very glad to hear it, and as there would be an early opportunity of discussing the question, he did not want to make two speeches upon it. He would just say one word with reference to America. The hon. member for Mackay had said that the circumstances of Queensland and America were very different. That was true. There land was utterly valueless until a railway went through it; here the land was by no means valueless until a railway went through it. The same hon. member said he did not fear the formation of rings. Did the hon. member know what rings were doing in Queensland at the present time? He did not think he did, but he would assure him that a great many people were beginning to open their eyes at the footing the rings had already got in the colony. They were already a source of serious danger. He knew he was speaking to deaf ears, although he was certain that many on the Government side of the House knew better than he did the force of what he was saying. Although he was talking to deaf ears, he would assure them that the eyes of Australia were getting opened to the fact that the American system of rings had already got a very firm footing in Queensland. He regarded the system of rings as one of the most dangerous things possible.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (the Hon. A. Archer): Give us an instance of one.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he gave the Colonial Treasurer credit for the most perfect sincerity, and he believed the hon. gentleman, in his innocence, had not the slightest notion of what was going on under his eyes. But about three-fourths of the people of the colony knew perfectly well that such things were. One might give a list of names that could be counted on the fingers of one's two hands, and it would be curious to see how many rings they were members of. It was not necessary to define a ring.

The PREMIER: What is a syndicate?

Mr. GRIFFITH said the best definition he had heard of a syndicate was, an association of gentlemen formed for the purpose of making a large fortune in a short time on a very small amount of money. He hoped that the Colonial Treasurer would retain to the end that freedom from complicity in anything like rings. He was glad that hon. members would soon have serious business to deal with, and hoped it would be dealt with fairly, and that they would all be guided, as was stated in the Speech, "by a desire for the happiness and prosperity of the people of Queensland." He hoped that all would set to work in that spirit, and that it would not be necessary for any hon. members to lose their tempers, or for the Premier to call, in Parliament as he had already done outside, the party who occupied the Opposition benches a set of wretched creatures.

The PREMIER: I distinctly deny that; I never used such an expression in my life.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that unfortunately the hon. gentleman had been so reported. However, he hoped that the hon. gentleman, in his zeal for matters in which he had taken so warm an interest, would not be carried away to use such expressions. Hon. members would then no doubt get on all the better. It would not be necessary for him to occupy the time of the House further, since the hon. gentleman had assured hon. members that they would have an opportunity immediately of discussing matters which were at the present time of most urgent importance. When the time came those matters would no doubt be very fully discussed.

The PREMIER said he was sorry that the hon. gentleman should have concluded his laboured speech by telling the House that he (the Premier) had at any time used towards the Opposition such an expression as that they were a set of wretched creatures. He was told that there was a report in some newspaper where that expression occurred, but he had never used it nor any term like it. It was probable that he was speaking quickly and excitedly at the time, and had referred to the fact that the men who had now combined with the members of the present Opposition had often called those with whom they were now combined wretches. That was the only matter of the kind he had referred to, and he was quite sure that the great majority of the hon. members of the Opposition would acquit him of ever having used an expression so ungentlemanly and so different from what he felt. He had always treated the Opposition with respect, and felt respect for them. He had listened to their arguments and answered their arguments; he took a delight in doing so while in the House. He repudiated the assertion that he had used such an indecent expression, and felt sorry that the leader of the Opposition should bring up a matter of that sort, as the hon. gentleman might have seen at once that it was a misreport. He had not contradicted it before for the simple

reason that he did not read it till a fortnight after, as it was only on Sunday last that he read the report of his speech at Roma. He was not in the habit of reading or correcting his speeches for the Press after they were delivered. He had to compliment the hon. member for Mackay upon the way in which he had moved the adoption of the Address. It had been the custom to bring forward an inexperienced member for that duty; but at the present time there was no member sitting in the House for the first time, with the exception of his hon. and learned colleague the Attorney-General, and for reasons which would be apparent to the Opposition he (the Premier) had not asked that hon. gentleman to move the Address. He had, therefore, asked an able man to do it, and that hon. member had taken advantage of his position to make the best case he possibly could for himself and for the sugar industry. The hon. member had made a good case and spoken out well, and he gave him every credit for doing so. He wished only to guard the House with regard to the fact that the matters to which the hon. member had referred were not the only matters nor the most important matters contained in the Speech. The hon. member also did perfectly right from his point of view in using his opportunity to lecture the Government; but, notwithstanding that lecture, the Government would be prepared to answer the charges he brought against them, charges which were not very grave ones after all. What the hon. member did say, however, did not prevent him from referring very heartily to the very able way in which the hon. member had brought those matters before the House. With regard to the speech of the leader of the Opposition, he had expected, from the laboured way in which the hon. gentleman commenced, that the House was going to have about three hours of charges against the Government. By all accounts they had been worse this year than in any year of the previous five. He did not know whether that was so, but the Opposition organs told them that they were. The charges, however, brought up by the hon. member were, after all, of the mildest possible description. The hon. gentleman said they did not bring the House together soon enough; they should have brought the House together early in the year. The hon. gentleman's ideas, however, were not very intelligible. If the House had been called together in January he doubted whether the hon. member would have been present, for he very seldom came except to manage his own point. He (the Premier) remembered distinctly that when taking the House into his confidence just before the end of last session, as he had a right to do and was in the habit of doing, he assured hon. members that he should endeavour to meet the House as early as possible in the year consistently with being able to put the position of the colony before hon. members. There were a good many reasons in favour of meeting early in the year, and there were reasons equally strong for not meeting until the present date. As a matter of principle he had never been committed either way, but it was a very sound thing to bring the House together at the present time because the Ministry could then state the exact position of the colony. The financial year would end at the end of the present week, and it was most important that the Ministry should be able to state exactly what had occurred and show the result of their own operations. That was one great advantage. In order to enable the Treasurer to make his Financial Statement he must have facts to deal with, and they could not be got much earlier than the latter end of June. That argument could never be got over in considering the time at which the House should meet. There were other advantages to be gained in

meeting the House at the present time. The Government had given the hon. gentleman an opportunity to do what he had been struggling to do for so many years—consolidate a party to get into power. What had the hon. member not gained by his (the Premier's) action in giving the hon. gentleman his fling and full opportunity and time to mature his plans? Was he not grateful for the time given to him? Look at what the Opposition had done during the last two or three months with the help of money got by a bigger syndicate than the one for which he (the Premier) was blamed for introducing into the colony. It was only astonishing to find the almost humble way in which the Government were met, in the place of the vote of want of confidence which had been so blatantly flourished in their faces by the newspapers of the Opposition for so many weeks past, and by which they were to be turned out.

Mr. STUBLEY: There is time yet.

The PREMIER said no doubt the hon. member for Charters Towers would like to move a vote of want of confidence, but if he did so hon. members would probably see the hon. member himself on one side of the House and everybody else on the other. That was one great advantage resulting from meeting at the present date; he would tell hon. members another. Most important matters were before the Government early in the month. There were the Coolie Regulations, which he was determined to mature in such a way as to put them before the House. There was also the annexation of New Guinea, with regard to which he might say, without depreciating the leader of the Opposition, that had that hon. gentleman been in power, or had the House been sitting, and had the hon. gentleman seen an opportunity to damage the Government, he would certainly have weakened the hands of the Government in the course which they adopted. The Government in the action they had taken had, he thought, deserved considerable credit, and that credit they could only have got in the absence of the Opposition party. He thoroughly believed that the leader of the Opposition would condemn the action that the Government took, and that the party at home who were opposed to it—a party who, he was sorry, predominated in the British Parliament at the present time—would have taken such action as would have made the action of Queensland ineffective. He believed that, by the action the Government had taken, New Guinea would form part, as the Administrator of the Government had said that day, of the Australian nation. They had succeeded in doing that, and he believed it was a happy result that they were able to do it when Parliament was not in session. He now came to another act of so-called mal-administration on the part of the Government. He meant the lawsuits initiated by the hon. member, who said he actually forced the Government to go back from their policy, and change the system on which they had acted before. But the hon. member took credit that did not belong to him. When he flattered himself that it was those lawsuits which made the Government change their policy, and made the rates of postage by other routes the same as that by Torres Straits, he took credit which he did not deserve; and for this reason: Long before the Government knew that the hon. member had any intention of taking action they had decided to assimilate the charges at the end of the year. They did so, irrespective of what the hon. member had done with his low pettifogging suits. He (the Premier) knew perfectly well the position of the matter. The advice of the present Attorney-General had a great deal to do

with the change, as well as his (the Premier's) admissions to the House. He said last year that he was doubtful whether the course taken by the Government in making differential rates in the postage of the colony could be maintained by law. He had not the slightest doubt about the rights of the case. He was perfectly satisfied of their right to make differential rates, and they stuck to those rates until they accomplished their object—namely, the establishment of a mail service. The law was in an anomalous position, and he thought that if the hon. member had brought his cases into court it was very likely that the Government would have been beaten. He (the Premier) was therefore prudent. He had accomplished everything required to be done. The policy assimilating the rates at the end of the year was, he had said, agreed to in the Cabinet months before the hon. member brought his action. The position of the law was this: England actually had the power of sending a letter to any party in Brisbane by any route that it liked, and to make the colony pay whatever charges there might be on that letter, and the colony was bound to deliver it without recovering the charges. Of course anyone could see that that was a most unjust law and that he was perfectly justified in not accepting it as long as he could. The law was made for a perfectly different position to the present one. It was made for a much simpler kind of postal arrangements than had long been reached in the colony, where there were four different mail routes. The whole matter was now in a nutshell. The colony subsidised a company by paying £55,000 a year to carry its mail-matter between Brisbane and England: the company got paid for that and did not require to get any more. The more postage money the colony got both in Queensland and in Brisbane was a clean deduction from that amount, and if they managed to get postage to the amount of £55,000 they actually cleared themselves. It was the object of the colony, therefore, to get as large an amount of mail-matter as would pay for the service. Having made an arrangement of that kind, would it not be suicidal to invite Great Britain and the people of the colony to send their letters by other routes? It was the business of the Government to encourage its own mail service, and the only practical way of doing that was by differential rates. That had been the cause of the fight with Great Britain. Of course Great Britain did not want to be inconvenienced with differential rates; but the Government had stood out, had fairly established their mail service, and the colony was the gainer. He would give the hon. member all the credit he had got for those miserable lawsuits. The next charge brought against the Government was that of having subsidised falsehood. But referring to that, and to show where the subsidising existed, he might state that a friend had, a short time ago, put into his hand a paper, in which there was a paragraph to the following effect—it was from one of the best papers in the colony—the *Daily Observer* of June 20:—

"Who finds the money? We ask this question in consequence of an offer made a few days ago by a paper in the interests of the Opposition to furnish gratis"—

He might say that it was an extract from the *Daily Herald* copied into the *Observer*—

"to furnish us gratis with a supply of supplements containing Mr. A. Forbes' letter on the Transcontinental Railway scheme, with a leader from the *Melbourne Age* on the same subject. We were requested to forward copy of our heading and date of issue in time for our next ensuing number. This would lead anyone to suppose that the publication was issued from our office, and that we gave countenance to the Opposition. It would have given rise to the idea that we had 'turned round' and agreed in condemning that which we have hitherto con-

sistently supported. Such is not our system of procedure. We believe in land-grant railways as being the most practicable; and we also believe that the proposed 'Transcontinental,' with some modifications, will be the best scheme that can be adopted for the benefit of the colony, Archibald and the *Melbourne Age* notwithstanding."

Let hon. members look at that transaction. The *Telegraph*, a paper in the interests of the Opposition, found money sufficient, perhaps through a syndicate, to publish all that rubbish in a supplement and send out issues to papers which generally supported the Government. But the *Dalby Herald* repudiated such a thing. They printed their own matter, and they would not put matter before their constituents in the way proposed. The proposal was what he called subsidised falsehood, and a better example of it he could not mention. He would go a little further. Pamphlets had been issued in a way to make the Liberal party contemplate the expense. They had gone to the expense of issuing pamphlets throughout the colony. By what machinery was that done? The pamphlet itself had been written by a gentleman who occupied a certain position in a stock and station agency office in Brisbane. He was a clerk there, and he mentioned the fact simply to let them understand the kind of reasoning that would go through a pamphlet of that sort. The pamphlet was written in the interests of that firm and in violent opposition to the Government. It had been distributed in thousands, in tens of thousands, and in hundreds of thousands. It had been sent to every place in the colony, and wherever Cobb's coach could take it, and it was in parcels of thousands unopened at several stations along the railways and mail coach lines. It had been handed to every little boy who could read in the streets. Who found that money? Was not that a bit of subsidised falsehood? A more outrageous travesty of truth he had never read than the alleged facts put forward in that pamphlet. It was written in the interests of a certain number of landed proprietors in the colony who objected to land-grant railways, and they used the machinery of the Liberal party to distribute them. They used Mr. Bulcock, who was an immense power in the Liberal party in Brisbane, and certainly deserved to be raised to a higher sphere whenever the Opposition had a chance to do so. He had been the medium for the circulation of that pamphlet throughout the colony. Did the hon. member think that they were going to admit of any such subsidised falsehood when his Government came into power? He would find that the people would come to their senses, and would find out the truth, in spite of any amount of money spent to circulate those pamphlets throughout the colony. He thought that the leader of the Opposition had been very mild in the charges he had made against him, and that the few remarks he had made in retaliation showed a little deeper depth of wickedness on the other side when they chose to look into their inner consciousness. The hon. gentleman had given him a little meed of praise when he came to the question of New Guinea; in fact, he said that it was just the sort of thing which he would have been likely to do himself. Now, he did not think that if the hon. gentleman had been Premier for ten years he would have annexed New Guinea. He believed that he would not have done it at all unless he was pushed on by the tail behind him, who might urge him to do it, and who would swear that they would turn him out if he did not do it. That kind of approval was very like the approval he had given all along to the policy of the Government. He remembered that when he brought forward the three-million loan the hon. member sat there night after night obstructing that proposal, on the ground that it was for

main lines of railway and for the purpose of making railways out into the squatting districts. That was the principle at stake. In the middle of the obstruction the leader of the Opposition came to his house and tried to make a compromise with him. The compromise he wished to make was that he (the Premier) should agree to a reduction in the amount he had put down on the Estimates for the making of railways into the interior of the colony, but the hon. member could urge nothing in favour of such a compromise. The question came on, and he opposed it right through on the ground that the money should be taken from those railways and put into branch lines. That was the cry at the time. They found afterwards, however, that in 1878 the hon. member claimed, and he believed it was correct, that he himself had advised his Premier and colleague, the Hon. John Douglas, to propose a loan of £5,000,000. They would remember that in 1878 the vote of want of confidence he brought against the Government was that they did not spend sufficient money in carrying out the railway projects of the colony, and his proposition, which they took as a vote of want of confidence, was that they should spend £3,000,000. If the hon. member had admitted at the time that that policy was right, or that he differed from his chief, they might have excused him; but to come forward now, after having opposed his motion, and claim that he thought £3,000,000 was not enough, and actually proposed £5,000,000—well, he could not say it was political treachery, but it approached as closely to it as anything he knew. How could the hon. member say that he thought that was the best policy, when they knew that he actually brought a man who had got his leg broken, and who came into the House on crutches, to vote against the proposal when it came to a division, knowing, as he did, that the then Opposition had a man away, and the motion was only defeated by one. That was in 1878. And what did he say now? Why, that they should have brought Parliament together because they were a defeated Ministry; because on the Warrego Railway Bill they carried the second reading only by a majority of two. He wanted to come to closer quarters with the hon. member. With regard to the position of parties at that time, it had been said by the hon. member for North Brisbane, the leader of the Opposition, outside that House—though he modified it that night by saying that he might not have done it directly, although it might have been done indirectly—that there were men on the Government side of the House who had been encouraged to believe that if they voted for that measure, in order to carry the Bill through the second reading, it would go no further.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER said he gave that statement the most unqualified denial. Further, he challenged any member on the other side of the House to say that he gave any member any encouragement to do anything of the sort. He knew perfectly well the members of the House who voted for the second reading. He knew perfectly well, too, that if he carried that measure into Committee it would be the wreck of the Government; but he was perfectly prepared to accept the position. Instead of giving the slightest encouragement of that kind to vote for the second reading, on the understanding that he would withdraw it in committee, he brought it forward in committee at once, and he was always prepared to accept whatever position the House might put him in with regard to it; and he challenged any hon. member to come forward—and he knew they were hon.

ourable men behind him—and say that he had given any such encouragement. He had been asked to give them a little encouragement; but he had not yielded one bit, and he was always prepared to accept a dissolution. How did the dissolution not come about? If the hon. member had had any notion of looking into the principles by which parties were guided, and into the characters of men, he would have seen at once that his business was to assist the Government to a certain extent in putting through that Bill. He (the Premier) had brought the Bill forward in committee. The Opposition spent the whole night in the most ridiculous talk he had ever heard, on the motion that the preamble be postponed. No encouragement was given, but threats were held out by members under the encouragement of the leader of the Opposition, that they would sit a month before the Bill got through. His position then was plain. There were many followers of the Government who were bound to go from Brisbane and pursue their avocations elsewhere; and he had given a pledge, as far as it was possible for him to do, to close the session within a certain time. That obstruction would also have stopped the bringing forward of other useful acts of legislation which had been laid on the table. He had adopted the principle of opposing the hon. member all through; he had never yielded to obstruction, and he would not do so. He defeated it there and then; and that was where the sore point came in. The hon. member had expressed his dissatisfaction at the way in which immigration to the colony had been conducted. He had said, “No doubt a spurt of immigration had taken place during the last twelve months.” If he had been fair he would have characterised it by some better term. The machinery at their disposal had been employed by the Government in getting the best class of men out to the colony, and their efforts had been successful. Until lately the greatest difficulty was experienced in filling ships with immigrants, half of whom did not remain in the colony; but now the applications were some thousands in advance of what they could bring out. That was owing to the vigorous action of the Government. Nothing had given him greater cause of uneasiness than that subject. He knew how quickly the members of the Opposition and the parties who supported them would turn round on the Government if the slightest check in trade should leave some portion of their immigrants without employment. He had to consider the capabilities of the colony for receiving immigrants. He thought they had gone as far as they should do in bringing immigrants here; they could not have gone further without danger. They were getting the immigrants also at a low cost. The steps the Government had taken would result in getting them not only at a low cost, but in getting a large body of immigrants who paid their own passages hither. He saw that the seeds had been sown in England and efforts were being made in that direction, and he was sure the Government could not be blamed for anything they had done for immigration. The hon. member should look at the real cause of its success. It was not entirely owing to the lecturers. They were very good, and he (the Premier) gave every credit to those gentlemen who were bringing forward the colony and its capabilities into notice; but other measures had been adopted by the Government. No measure contributed more to immigration than the Mail Service, which the hon. member, in a few mean words, had tried to traduce, although it was a success. When it was brought forward the Opposition laughed at the idea of its being an immigration service, and of immigrants coming by it, but they now saw them coming by every mail

steamer. The hon. member sneered and said the company would not bring immigrants unless at a profit, but what an idea was it that people in business should not make a profit? Because the mail company made a profit, they made a success of their business. He had expected from the hon. member, in criticising the speech of the hon. member for Mackay, that he would have entered more enthusiastically and have gone deeply into the subject of coolie immigration than he had done. He had not thrown much light on it. He (the Premier) believed the hon. gentleman had made a speech on which he could hedge on a future occasion. He had been elaborate in his efforts to satisfy them that he never had been in favour of Chinese in the colony. Well, he had read the hon. member's speech at Roma, and he did not see that he had said much for it there, but he would ask the hon. member why he ever mentioned it at all? Why, he told the people at Roma that the Chinese were less objectionable than coolies! It was done in a quiet way certainly, but why? It was thrown out as a feeler to see if he could provide a substitute for what he saw to be a necessity—coloured labour for sugar-growing. If the bait had been taken—if he had not been caught by his own people in the papers—he would have jumped at the chance. But he came to Brisbane and said that in advocating Chinese—

Mr. GRIFFITH: I did not advocate Chinese labour at Roma.

The PREMIER said that what the hon. gentleman said at Roma, when advocating Chinese labour, was that they were much more easily got rid of than coolies, and that it was by the patriotic action taken by himself and *confères* in 1876 that they could do it. Did anyone think that a reason? He (the Premier) took it as a feeler, as it was apparently, with the object of seeing whether Chinese would suit; but they did not. How could Chinese immigration be better regulated than coolie labour? The Chinese labour could be regulated at once by passing an Act preventing them from coming. They need not say only one Chinaman can come for each 50 tons in a ship, or go to the trouble of setting a £100 poll-tax on them; still that would require an Act of Parliament; but coolies could be prevented easier. It was simply for the Government of the day to dismiss the protector of the coolies on behalf of the British-India Government, and to intimate to that Government that they had done so, and the immigration was stopped at once. Why raise the bogie about invasion? The Indian Government were not anxious that the coolies should come to the colony. They did not try to force them upon the colony; but they said that as those men differed in their habits from Europeans here, they must see that they were duly protected by law. Now, the hon. gentleman had told them that in no other country were such things known as regulations. But what were the Factory Acts in England? What was the best of the Liberal legislation in England during the last twenty years but the action of Parliament to defend the rights of labour in cases where the people were unable to protect themselves? What were the Mining Regulations, if not to protect a race of men who could not, or who were unable, or who were supposed not to be able, to protect themselves? The hypocrisy of the hon. gentleman, in pretending that he believed in the employment of Chinamen and of kanakas, but not of coolies—what was the cause of it? Simply because he (the Premier) had proposed the introduction of coolies as a solution of the black labour question. If the hon. gentleman had been in his place he would have proposed such a scheme

himself. The hon. gentleman had been looking around him. His trip to Mackay was not simply to accept the invitation and kindly hospitality of the hon. member (Mr. Black), but he thought that it was perfectly possible that he might be able to make converts among the sugar-planters and so obtain a majority in the House. But he did not do it, and simply became a part of Billy Brookes' tail after all. He took it to be a pitiable sight what the hon. gentleman had made of the Coolie question. Let them look at the speeches which the hon. gentleman made in the North last year. He then told his listeners that if the industry required it he would not see the industry put back for want of coolies, but they must come in under proper regulations; but what did he now say? Why, that, though he had said that, he had since reconsidered the question, and had come to the conclusion that they could not make any such regulations. Why had he not told them his mind two years ago? He had been thinking over the subject for the last fourteen years, and had gyrated fifty times since he (the Premier) had known him. The hon. gentleman would no doubt say, when he got the power, that it was perfectly easy to make proper regulations—that McIlwraith was not clever enough to see that, but that he was cleverer, and would enable the coolies to stop only as long as he chose. The hon. gentleman ridiculed the correspondence that had taken place between the Queensland Government and the Government of India. He (the Premier) thought very highly of the correspondence, and was proud of it, although the hon. gentleman opposite had tried to make a point out of a supposed mistake in the date of a letter. His (the Premier's) position in regard to the Coolie question was a plain one, and had been before the country and before the House for years. He had spoken of it numbers of times in the House, and he challenged the hon. gentleman to say that he had gone back on the principles which he had enunciated there. He had explained to the House that he had always done all he could to keep Queensland a white colony, to make it a home for their fellow-countrymen, or, if they could not be got, for other Europeans. That had been his policy all through, and he had been against allowing an influx of Chinese or any other inferior race to come in and bid with the white man in the ordinary avocations of life. He gave the hon. member for North Brisbane his support in the Bill he brought in in 1877. He said as followed while the Bill was under discussion. He did not intend to read the whole of the speech unless the hon. gentleman desired it. He quoted from *Hansard*, vol. 23, page 252, when the Bill in question was on for second reading:—

"Mr. McILWRAITH said that from the mild way in which the subject was introduced in the Governor's Speech during the present Session—'My Ministers consider that it is necessary to watch this immigration very closely,' and from the fact that they had nothing before them at the present time but the Bill that was discussed last session, he was afraid that the serious difficulty connected with Chinese immigration was likely to be overlooked."

Was not that a speech of a man who did not believe in Chinese immigration, though he supported it at the time?

Mr. GRIFFITH: Yet you voted against the Bill.

The PREMIER: Wait a bit. He (the Premier) saw on that occasion that the hon. member was going to shunt the question, which was one of those peculiar questions for keeping the Liberal party in popularity, but which they afterwards shirked in practice. For years the repeal of the Polynesian Act was promised, but the question

was always shirked. The cry was down with the kanaka with the Ministry with which the hon. gentleman was connected, but they would never do it. They brought in four Bills to regulate kanaka labour in the interests of the settlers, but none of them were passed, and at last he put them to a test by which it should be seen whether the labour was to be stopped or not; and the Bill was never brought forward after that. He said that if they really meant to do away with the kanaka labour they ought, in common honesty, to let the planters know it at once, and if they fixed a day he would support them. But when the amendments with that view were proposed, the Bill was swamped. That would show the action he had taken on the Coolie question. And now about the Chinese. He went on to say, in the speech from which he had already quoted:—

"It was a relief to him, therefore, to hear from the Premier that evening that it was intended to introduce legislation which would put a stop to Chinese immigration on its present scale; and he was also glad to hear the statement made by the leader of the Opposition in reference to the facilities given to such legislation in India by the British Government, as it suggested a remedy which might be quite practicable in this colony. It appeared that white servants were only introduced into India on the guarantee that if they did not become good citizens the introducer would be obliged to pay their passage back to the country from which they came. That he thought would be a remedy, and he hoped the Government would give it their serious consideration when framing the other Bill. He held different opinions on the subject from many hon. members on his side of the House."

He was then speaking from the Opposition Benches, and most of the members there were in favour of that description of immigration, though he was against it—

"and in regard to the Bill before them, although the hon. Attorney-General said it was almost the same Bill that was passed last Session, he thought that nearly all the objectionable features of that Bill had been omitted."

Those were the principles which were in the Bill of last year, and that Bill was carried. He was surprised at the hon. gentleman questioning his opinions on the matter, as he had said the same thing in a dozen other speeches and at greater length. The hon. gentleman said he had opposed the duty on rice in the interests of Chinamen, but he opposed it in the interests of his countrymen and would do so again now. The fact of the matter was that at some future time he could take credit to himself before his constituents by saying that in 1877 he proposed a protective duty on rice in favour of excluding Chinamen. The principles he (the Premier) had enunciated with regard to black labour were quite different from those of the hon. member. He did not believe any more than the hon. member did in the idea that there was the slightest chance of the free institutions of the colony being endangered. Even if coolies were admitted the white population would increase, and where was the danger? From what part of the history of the British Empire did the hon. member gather his information? The hon. member referred to Jamaica, and he would also refer to Jamaica. He had lately read the speech of a very liberal member of the House of Commons, who said that the free institutions of Jamaica were taken away on account of her bad conduct ten years ago; that since then they had been importing coolies regularly, and that members of the English Parliament had been agitating, with the greatest prospect of success, in favour of those free institutions being given back to the colony. That was a fact which the hon. member should try to digest. He was not afraid of free institutions being endangered in the colony by the introduction of coolies; he was

more afraid of their being endangered by the only remedy proposed by the hon. member for North Brisbane—flooding the colony with cheap European labour—a remedy of which he would be one of the most determined opponents. That was not a solution of the question at all. If the hon. member brought in Continental labour until the sugar-growers in the colony came into competition with those of other countries it would be a miserable position for the working men of the colony. The hon. member would have cheap white labour, but he (the Premier) could rouse the whole of the working men of Brisbane against such a proposal as would provide white labour for sugar plantations. A more outrageous idea was never proposed. The hon. member knew well that every liberal mind in the colony would revolt at the idea of flooding the market with cheap labour, and reducing the present rate of wages. In spite of what the hon. member said, he could contemplate a country, and he saw it before him in Queensland, whose prosperity depended on the two races working side by side. The white population would be in a better position, with better employment, and earning better wages, while people of a different race were working on the plantations. If the thing was bad in principle, why not do away with kanaka labour? He had no doubt that the coolie was far better than the kanaka. He had been accused by a Melbourne paper—one of those papers the Liberal party thought worth while to disseminate amongst the squatters—of having allowed abuses to exist without investigation. He admitted that the trade was not advisable, and that if they could get a better class of labour they ought to do away with the kanaka trade. Abuses could not possibly take place in the coolie trade, and they knew that the men would be treated in a humane and Christian-like way. They would be defended in India, and they would be defended in the colony by humane administration; and what better could they have? To come back to the point he was trying to impress on the House: the position of the working man would unquestionably be better by having coolies on the plantations, and unless there was a black population for the sugar plantations much of the necessary work could not be carried out. Millions of acres of land had been taken up on the faith of some such system being established. Let them look at the vast number of workmen dependent on the sugar plantations—were those men to be thrown out of employment? When they came to see the result of the principle enunciated by the hon. member for North Brisbane, they would come to the conclusion that the two races could work side by side and thrive, but he did not say that the races should mix—that was a principle he had always opposed. For the last fifty years legislation in England had tended to improve the position of the working man. He had been encouraged to live in a better house, to read books, to enjoy music, to work shorter hours, and to give more of his time to mental culture. All that meant less labour and more money. They had encouraged the working man therefore to live up to a certain standard, and was he to be brought to the colony and told, “Unless you can compete with a Chinaman and live on the wages he earns and the fare he lives on, you must go to the wall”? That was a position of matters which members on his side of the House would never stand, and he did not think it would be seriously advocated by any honest man in the colony. It was opposed to all honest principle to get up electioneering cries against the only labour that would keep the sugar industry in its present prosperous state, knowing at the same time that they could not provide a remedy and had not the slightest intention

of doing so. The progress made in railway construction had pleased neither the hon. member for North Brisbane nor the hon. member for Mackay; but he supposed nothing would please the hon. member for Mackay but a railway from Mackay to somewhere else. All he could say was that very material progress had been made in railway extensions, and that greater efforts had been made during the past year than in any year before in Queensland. A great deal of work had been done, as could be seen from the amount of money spent. A great outcry had been raised on the matter, but they knew what it was—every district wanted to have a railway made at the same time. If they had put on all the surveyors in the colony on the different lines of railway they could not have got them ready in time to suit everybody. They had done their best to satisfy the wants of the colony during the time they had been administering the railways, and especially during last year. The hon. gentleman characterised the Railway Department as being the worst managed department in the world. That might be the case, but, if so, the seeds of it were sown by that hon. gentleman. He (the Premier) believed and knew it to be a badly managed department, but so long as railways were in the hands of the Government it always would be a badly managed department. He did not believe in railways being in the hands of Government, and had never advocated that principle; but he did not think the Railway Department was worse managed than any other department of the Public Service. At all events, the Government had made every effort to reform the service as far as they could. They had taken a very different course from that followed by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles). When that hon. member was Minister for Works he went to Gympie and told the people there that three-fourths of the Civil servants, including the whole of the Railway officials, were useless and not wanted, and then when he made up his next Estimates he increased the number of the Civil servants and raised their salaries. That hon. member put some of the worst men into the Public Service who ever got there. At all events he increased their number, after having declared that the greater part of them were not wanted.

Mr. MILES: No, no!

The PREMIER said the hon. member had only to compare the Estimates when he was Minister for Works with those of the previous year, and he would find that every word that he had said was thoroughly justified. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) expressed a desire that the memoranda connected with the postal conference at Sydney should be laid on the table. That document was not printed yet, having only been received a short time ago, but it would be laid on the table as early as possible, when, perhaps, the hon. gentleman would give some reasons why Queensland should join the postal union. The Government objected to it, and he was prepared to give very weighty reasons for those objections; at the same time he was quite prepared to listen to the opposite arguments of the hon. gentleman. He (the Premier) was not carried away by the clap-trap that that union was such a splendid thing, and that by it they would get their letters a great deal cheaper and by more routes. All he knew was that the terms on which they were to join the union would have resulted in a loss to the colony of £10,000 a year, without any additional facilities, and they were not prepared to make that sacrifice for the sole honour of belonging to the postal union. He confessed himself unable to understand the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition

that letters should find their natural channel. He knew that letters generally went on the route provided for them by the Government, and the best routes took the most letters. If the hon. gentleman could point out a natural channel for letters from Queensland home he had not done it, for up to the present time he had not thrown a scintilla of light upon the matter. The Government had established what they believed to be a thoroughly good mail service, and the service was constantly improving. They were landing letters in Brisbane by that service as early as by the P. and O. Company's steamers, and much earlier at all the Northern ports; and they had alternative routes in the southern colonies for which they paid very handsomely. If the Government had not a service of their own they would be at the mercy of the other colonies, and the quality of the service in the other colonies was greatly due to the way in which Queensland had shown her independence and made a mail line for herself. The hon. gentleman fought shy of a subject which he said he was glad to find that he (the Premier) did not intend to fight shy of—that was the system of land-grant railways; but he would follow the hon. gentleman's example and not carry the debate much further. That question would form the first business to be brought before the House next to the Bill to which they were pledged for inscribing stock in London. That Bill would of course go through as a matter of form. They were committed to it; they fully understood its principle, and possibly it would have the effect of getting a better price for their loan than otherwise. At all events the Government were committed to it, and it would be submitted to the House at once; and then they would have the Transcontinental Railway Bill; and when that was carried they would have the Warrego Railway Bill; and by the time they had got through those measures they would know a great deal more about rings than the hon. gentleman had chosen to tell them. He should have a good deal to say about those rings, and hoped to be able to show that the Government of the country was not going to be made up of a cabal consisting of men who enjoyed the biggest monopoly in its way that ever existed in any country along with men who had been abusing them ever since they entered political life. When he saw men like Mr. Wienholt cheek-by-jowl with the hon. member for North Brisbane, and remembered the time when that hon. member used to take a big sheet of paper on which he sketched two dummy selections, pointing to that man as a very cormorant who would not even put a small humpy on a 10,000-acre selection, but built the kitchen on one and the bedrooms on the other to perform the conditions of both selections—when he remembered such things, which occurred session after session, he could not but wonder.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That was not Mr. Wienholt.

The PREMIER: Did the hon. gentleman think for a moment that the country was going to be governed on principles of that sort? Did he think he had only to make a sufficient number of men on his (the Premier's) side agree with him just now, and that the country was not to understand how the agreement had been brought about? Did he fancy that he (the Premier) would not expose the principle on which that agreement was based? Did he think that he would not have a great deal to say about the terms of the bargain, and see that the country had not to pay something very unequal for it? The hon. gentleman must not consider that all political principle had gone from the country. He could find a powerful

political party who did act on principle, and who would take care that the colony was not handed over to the keeping of rich monopolists. The hon. gentleman had gone throughout the country saying that the Government ought to be conducted on better principles, and that they ought not to abuse him so much. He should like to know who had been so much abused as himself (the Premier) from the machinations of the hon. member for Brisbane. He did not want to abuse the hon. gentleman, but he could assure him that he would hear a great deal more about those rings before he went much further—something that would be both amusing and instructive to the hon. gentleman when he heard it from his friends. He was astonished at the hon. gentleman daring to bring the matter of rings before the House at all. There were rings that had helped to bring that town into a worse state than it ought legitimately to be in. The rings which had been formed in Brisbane for the purpose of forcing up the price of land—about which some hon. members on the Opposition side of the House knew so much—were the most abominable institutions in the country, and would be the cause of a great deal of suffering during the next few months. The hon. gentleman, in speaking of land-grant railways, mentioned Canada, and he should also have a great deal to say about Canada, and he should be able to bring the strongest reasons forward for the adoption of their policy of land-grant railways. The hon. gentleman said that in Canada the land was rich enough, but there were no means of communication, and he used that as an argument why land-grant railways should exist there; but did not any child who had learned the meaning of the word geography in a common school know that there was no country in the world in which there were fewer natural means of communication than in Australia. There were no large rivers or other natural means of communication, and yet what he had just stated was the only argument the hon. gentleman found to bring forward. Land-grant railways had been a grand success in America, and the principle was not to be put down by hon. members shouting out "syndicate" and "ring." They had been a grand success, and he would ask any man who looked at a map of America and saw the line which divided Canada from the United States, and saw how thickly the United States was dotted over with towns and villages and cities, and what a wilderness existed on the Canadian side, he would ask him to give a better reason than he was about to give for the fact that on one side of the dividing line was the United States with a population of 55,000,000, and on the other side a country with a population of 5,000,000. He could give the reason. It was well known that the Hudson's Bay Company—a big land monopoly—existed for 230 years, and people had been told until about twelve years ago, when the monopoly was abolished, that the country contained nothing; that it would be a most dangerous experiment for a man who wanted to get information, like Archibald Forbes, to traverse the country and write about it; that it was, in fact, fit for nothing but to furnish skins of the wild animals it contained. That monopoly was knocked on the head and the territory of the company was made a portion of Canada, he believed, speaking from memory, twelve years ago. The result of the adoption of land-grant railways had been that the population had doubled in that time, and the people of the country were trying to come close to their neighbours on the other side of the dividing line. Was there not something similar in this colony? Here also there was a certain

monopoly, and it was necessary to provide some means for settling a population throughout the length and breadth of the land. That was the work which land-grant railways were to do, and they were not to be put down by abuse and by saying that the men who advocated them were scoundrels suborned by rich syndicates in London. He could stand all that. There was no man could say that he had ever for years past shirked the task of bringing the principle prominently before the country in spite of abuse. It had not the slightest effect upon him, and he should continue to give reasons why the construction of land-grant railways should be gone on with. That was some of their first work, and he believed that before he was done hon. members would admit that, whatever might be the faults of the Government, they had, at all events, used their very best effort to put forward a principle which would be found to be one of the best working principles possible for populating the country. He had done his very best to put the principle before the country, and whether he lost office by it or not was a matter of very little consideration to himself or his colleagues. He would not, however, say that that was not a consideration to those who were trying to put the Government out; but the Government would be just as satisfied to carry the principle on the opposite side of the House as though they were in office. They might have just as much power then, perhaps even more than now; and he should live to see the day when the leader of the Opposition would repent that speech in which he went against the principle of land-grant railways altogether, because he would be forced to adopt it, and would perhaps be a subordinate in the Ministry which carried it. The matter would possibly go to the country, and in any case the discussion that must take place would throw a great deal of light upon the subject—not the light, dim and murky, that had been endeavoured to be thrown upon it by those gratuitous supplements that were sent from newspapers in Brisbane and were paid for out of some extraordinary fund which the Liberal party had, perhaps unexpectedly, got hold of—but which was a big fund at all events. A better light than that would be obtained—the light which Parliament would be able to throw upon the subject by means of the debates in the House, and that would serve to show the people what any system of organized falsehood would fail to convince them of for any length of time.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that in rising to speak at that stage he wished it to be clearly understood that he was not seeking to place himself upon a political level with the hon. gentleman who had just resumed his seat. Had any of the former colleagues of the leader of the Opposition purposed to followed the hon. gentleman he should not be occupying the floor of the House at that stage, nor should he trouble the House with any lengthened observations, particularly after the Premier had promised to bring forward, within a few days, that question which would dwarf into insignificance all other questions that had occupied attention during the last twelve months. With regard to the Opening Speech, he cordially endorsed what had been said with regard to the feeling that prevailed throughout the length and breadth of the colony on the subject of the removal by death of the late highly esteemed Governor of the colony. He could not speak in terms of such cordial approbation of the following paragraph in the Speech. He might premise his remarks by saying that he had as great a dislike for cant, pure and simple, as any hon. member of the House, but he thought that nothing would have grated more upon the feelings of the late Sir Arthur Kennedy than to be

obliged to read a Speech in which hon. members were congratulated upon propitious seasons without some reference more or less direct being made to the Author of the propitious seasons in which the colony rejoiced, and which had conduced to the prosperity of the colony during the last twelve months. The omission, he thought, could hardly have occurred had the late Governor lived to occupy that position on the present occasion. With reference to the matters which had been touched upon by the hon. member for Mackay in the able address with which he had favoured the House, he noticed the same fault as had been referred to by the Premier when he commented upon the hon. member's observations. The hon. member's remarks seem to be tinged too strongly with mere localism. He could have wished the hon. member had traversed a wider area and brought forward arguments upon the general policy of the Government rather than expatiate at length upon the magnitude of the sugar industry and the indispensableness to the permanence of that industry of the continuance of coloured labour. The hon. member endeavoured to prove to the House that without a continuance of a large supply of coloured labour it was impossible for the sugar industry to be a success. The hon. gentleman said in effect that, in order to provide for the permanent prosperity of the sugar industry, it was necessary that it should remain on the same basis as at present. He (Mr. Rutledge) had, ever since he had had a seat in that House, inveighed against the position taken up by a large section of capitalists—that it was necessary the industry should remain on the present basis. He was glad that the leader of the Opposition had pointed out what was destined to be the true solution of the difficulty in connection with the question, when he spoke of having the land cut up into comparatively small areas and farmed by men who were proprietors in fee-simple, and who would get their cane crushed by contract. In that way they would bring about what had been tried most successfully in the southern parts of America, and the industry would be divided into its two legitimate branches. He had always maintained that the growing of sugar was a separate industry from the manufacture of sugar. Whereas now they had one man who brought capital to bear in the growth and manufacture of sugar, they would then have a system under which a number of comparatively poor people would participate in the general prosperity of the colony by the sugar industry, while the profits of capitalists who erected large and expensive machinery would not in any way be diminished. Until they returned to a system like that, prepared to follow the admirable example set in the Clarence River district, they would always have dissatisfaction, always have innumerable difficulties from which it was impossible to extricate themselves. And how would the thing work? At present there were a few men who had rich agricultural areas; some of them had borrowed largely on the security of their estates, and were comparatively at the mercy of the banks or large financiers. Suppose there came a commercial crisis—it might not arise from any fault of the Government, but from two or three unpropitious seasons—what would be the result? Those few large capitalists would be pinched and deprived of the facilities they at present possessed for working their estates; some of them would be obliged to suspend payment, and it did not require a vivid imagination to picture the results likely to follow. Large numbers of black and white workmen would be dismissed, and many people would be involved in ruin. But if they divided the responsibility and spread it over a much larger area; if there were 300 or 400

families on the sugar lands where half-a-dozen capitalists were settled—when a commercial crisis or a period of commercial depression came—two or three failures would not materially affect the general prosperity. Unless they had a system of that kind they would always be told about the necessity for coloured labour; they would always have the bogus held up to terrify unthinking people that they ought to allow the capitalist free play, and that the industry would never succeed without such labour. That was the alternative held up to them; but, as an Opposition, they declined to be forced to accept that alternative. The advocates of the system said that they must either have coloured labour or the industry would be destroyed. The Opposition repudiated the alternative. Hon. members on the Opposition side of the House were just as true conservators of the prosperity of the colony at large, and the sugar industry in particular, as those who put that alternative before them. The hon. member for Mackay had alluded to the objections to the introduction of Chinese. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not think anyone could look with more dislike on the proposal than hon. members on the Opposition side. The hon. member said that if Chinese were brought into the colony they would inevitably mix with the white population, and it would be impossible to avert the evils which those immigrants were certain to bring about. But then the hon. member said that if coolies were obtained the evils resulting from the introduction of Chinese would be avoided, because the coolies would be under such regulations as would prevent them from mixing with the white population. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not think it was necessary to repeat the arguments which the leader of the Opposition had already brought against that view. The hon. member (Mr. Black) had challenged the statement of the leader of the Opposition, to the effect that in the course of fifteen or twenty years, if they considered the present progress of the sugar industry, there would be a million coolies in the colony. But suppose they took a much more moderate view than that. They knew that the regulations were intended to affect the occupation and employment of coolies introduced into the colony. Supposing they succeeded in overcoming the objections of the Indian Government to the regulations which had been proposed, and of which they had signified their disapproval—suppose they allowed, for the sake of argument, that the Indian Government assented to the regulations as proposed by the Queensland Government, what then? If they took a much more moderate view than that taken by the leader of the Opposition, and say that in ten years a quarter of a million coolies came to the colony, they knew that by the regulations those coolies would be accompanied by their wives, and also by their children, if they had any. Even if they did not bring children, the probability was that in the course of ten years they would become parents of at least half-a-million children, who would be entirely outside the regulations; and if the coolies were willing to go on renewing their engagements from one five years to another, in the course of a decade or two there would be outside the regulations about half-a-million coolies in the colony. He wanted to know whether there was no force in an objection like that, even if there was no force in the other objections raised against the introduction of that class of labour. But they had men in the House who were convinced in their own minds, because their interest lay that way, that in order to carry on the sugar industry successfully there must be a continuance of the present system, by which a few men monopolised all, and he said that it was hopeless to expect to

bring round those gentlemen, whether inside or outside the House, to an opposite way of thinking. The hon. gentleman condemned in very strong terms, and he was supported by the Premier, the proposal to bring in what was called cheap white labour from the European states. It was assumed—and it might be noticed that there was a substratum of assumption underlying all the arguments of the advocates of coolie labour—it was assumed that if a white population were to be introduced into this colony it would necessarily be, and would continue to be, a cheap white population. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the persons coming to the colony from the southern states of Europe, and willing to engage in work similar to that in which they had been engaged in their own countries, and at a somewhat cheaper rate than the ordinary European labour, that they would be willing to serve for three or five years, they would not be likely to clash in any way with the European population already here, as they would be strangers to them in language, in laws, and in customs, and would have to acquire a certain similarity of feeling with the European labourers already here. If they could be induced during the term of their apprenticeship—for that was what it really would be during the short time they were under contract of service—to accept a lesser wage than the British workman could be induced to come to this colony for, he did not think that even then there would be any danger to the white men already here, or that it would be any great injustice to the white men induced to come to the colony on those terms. He was not prepared to accept it as an assumption, however, that those men would come as cheap labour. By assuming this—that they wanted cheap white labour here—the planters and advocates of coolie labour only showed their hand. It was tantamount to professing openly that unless the labour was cheap it was actually of no good to them. One said that they wanted coloured labour because it was reliable; another said they wanted it because it was cheap; but of all the arguments in favour of its introduction, the strongest argument that he had heard was based upon the fact that the sugar-planter, who had such large interests at stake, wanted to obtain an inexhaustible supply of labour on terms which would suit him best. They could not loyally encourage any system of immigration, either black or white labour, which would have a tendency either to reduce to a lower level the labour they had already, or that would provide for the men an insufficient remuneration for their services. The hon. member at the head of the Government had endeavoured to frighten them in that matter by saying that the working man would rise and with a tremendous outcry would drive those advocating the introduction of Europeans out of the House altogether. That was what he intimated. The hon. member himself had never been loyal to the principles of immigration in the only way in which immigration ought to be carried out in this colony. The hon. gentleman's sympathy simply lay entirely with the huge capitalists—about whom they had heard a lot that evening—whose interests could only be promoted by the introduction of an unlimited supply of obedient servile labour. The hon. gentleman had never honestly striven to introduce immigration into this colony which would have occupied a position midway between the ordinary labour—that need not mean servile labour, for no labour was necessarily servile—which would occupy a position midway between the ordinary labourer and the capitalist. The hon. gentleman last session succeeded, with the aid of the phalanx behind him, in throwing out the amendments of his hon. friend the leader of

the Opposition, which would have had the effect of bringing people here possessed of small capital, those people who did not want to come out in the British-India boats, or in any boats assisted by the colony; men who would come out because they could not any longer find in England suitable opportunities for investing their small capital. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had never striven to introduce such people as those. He had received a communication from a person at Gympie—having recently visited Gympie and spoken upon immigration amongst other matters—calling his attention to the fact that numerous obstacles were thrown in the way of small capitalists who endeavoured to make homes for themselves in this colony. It was of no use for any hon. member of that House, whether an hon. member of the Government or otherwise, to say that there were not serious impediments thrown in the way of men desiring land for agricultural purposes. There was scarcely a member of that House who, if he were desirous of obtaining a suitable selection for agricultural purposes, would know how to go about obtaining it. They knew very well that persons coming to the colony were retarded in many ways in their search for suitable land, and instead of being encouraged to locate themselves upon the land, they were almost frightened out of any idea of settling upon the land at all. The hon. gentleman went on to speak in very laudatory terms about the Mail Service. It was with very great regret that he (Mr. Rutledge) said the Government now in power was a Government which had been actuated by its personal likes and dislikes to an extent which had characterised no other Government the colony had had. That might not altogether apply to every member of the Government, but every member was responsible for the others, and the whole of them must be held responsible for the actions of one or two, of which actions they did not openly express their disapproval. It was a Government which had endeavoured to make its opponents feel the lash, and imposed disabilities upon those who, in the endeavour to express their honest convictions, had disagreed with them. It was a Government having class antipathies, and had striven in every possible way to give effect to those class antipathies. In connection with the postal arrangements he would mention one of those class antipathies. They all knew how the Government scouted the idea of offering substantial facilities for the introduction of Germans into the colony. They would have nothing to do with them at all. They were told that they wanted their own countrymen. So they did, but they wanted with them a steady stream of that kind of population from which they originally sprang. He believed that, according to the testimony of every man who knew what he was talking about, the colony was much indebted to the German element of its population. What had they found in connection with the Mail Service which they were told was going to bring the metropolis within forty-four days of London before long? When he took up the printed postal guide he found this state of things—and he hoped the Germans throughout the length and breadth of the colony would remember what he was going to say:—If they would only consult those printed tables they would find that, whereas a letter could be carried by that Torres Straits Mail Service to any part of the United Kingdom for the moderate sum of 4d., if a poor German resident wanted to send a letter to any of his relatives in the "Fatherland" he had to pay more than double that sum; in other words, he had to pay 9d. for the privilege of communicating with his fellow-countrymen. There must be some reason, but the only one he could assign was that the Government, in its antipathy to the Germans,

had in that way striven to impose a disability upon those who, by writing home to their friends, would induce them probably to immigrate to this country. It was quite refreshing—perfectly refreshing indeed—to find the Premier inveighing as he did against all capitalists. He would have a little to say about that presently; but before passing he wished to draw attention to another serious defect in the Speech that had been put into their hands that day. He found that the mining industry, which was perhaps not second in importance to the sugar industry itself, was dismissed in a few words. The only place where they could find mining industry even indirectly referred to was in the paragraph which said:—

"Our agricultural and pastoral pursuits have been conducted with more than common success; while our mining industries have held their own."

The land and settlement of people on the land had a special paragraph further on in the Speech. Not so the mining industry; never a word about that industry except those few words put in as a sort of padding. The Government had not dealt fairly with the mining industry. Any one who had visited Charters Towers or Gympie, and had had any communication with the persons who had invested capital in those mines, would come to the conclusion that the miners had not had fair play at the hands of the Government. One of the first things they did was to abolish the Department of Mines that existed. They did away with the office of Under Secretary for Mines, though it was conclusively shown that the amount of mining business done in this colony was largely in excess in some divisions than in Victoria and New South Wales, and they had simply incorporated the Mining Department with the Works Department; and, according to the very able testimony of the hon. member for Mackay, the Works Department was already an over-gorged department. It was such an obese unwieldy department that it was not capable of being moved with anything like the requisite amount of activity to keep it working beneficially in the interest of the colony, and yet was thrust into that already overgrown, unwieldy department, the Mining Department. The time had arrived in the colony when the mining industry had attained such proportions as justified the establishment of a separate department, and until they had a Minister for Mines and a department separately devoted to looking after the industry, they may expect it would not advance in the accelerated ratio which a reasonable man was justified in anticipating. It was indeed refreshing to hear the Premier talking about great monopolists and great capitalists; the hon. gentleman talked about rings and syndicates—he conceived all at once a holy horror of great capitalists. He (Mr. Rutledge) always thought that the hon. gentleman was a great advocate of great capitalists and great monopolists. He (the Premier) was perpetually harping about the beneficial results of having them in the colony. But now he found him inveighing in the columns of the newspaper Press against having monopolists and capitalists. He (Mr. Rutledge) wanted to know if it was possible for any man to exhibit greater bitterness against a class of men of whom he had always been an idolater than the Premier. He talked about the great squatters finding capital for the circulation of the *Telegraph* containing the speech of the leader of the Opposition. If so, his (the Premier's) means of information must be very much superior to the means in possession of members who sat on the Opposition side of the House, if he had ascertained that any capital whatever had been provided to enable the proprietors of the *Telegraph*

or anyone else to circulate the speech of the hon. member. Did he think that the *Telegraph* proprietors were not sufficiently wealthy proprietors without anything in the shape of a subsidy to carry out that enterprise? Was he so steeped in the idea of subsidies—had he been so habituated to subsidising everybody he wanted to do anything for him—that he thought there was not a concern in Queensland that might operate for the public good without a subsidy? He (Mr. Rutledge) came to the conclusion that that was the way in which the thing was to be accounted for—that he (the Premier) attributed to other people what he habitually practised himself. He (Mr. Rutledge) had yet to learn that the proprietors of that newspaper had received a single farthing from any squatter or any syndicate to enable it to carry out its operations in that respect. Anyone who had watched the career of that paper must have come to the conclusion that it was, from the very first, the vigour with which it had been conducted, the ability of its literary articles, and the general skill with which the whole concern had been managed which had done a very great deal towards bringing about the state of public feeling that existed antagonistic to the Premier in Queensland, and “hence these tears.” Was it not quite refreshing to hear the Premier inveighing against the *Telegraph* for doing such a naughty thing as sending its supplements away to the different parts of the colony, and getting the local papers in the provinces to publish its supplement under their own own heading? But he did not tell them about the virtuous *Dalby Herald* that repudiated the attempt of the *Telegraph* to corrupt it in that way by getting it to circulate the *Telegraph's* original matter or its borrowed matter in the guise of the *Dalby Herald*; and he got up and spoke of the *Observer*, that precious rag of which he was one of the proprietors—that *Daily Observer* that nobody ever read except himself and a few of his followers. He (the Premier) got up and told them about that being one of the best newspapers in the colony, and one would think that the *Daily Observer* in the exalted character which it occupied was an authority on all public matters. It would never be guilty of any such mean little trick as that; and was it not a remarkable fact that that very same *Observer* got that very same virtuous *Dalby Herald* to issue as its supplement the *Observer's* supplement containing the Premier's speech at Roma? The hon. gentleman had lost sight of that fact altogether, and as to who paid for it. He would ask the hon. gentleman the question, “Who paid for it?” He (Mr. Rutledge) left that to the discernment of the hon. gentleman, who, being so very ready in detecting who paid for utterances in the papers opposed to him, was surely able to know something about who paid for little favours of that kind which were conferred by the paper of which he was the distinguished proprietor. He did not wish to occupy the time of the House at any unnecessary length, but before he sat down he wished to place himself right with the country in a little matter which perhaps he ought to refer to, particularly as the Premier had treated them to a complete novelty in the shape of an impeachment of a few great capitalists in the colony. The hon. gentleman had thought it wise to rush into print and write lengthy letters against those who opposed the land-grant railway system; and though he professed to occupy a higher vantage of ground than the ordinary newspaper correspondent, he thought that when he condescended in newspaper correspondence to employ a style that was not as becoming as it ought to be in a gentleman in his position, he must not complain if he found himself open to criticism. When the leader of the Opposi-

tion was referring to the epithet that was attributed to him at the Roma banquet, when it was alleged that he had called the members of the Opposition “wretched creatures,” he waxed indignant, and told the hon. gentleman at the head of the Opposition that he ought to have thought better of him than that he could use an indecent expression like that, and call those who sat on the Opposition side of the House “wretched creatures.” He accused the hon. gentleman of want of consideration for having supposed it possible that it was a truthful report, and not a misreport, of what he said. See how the thing worked when the hon. gentleman himself chose to attribute to other persons that which they never said. He (Mr. Rutledge) must excuse himself to the House for obtruding matters purely personal to himself on their attention, but the attitude the Premier assumed when talking of capitalists in the colony must be his justification when misquoted, after denying the having said what he had been reported to have said. In January last he had, accompanied by the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes), made a trip to the North, and had visited Cooktown and other towns there. At those places they were asked to address public meetings, which were called and presided over by the mayors of the towns, and he and the hon. gentleman with him had addressed them. At Cooktown he had made a speech, and what purported to be a *résumé* of it was telegraphed to one of the leading papers of the colony—a short, incomplete report, in which a paragraph occurred which had been quoted and used against him. He found when he returned south that the newspapers had been making capital out of that misreport; and, though he sent a letter to the paper which made the misreport, he found the Premier not above the trick of fixing those sentiments upon him, which was not honourable to that gentleman, who was so touchy when things were improperly attributed to him, and touching his own honour. It was attributed to him (Mr. Rutledge) by the hon. gentleman, in a caustic letter which he wrote, winding up with a lordly reference to himself (Mr. Rutledge) and something about Mr. Wienholt sitting between himself and the hon. member for North Brisbane—evidently dangerous company; that he was the advocate of dynamite for the great capitalists. He did not wish to refer to Mr. Wienholt's probable preference for himself, the hon. member for North Brisbane, to the hon. the Premier; but as he had stated in a newspaper letter that what had appeared was a copy of part of an article which appeared in an English newspaper, he had taken considerable trouble to hunt it up. It had appeared in the *Spectator*, a newspaper which was second to none in its effect on the opinion of the world's great metropolis. The quotation he had made began:—

“An American millionaire, therefore, often makes himself master of some concern, or group of concerns, and is thenceforward a sort of king, governing as he pleases, pushing his policy as against other policies, fighting huge corporations, defying the public, with which he is sure, sooner or later, to come into collision, corrupting State governments, and even influencing the Government of the Republic. He occupies the position at once of a great company and a great aristocrat, and as he has usually as few bowels as a company, and is as self-centred as the great aristocrat, he is hated as neither is hated in this country. And there is often cause for hate. Nothing can be more vexatious to a community than that a single man should control all telegraph lines, as on the eastern side of the continent is nearly the case in America, or should be able to make or destroy entire cities, counties, and methods of industry, by altering railway routes or rates—things entirely within Mr. Vanderbilt's power or Mr. Jay Gould's—throughout great States; or not only own, but insist upon doing the repairs for half a city, like Mr. Astor, in New York. A feeling grows up that

the individual should be made responsible for the use of such gigantic power, even though it be derived from property, just as it would grow up here, if the Grosvenors, the Russells, or the Bentinck ladies used the enormous powers in their hands, through their ownership of West London, in any whimsical way. Respect for property is stronger here than in the Union; but just let the Duke of Westminster order his tenants, as leases fall in, to paint all their houses black. This feeling is more bitter against individuals than corporations, naturally because the latter create less sense of individual and unreasoning will; and in America it rises to such heights that the most prominent millionaires—Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Jay Gould—are in nearly as much danger from dynamite as ordinary European kings."

When he quoted the authority of a newspaper like that, he was not to be held responsible for sentiments so abominable to himself and to others as those circulated on the strength of an imperfectly telegraphed report. He brought it forward now to justify himself, and to show that the Premier was extremely sensitive when there was attributed to him what he had not said and had not taken the trouble to contradict. He had a right, in face of the protest he had made, to complain against the attempt to make him responsible for what he had never uttered and for what was utterly pernicious to him. As regarded the Transcontinental Railway agreement, that would be brought forward at an early date, and he would then take the opportunity of expressing his opinion on that most colossal of enterprises introduced into the colony. Colossal as it was, it would receive a blow—a reeling blow—at the hands of a number in that Assembly which it would never in all time recover.

Mr. PALMER said that, talking of blows, the hon. member had given him a blow. He had never heard a man assume such a responsibility as he had done in this world. He was utterly ashamed that any countryman of his had uttered such words as the hon. gentleman. But the hon. gentleman had denied them now. The paper, or its editor, was responsible for the statement that the hon. member had said he did not wonder that those men used dynamite.

Mr. McLEAN moved that the debate be now adjourned.

The PREMIER asked if the hon. member could give any information to the House as to when the debate was likely to be closed, as there was other important business to come on?

Mr. McLEAN said he could not give any opinion, as he did not know how many members were going to speak on either side of the House. Although he was of opinion that no doubt many members would wish to speak to the question, he thought and hoped the debate would terminate to-morrow night.

Question put and passed.

Ordered—That the resumption of the debate stand an Order for to-morrow.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at ten minutes to 10 o'clock till 3 o'clock to-day.