

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 23 January, 1884.

Petition.—Questions.—Elections and Qualifications Committee.—Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church Bill.—Motion for Adjournment.—Formal Motions.—Supply.—Financial Statement.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Elections Act of 1874 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Bill—second reading.

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

PETITION.

Mr. BAILEY presented a petition from the trustees of the late George Sutton, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to enable them to sell and dispose of such part of the trust property comprised therein as they may deem necessary, for the purpose of improving the remainder of the trust estate. He said that the necessary funds had been paid into the Treasury, and the papers containing the advertisements and notices had been deposited with the Clerk.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—
1. Is it the intention of the Government to provide this session a sum of money, from Surplus or any other fund, for deepening the channel known as the Narrows, which connects Keppel Bay with Port Curtis?

2. If so, what amount is it proposed to expend?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

The necessary survey of the Narrows has just been completed, but the result has not yet been communicated to the Government, who will give full consideration to the report when received.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—
Is it intended during the present session to ask the House to approve of the plans, section, and book of reference of the proposed Extension of Railway from the township of Howard to Bundaberg, as laid upon the table of the House on 3rd November, 1883?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) replied—

The intentions of the Government in connection with the Howard to Bundaberg line will be made known to the House as soon as a decision is arrived at on the subject.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—
Is it intended during the present session to ask the House to approve of the plans, section, and book of reference of the proposed deviation on the South Brisbane Railway, near Woolongabba, as laid on the table of the House on 3rd July, 1883?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
Yes.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—
Is the survey of Line of Railway from Isis Scrub to Gayndah, as authorised by the late Minister for Works, being proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
No survey from Isis Scrub to Gayndah is being proceeded with, nor can any authority for such survey be traced in the records of the department.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—
1. Are the arrangements made by the late Minister for Works for the immediate Geological Survey of the Port Curtis district by Mr. Rand being carried out?
2. If not, how and where is it intended to employ that gentleman?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
Yes.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—
No provision having been made on the Estimates-in-Chief for 1884 for Salary of Gold Warden for the Gladstone district, how is it proposed that that officer's duties shall be carried out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
Salary for Gold Warden, Gladstone district, having been inadvertently omitted from the Estimates-in-Chief, provision for the same will be made on the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. JESSOP asked the Minister for Works—
If it is true that Mr. Forbes, who has been on the trial survey of the railway from Dalby to the Bunya Mountains, has been removed?—and, if so, on what grounds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
Mr. Forbes has been removed to suit the requirements of the department.

Mr. JESSOP asked the Minister for Lands—
If it is his intention to grant any relief to the selectors when the March rents come due?—and, if so, in what form?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) replied—

The subject will receive consideration when the March rents have been collected.

Mr. MORETON asked the Minister for Works—

1. Whether the survey of a Railway from the Maryborough and Gympie line to Gayndah is being proceeded with?

2. When do the Government intend to call for tenders for the second section of the Esk Extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—
1. Yes.

2. It is expected that parliamentary plans of sixteen miles of the second section will be ready to be laid on the table of the House in a few days; but working plans and sections are not in a sufficiently forward condition to enable me to say definitely when tenders will be invited.

Mr. ISAMBERT asked the Minister for Works—

Have any Leases of Refreshment Rooms on the Southern and Western Railway been renewed by the late or the present Government otherwise than by public tender?—and also the sums at which such leases were renewed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The following Leases were renewed in October last without inviting tenders:— Ipswich Refreshment Room, for two years, from 1st January, 1884, Jane Hooper, at £50 per annum; Grandchester Refreshment Room, for two years, from 1st January, 1884, Jane Moran, at £11 per annum; Helidon Refreshment Room, from 1st January, 1884, J. A. Pearson, at £140 per annum; Too-woumba Refreshment Room, from 1st January, 1884, J. A. Pearson, at £100 per annum.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE.

Mr. Ernest James Stevens was sworn at the table as a member of the Elections and Qualifications Committee.

WICKHAM TERRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BILL.

Mr. FRASER brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider this Bill.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday, the 31st instant.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. ARCHER said that he would put himself in order in the usual manner, as he wished to call attention to a letter that had appeared in that morning's *Courier*, in which his name appeared very prominently. The letter was from a gentleman who signed himself "W. Allen," of Rockhampton, but now in Brisbane. In the course of the debate on the Bill to repeal the Polynesian Labourers Act, he (Mr. Archer) made some statement that affected that gentleman, and, as he had rushed into print, it was his (Mr. Archer's) duty to put him right. One statement objected to was that Mr. Feez was a member of the Pandora Sugar Company. In that it appeared that he (Mr. Archer) was wrong; but he was quite certain that he was not wrong in stating that Mr. Feez had said that the company were determined to make sugar without employing coloured labour. Nor was he mistaken in saying that Mr. Allen was a most determined opponent of kanaka and all coloured labour. Therefore, while he was mistaken in saying that Mr. Feez was a subscriber to the company, he was not mistaken in the main facts. Another great error he had committed was, that he called Mr. Allen the secretary of the company. It appeared that he was a member of the committee that managed the affair, and he (Mr. Archer) did not think that made much difference. He could only say that Mr. Allen had been a most decided opponent of coloured labour; but becoming part proprietor or subscribing to the Pandora Sugar Plantation, he had now become a friend to kanaka labour to such an extent that he had signed the cheque forwarded to the Government for the purpose of paying the passages of kanakas to this country. He thought, therefore, that he was perfectly justified in saying that experience had convinced him that white men such as could be got even at a time when immigrants were plentiful did not warrant that company in pursuing the industry with white labour. The gentleman himself admitted it at the end of his letter, and it should be remembered that he was now interested in the matter and did not speak as an outsider. He said:—

"One thing is, however, certain, that no matter what political party holds the reins of government, the splendid sugar industry of Queensland must not be allowed to die, must not be driven out of the colony by legislation. Labour must be forthcoming in abundance sufficient to meet all requirements. Where can it be found?"

Why it was necessary for the gentleman to traverse his (Mr. Archer's) statement in the way he had done, because he had called him "secretary" instead of a member of the committee or something of the kind, he could not understand. He very likely was mistaken in calling the gentleman "secretary," but he knew

he was one of the gentlemen who signed the cheque which had to be sent in to the Colonial Secretary before they could get the kanakas they had applied for. He begged to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. BROOKES said that, seeing that Mr. Allen was not in the House to speak for himself, he would undertake—and he did not run much risk in doing so—to speak on his behalf. He had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Allen, and he was quite sure that, had he had an opportunity of replying to the hon. gentleman who had just sat down—

Mr. ARCHER: I did not attack him.

Mr. BROOKES said that, had Mr. Allen had an opportunity of replying to the hon. member, he would have satisfied that gentleman and the House that his opinions had not varied one iota, and he thought he would have complained of the way in which his letter had been treated. The hon. member was very clever to read the closing paragraph of that letter; but he (Mr. Brookes) might be permitted to read a sentence or two from an earlier part of the letter. Speaking of coloured labour, Mr. Allen said:—

"The questionable means, however, resorted to in obtaining this labour is enough to bring down the vengeance of Heaven on this land. Threats of dynamite, the intimidation of chiefs, barefaced kidnapping, and the use of violence in carrying on this traffic in human flesh cannot be any longer tolerated by a nation which has paid £20,000,000 sterling to strike the fetters from the negro slave."

He could almost imagine that the hon. member who had just sat down had not read the letter. *Prima facie* and coming to a rapid conclusion, that was what one might think. With reference to the paragraph the hon. gentleman had read, it was clear to every hon. member in the House that it bore an entirely different construction to that which the hon. gentleman had endeavoured to impose upon it. He could ask the same question with perfect good faith, and could answer it too—"Where was the labour to be found?" The hon. gentleman supposed that Mr. Allen asked that question in despair. Nothing of the sort. The question admitted of a very easy answer, and he knew Mr. Allen sufficiently well to say that his opinions on the question of coloured labour were perfectly sound. The answer to the question was by introducing a supply of European labour up north, on to the sugar lands. Mr. Allen was not driven into a corner in the way the hon. member supposed, when he asked where the labour was to be found. He deprecated the injury of the sugar industry by legislation, and so did all the opponents of coloured labour, and they had no idea of injuring it; on the contrary, if the means they had proposed, and had many times proposed, were adopted, the sugar industry would be based on a sure and firm foundation, and would greatly assist the welfare and progress of the colony. He did not think it was quite fair of the hon. gentleman to speak of an absent gentleman in the manner in which he had done; and, knowing Mr. Allen as he did, he thought it his duty to protest against the remarks of the hon. gentleman concerning him.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not understand the hon. member very well, but if he might be allowed to ask him a question he would ask him whether he denied that Mr. Allen had signed a cheque and requisition to the Colonial Secretary for kanakas?

Mr. BROOKES said he would not deny what the hon. gentleman had said. There was no man in the House whom he would more implicitly believe, but at the same time he might be mistaken—he was only speaking in explanation. It was perfectly possible for many gentlemen to have been so placed, and Mr. Allen might have been so placed,

Mr. NORTON : This is not an explanation.

Mr. FERGUSON said he perhaps knew as much about the affair as any member of the House. He had been one of the first directors of the Pandora Company, and Mr. Allen was a director as well. The plantation was to be a white man's plantation. It was decided at first that it should be worked by white labour only, but in a very short time—not more than nine or ten months, he believed—the board passed a motion unanimously—and Mr. Allen was one of the gentlemen who voted for the motion—that it was no use trying to carry on the work any longer with white labour, and they decided to get kanaka labour on the plantation. He knew also that in the absence of the chairman of the board Mr. Allen filled his place and signed cheques for kanakas. He (Mr. Ferguson) had resigned his position on the board about twelve months ago, and Mr. Allen had been a director ever since and had all along sanctioned the employment of kanakas, and did as much as any other member of the board in support of their employment. So that to a certain extent Mr. Allen had, as the hon. member for Blackall had said, supported coloured labour.

Question put and negatived.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were passed :—

By Mr. BAILEY—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, the Report of the Inspecting Surveyor on the proposed Railway routes from the Burrum towards Bundaberg.

By Mr. KELLETT—

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

1. How many special trains have run on the Southern and Western Railway from 1st January to 31st December, 1883.
2. How many on Sunday, and by whom used.
3. How many trains not paid for, to what stations they were despatched, and for what purpose they were used.
4. How many were paid for and by whom, to what stations they were run, and the rate charged per mile.

SUPPLY.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in making his Financial Statement, said :—

Mr. Fraser, — In addressing you, sir, at this time on the subject of the Finances of the Colony, I have to deal with a considerably larger period than has heretofore been embraced in the Treasurer's Annual Financial Statement. The present Statement must refer to the transactions of the financial year ended 30th June, 1883, as well as to those of the first six months of the year 1883-4, together with the Treasury expectations for the remaining period of the year. The fiscal condition of the colony demands continuously the closest attention of Parliament, and at the present time, when the country has pronounced such an emphatic opinion upon the manner in which our largest public works shall be constructed in the future, when a new Administration has succeeded to office pledged to give effect to such opinion, it is not only right that the financial position of the country should be clearly understood, but, also, that its progress and growth should be fully realised and noted, so that its immense capabilities, if rightly directed, may be thoroughly appreciated and its future advancement and prosperity be confidently relied on. I believe, sir, that if we fully consider our present financial position—if we give due attention to the statistical history

of the colony, and observe the vast resources we possess, in the development of which we have but as yet only approached the threshold—we will ourselves feel that, while thankful for the immense strides we are making in the march of progress, we have attained a position where we have every justification for confidence and courage in the direction of our financial concerns in the future; that, having arrived at such a position, we need not be apprehensive that we shall have to sue as supplicants for financial arrangements where we have a right to deal on terms of equality, and will feel justified in entering upon such arrangements with unhesitating self-reliance, based on the knowledge that the colony's position and progress are sufficient material guarantees to the whole monetary world of its ability to provide for whatever obligations Parliament may, from time to time, authorise to be contracted. The usual Treasury Tables have been prepared to enable my remarks to be followed. These tables show the financial position of the colony at the close of the financial year 1882-3, and, so far as they treat of Treasury transactions, I have had them further brought down to the 31st December, 1883, in a supplementary sheet. To these I will now direct the attention of honourable members.

I shall divide my address—

1st. To deal with the Consolidated Revenue Account during the financial year 1882-3, the Surplus Revenue, Savings Bank and Trust Accounts for the same period, resuming consideration of the Consolidated Revenue Account for the past six months of the financial year 1883-4.

2nd. Administration of the Loan Account for the same period; and

3rd. The Treasury expectations for the financial year 1883-4, the Special Appropriation of the Revenue balance for the year 1882-3; and consideration of our Loan Funds and requirements at the present time.

1st. *The Consolidated Revenue Account for the Financial Year 1882-3.*—If hon. members will turn to Table B, Treasury Tables, they will see that on the 1st July, 1882, the Consolidated Revenue Fund had a credit balance of £245,410 6s., which balance was subsequently reduced by the transfer by Parliament to Surplus Revenue Fund of £245,040 under the Appropriation Act of 1882-3, No. 4, for the construction of sundry public works and services. The revenue for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1883, amounted to £2,383,859 6s. 2d., being an increase of £199,359 on the Treasurer's estimate, and an actual increase of £281,764, or nearly 13½ per cent., on the preceding year.

The largest contributories to the revenue of 1882-3, furnishing amounts greatly in excess of the Treasurer's estimate, were as follows :— Customs, showing an increase of £114,696 over the preceding year, or nearly 18 per cent., an amount surpassing by £33,703 the Treasurer's estimate for the year. Stamp Duties exceeded the preceding year's receipts by £10,878, and the Treasurer's estimate by about the same sum. Rents of Homesteads and Conditional Purchases exceeded the preceding year by £6,679 only, although the Treasurer's estimate for the year was surpassed to the extent of £21,998; and while Auction Sales of Land gave but a small increase on the preceding year's receipts, they showed the very considerable increase of £14,227 on the Treasury estimate. Pastoral Occupation showed an increase of £6,093 on the year 1881-2, and exceeded the year's Estimates by £7,336. In Railways, a wonderful expansion of revenue is observable. Estimated by the Treasurer to yield £440,500, they returned £475,860,

being an increase on the Treasury expectancy of about 8 per cent., but in reality an increase of £104,650, or fully 28 per cent. on the preceding year's revenue. The Post Office exceeded the estimate by £10,291, but surpassed the receipts of 1881-2 by £13,355. Telegraphs likewise exceeded the estimate by £11,000, and the preceding year's receipts by £14,162. In Miscellaneous Services, other receipts gave the Treasury the advantage of £8,685 on its Estimate for the year.

It will be observed from the figures I have adduced that the increase of revenue to the Treasury for the year 1882-3 must have been as unexpected by the Treasury as it was gratifying to the public. It would appear that the depression of the years 1879 and 1880 had cast a gloom over the future of the colony, and had obscured, to the Administration of the day, the wonderful advancement of the country and the rapidity with which it was recovering from seasons of adversity. Intimidated by the severe period of 1879, the late Government transferred To Revenue the unexpended balance of Lands sold for special railway construction, amounting to 129,821 1 4 And further obtained from Loan, on account of the proceeds of such Lands already expended, a further aid of 252,525 0 0

Making a total of ... £382,346 1 4

The balance of Consolidated Revenue on the 30th June, 1883, was 311,594 13 4 To which is to be added the Surplus Appropriation of 1882 245,040 0 0

In all £556,634 13 4

So that, if the questionable transfers above referred to had not been made, the balance on 30th June, 1883, would have amounted to £174,288 12s., a recovery which evidently was not contemplated by the late Administration.

The Expenditure for the year 1882-3 amounted to £2,072,634 18s. 10d. This charge, together with the transfer to Surplus Revenue Fund of £245,040 before alluded to, left the account with an apparent credit balance, as on the 1st July, 1883, of £311,594 13s. 4d. Hon. members who have studied the Treasury accounts will understand that, although the Treasury books are closed for the financial year on the 30th June, yet under the Audit Act there remains a dependency in the shape of Balances of Votes Unexpended, being for services authorised by Parliament but which had not been disbursed, although contracted for, within the financial year for which they were voted. By turning to Table I it will be seen that on the 30th June, 1883, a dependency of this character to the extent of £244,059 11s. 1d. was then outstanding, being a liability as against the credit balance or surplus of the Consolidated Revenue on the same date.

On the 30th September in each year these unexpended votes of previous years are subjected to Cabinet consideration, when such balances as have not been expended, or such services as have not been contracted for, may be lapsed. Accordingly, we find in Table H that this outstanding liability on 30th June was reduced on 30th September by the sum of £50,272 3s. 11d., allowed to lapse, reducing the net liability to £193,787 7s. 2d., which, if provided for out of the surplus on 30th June, would leave only available for other appropriation a sum of £117,807 6s. 2d.

As the amount of the net liability for these unexpended votes of the previous year has maintained a generally uniform aspect, the Treasury

has adopted the practice of assuming the liability of one year to be fairly set off by the probable undischarged liability of the following, so as not to disturb the available cash balance of Consolidated Revenue on the 30th June; and at the present time I am not inclined to alter this arrangement. I shall, therefore, further on deal with this assumed Revenue Surplus of £311,594 13s. 4d., although I feel constrained to say that I hope, in another session of Parliament, to recommend an alteration in the form of our Public Accounts whereby those of the Treasury and of the Audit Office may be assimilated to embrace similar periods and to deal with the same transactions—a reform which would greatly tend to render the Public Accounts more intelligible, and possibly more interesting to all classes of the community, and would also be attended with the further great advantage of putting Parliament in earlier possession of the Auditor-General's Report, which could then be framed immediately after the close of each financial year. In addition, a more direct control over departmental expenditure in dealing with the balances of votes unexpended at the expiration of the financial year in terms of the 18th section of the Audit Act, could be more strictly enforced.

I will now briefly glance at Table C, representing the Surplus Revenue Fund, at the credit of which on 1st July, 1882, appeared a balance of £3,611 5s. 8d., being the unexpended residue of the special appropriation under which the Surplus Revenue Fund was first opened in 1874. The account was replenished by a second Parliamentary Appropriation in 1882, amounting to £245,040, to provide for the construction of steamers, harbours and rivers, lighthouses, buildings, roads and bridges, water storage, main roads, and defences of the colony. The expenditure which has been made on account of these services during the year 1882-3, representing £36,924 11s. 4d., has reduced the balance available on 1st July, 1883, to £211,776 6s. 5d.; and further expenditure for the six months ended 31st December, 1883, leaves a balance at credit of the account on 1st January, 1884, of £182,234 15s. 9d. Table E represents the Savings Bank Drawing Account for the financial year ended 30th June, 1883, at which date the credit balance stood at £385,048 15s. 11d. Transactions for the six months ended 31st December, 1883, have resulted in a balance at the credit of the account on the latter date of £463,663 6s. 8d. In addition to this drawing or operative balance, of £463,663 6s. 8d., the bulk of the Savings Bank Funds stand invested in debentures and other securities to the extent of £698,899; the total amount, therefore, at the credit of 28,818 depositors on 31st December, 1883, represented a total of £1,180,051 5s. 10d. As the Savings Bank is considered to be an institution most directly dealt with by the industrial workers of the community, and throughout all countries serves to gauge the progress of wealth and accumulation among the working classes, a comparison based on the ratio per head of population in some of the Australian colonies and Great Britain is instructive. On the 31st December, 1882, the total deposits in the New South Wales Savings Banks represented a ratio of £3 13s. 9d. per head of population; in New Zealand £3 12s. 1d.; in Victoria £3 5s. 11d.; while in Queensland, in the Government Savings Bank only, the ratio stood at £4 9s. 5d. In Great Britain, where, notwithstanding deposits had increased 30 per cent. during the preceding ten years, in 1880 they had attained only to £2 3s. 11d. per head.

The Trust Funds are shown in Table F. On the 1st July, 1882, the total amount at credit of this account represented £106,164 15s. 7d., which

was increased by the transactions of the year 1882-3 to £144,524 19s. 1d., the credit balance on 30th June, 1883. This balance has still further augmented during the six months ended 31st December, 1883; the Trust Accounts on that date showing a total credit balance of £183,782 1s. 4d. The detailed balances appear in the Tables, and hon. members will observe that the increase is chiefly derived from the Chinese Immigration Fund (capitation tax) and Immigration Collections.

I now resume consideration of the Consolidated Revenue for six months ended 31st December, 1883. The revenue received up to that date considerably surpassed all previous similar periods, amounting to £1,355,468 17s. 3d., and representing an increase of over 17 per cent. on the six months ended 31st December, 1882, within which term the revenue receipts amounted to £1,155,884 8s. 7d.; while the last quarters of 1882 and 1883 produced, respectively, £506,701 3s. 1d. and £646,398 17s. 5d., an increase in favour of the last three months of 1883 of over 27 per cent.

Hon. members may more readily understand the position of the Revenue if I refer to a few of the more prominent contributories during the six months ended 31st December, 1882 and 1883 respectively, as well as to the three months of 1882 and 1883 ending on the same date:—

	6 Months to 31st Dec., 1882.	6 Months to 31st Dec., 1883.	Increase.	3 Months to 31st Dec., 1882.	3 Months to 31st Dec., 1883.	Increase.
—	£	£		£	£	
Customs ...	376,455	421,744	12 %	182,446	217,280	19 %
Stamp Duty ...	41,687	43,648	4 %	20,286	22,018	8 %
Licenses ...	10,628	11,630	9 %	3,980	5,097	28 %
Land Revenue ...	368,919	432,470	18 %	98,540	146,400	56 %
Railways ...	206,359	272,115	31 %	121,681	157,008	29 %
Postage ...	82,214	89,356	22 %	16,076	20,132	25 %
Telegraphs ...	32,453	37,028	14 %	16,521	18,413	11 %
Harbour and Light Dues ...	9,102	10,178	11 %	3,700	5,589	51 %
Other Receipts ...	53,411	63,926	29 %	34,035	46,217	35 %

The large apparent land revenue for the six months of 1883-4 has chiefly been produced by the extent of pre-emptives applied for under pastoral holdings. During the financial year 1882-3 the payments into the Treasury for pre-emptive purchases amounted to £29,824, while for the six months of 1883-4 ending on the 31st December, £78,083 was paid into the Treasury. The whole of this amount, except £3,584 received in December, was paid on or before the 12th November; the payments into the Treasury between the 11th October and the above-mentioned date representing the sum of £68,739. Possibly the impending change of administration may have had some effect in producing this impulse to pre-empt, but the Government will only be discharging their duty to the country in revising these applications and in considering how far their acceptance may accord with the land policy which has been enunciated this session.

The receipts from Public Works and Services are matter of congratulation. The constantly progressing receipts from the Railways fully justify the Government in contemplating most vigorous prosecution of railway construction throughout the colony.

The expenditure out of the Consolidated Revenue for the first six months of the financial year 1883-4, ended on the 31st December, 1883, amounted to £1,137,180 7s. 10d., which, contrasted with expenditure for the same period of the preceding year, amounting to £966,844 10s. 11d., showed an increase of £170,335 16s. 11d., or at the rate of 17 per cent. per annum on the preceding year. This increase is attributable partly to the annual payments of interest on the Public Debt; to the general enlargement of the departments; and further, from the fact that the appropriation for the financial year 1882-3, under the Estimates-in-Chief, has been very considerably enlarged by Executive authority for increases to salaries, which the Committee has now before it in the Supplementary Estimates for 1882-3. The balance at credit of the Consolidated Revenue on the 31st December, 1883, amounted to £529,883 2s. 9d., showing for the six months of the present financial year a surplus of £218,288 9s. 5d. It will be remembered, however, that Executive reconsideration of applications for pre-emptives may affect this apparent surplus to an appreciable extent. I do not, therefore, intend to deal with this balance as a present Surplus Revenue, but will confine myself to the amount represented at the credit of the Consolidated Revenue at the close of the financial year 1882-3. But before dealing with the special appropriation of this balance, I proceed to the consideration of—

2nd. *The Loan Fund for the Financial Year 1882-3, and its Administration for the first Six Months of the Financial Year 1883-4.*—Referring to Treasury Table D, the balance of the Loan Fund on 1st July, 1882, represented £1,185,652 16s. 5d., at the credit of the account. During the financial year 1882-3 the account was credited with £57,498 0s. 1d. for transfers and repayments, and was debited with £1,204,373 18s. 10d., the expenditure for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1883, and also with £1,361 17s. 6d. for stamping debentures of the Loan of 1881, resulting in a credit balance to the account on the 30th June, 1883, of £37,415 0s. 2d. This is the aspect of the Loan Fund on the date mentioned in the Treasury books, which deal only with actual receipts, and take no notice of the amounts received in London not advised to the Treasury up to the end of the year 1882-83, on account of the sale of part of the loan of 1881 and 1882, in all £3,733,000. Tenders were invited for £2,500,000 of these loans, which realised gross £97 1s. 2d. per cent. The

terms of tender were 5 per cent. on tender and 20 per cent. on allotment (18th May); 25 per cent. on 12th July, and 50 per cent. on 12th December. Advices of the payment of the 25 per cent. paid on tender and allotment were not received by the Treasury till after the end of the financial year; so that the credit balance of £37,415 0s. 2d., shown in Table D, was actually enlarged by the receipt in London, prior to the end of the financial year, of the first instalments of 25 per cent. on the sale of the portion of loans before mentioned. The further progress of the Loan Fund to the 31st December, 1883, is also shown in Supplementary Table D. The account has been credited with £1,747,132 19s. 0d. on account of the sale of debentures before mentioned, and is charged with the six months' expenditure, £944,287 6s. 4d., whereby a balance of £143,169 9s. 10d. is shown to the credit of the account. A sum of £679,187 11s. 0d. payable in London on or before the 12th December, being the final instalment of the £2,500,000 loan, has yet to be credited to the account. The matured debentures of the Loan Act of 1863, amounting to £707,500, have already been charged to the account, so that on the 1st January, 1884, the Loan Account would possess a credit balance of £822,357 0s. 10d.

When tenders were invited in May for £2,500,000—part of the loans of 1881 and 1882, amounting to £3,733,000—it was announced that “the balance of the loan will not be negotiated for at least one year from the date of the present issue,” a provision doubtless introduced with a view to conciliate subscribers to the loan. Viewed by the light of subsequent events, which has shown most unmistakably that the indebtedness of the colonies is not regarded in Great Britain with any apprehension of colonial ability to profitably employ the loans contracted with the parent country, it must now be considered unfortunate that such a promise was ever volunteered. We have still unsold the balance of the loans last mentioned, amounting to £1,233,000, which we are precluded from offering till next May, notwithstanding the present favourable condition of the money market of Great Britain, as has been clearly shown by the satisfactory reception of the late issues of the Cape, New South Wales, and New Zealand stocks.

In addition, debentures issued under the Loan Act of 1864, amounting to £1,019,000, fall due on 1st January, 1885. Provision must be immediately made for the issue of stock to retire these debentures, which, when effected, will relieve the colony of a pressure of £20,000 per annum for interest, being the difference between the rate borne by our recent loan issues and the 6 per cent. debentures of 1864. It is incumbent on Government to deal with these loans before their own loan policy can be fully declared. The ground has been left encumbered with a condition and without due provision for impending obligations. To honourably fulfil this condition, however unwisely it has been made, must be the duty of the Government of this colony, and to remove the obstructions which have been allowed to accumulate in the way of our future loan policy must engage the attention of the Administration until the opportunity of unfolding fully their own loan proposals is afforded them at the next regular session of Parliament. The balance of debentures of our last authorised loans, which had not been even forwarded to London when the change in the Administration of the colony took place, has been sent forward, and the amount of £1,233,000 will be placed on the market at the expiration of the time indicated in the promise of the late Government.

Honourable members will be aware that steps have been taken to complete arrangements for

the inscription of the portion of the loans already sold (£2,500,000) with the Bank of England, whereby the holders of these debentures will have the option of converting their bonds into inscribed stock. The balance of the loans before mentioned (£1,233,000) which Government contemplate offering in May, having been issued as debentures, will be sold as such, with option, by purchaser, of inscription. After the issue of this balance, it is hoped that all arrangements will have been fully completed so as to allow our future Loan Bills to authorise the issue of inscribed stock only. It must not be imagined that this very proper action will at once increase the value of our stock on the Exchange. That will depend altogether upon the condition of the money market from time to time. But the advantage of inscription will be to afford an opportunity of extending the number of our bondholders, and to admit as investors in Queensland stocks those persons who, holding interests more fiduciary than direct, have hitherto been precluded by the nature of the trusts from investing in securities transferable by delivery.

We have just been informed by cablegram that the Bank of England in finally arranging for the inscription of our stock require that they shall issue all loans which they inscribe on the terms of the New Zealand Government. This condition, although not contemplated when application for inscription was made, will, I doubt not, materially strengthen the position of our subsequent loans on the London Stock Exchange, for I am of opinion that the floating of our loans, the payment of the half-yearly interest, and the registration of the bonds form one grand division of our finance administration, which cannot be entrusted to abler or stronger hands than the Bank of England, whose high financial standing forms at once an advertisement, and a commended introduction of our loans to the attention of the largest investors of Great Britain.

The Loan Expenditure during the year 1882-3 amounts to £1,204,373 18s. 10d., being an increase of £321,633 13s. 4d. on the preceding year. For the six months of the financial year 1883-4, ended on the 31st December, 1883, our Loan Expenditure amounted to £944,287 6s. 4d., an increase of £388,712 5s. 3d. on the corresponding six months of 1882. During the financial year 1882-3, the sum of £253,454 18s. 3d. was expended on Immigration out of Loan, being in excess of the whole parliamentary appropriation for such purpose provided in the Loan Estimates of 1881-2, amounting to £250,000. This scale of Immigration Loan Expenditure, unprecedented in Treasury experiences, was largely increased during the six months ended December, 1883, having swollen to the sum of £232,633 13s. 3d., or at the rate of over £465,000 per annum, to be increased by expenditure in England between 1st October and 31st December, 1883, advice of which has not yet reached the Treasury. This heavy disbursement, incurred solely on Executive authority, and in the absence of parliamentary authorisation, has overdrawn the Immigration Loan vote to the extent above stated, and other unforeseen expenditure in Loan Account shows total debtor balances amounting to £351,262 2s. 4d. to be provided on first Loan Estimates.

Honourable members will learn from Table N the annual rate of expenditure from Revenue, Loan, and Special Receipts for purposes of immigration since the foundation of the colony. 1878-79 witnessed an expenditure of £152,265, which was deemed so excessive by the late Administration, who entered office in that year, that in 1879-80 and 1880-81 the expenditure was curtailed to £47,005 and £71,641 respectively. The colony

during these years was suffering under continued depression, and immigration operations were consequently relaxed. In 1881-2 the expenditure increased to £129,877, and was followed in 1882-3 by the disbursement from all sources for immigration, to the extent of £325,263, while the Loan expenditure alone for this service during the six months just terminated has been proceeding at the rate of nearly half a-million per annum. During the year 1882, 12,657 immigrants landed in the colony, while in 1883 the number attained to 23,088, 3,339 of whom were bounty immigrants. It is difficult to assign any intelligible reason for this sudden activity in the Immigration Department attended with this inflation of expenditure. The benefit to the colony from such a sudden paroxysm in our immigration system must be regarded as extremely doubtful, while the derangement to our finances under the abnormal expenditure before alluded to is certain. Indeed, the service appears to have been conducted less in the interests of the colony than for the benefit of those shipowners who have enjoyed the confidence of our London office, and who have drawn from the Treasury between July, 1882, and December, 1883, inclusive, amounts as under, for the conveyance of immigrants, namely:—

Messrs. Gray, Dawes, and Company	£231,584
McIlwraith, McEachern, and Company	60,449
Anderson, Anderson, and Company	35,985
Thomas Law and Company	46,895
F. Green and Company	20,038
C. Bethell and Company	5,752

The Government consider that European immigration, conducted at the rate of about 1,000 persons per month, will in the present condition of the colony adequately supply the labour market without deranging demand; and as it is highly desirable that our immigrants should be selected from those who possess some small means, so that our immigration system may not become the vehicle of planting a pauper population in our midst, it is confidently expected that the 17th section of the Immigration Act of 1882 will be more fully operated on, so that our Loan Expenditure, under careful administration of this service, may be covered by an annual appropriation of about £150,000, pending further consideration.

I have now, sir, brought my Statement down to the 31st December, 1883, on which date the Public Balances stood as follows, as per Supplementary Table G:—

	£	s.	d.
Consolidated Revenue Fund	529,883	2	9
Surplus Revenue Fund	182,234	15	9
Loan Fund	143,169	9	10*
Savings Bank Funds	463,663	6	8
Trust Funds	183,782	1	4
	£1,502,732	16	4

The manner in which these balances stood invested on 31st December, 1883, is as follows:—

National Bank—			
Brisbane	£1,140,785	1	11
London	245,504	3	9
Bank New South Wales	100,000	0	0
Agent-General	16,443	10	8
	£1,502,732	16	4

*Representing the Loan of £707,500 as paid, but not including the last instalment of the sale of £2,500,000, due in London on 12th December.

Of which balances the following amounts have been placed at fixed deposits with the banks undermentioned:—

Bank.	Amount.	Due Date.	Rate of Interest.
Queensland National Bank	*£50,000	1884, 27 April	5½%
Ditto	50,000	28 May	5½%
Ditto	100,000	10 July	5½%
Ditto	100,000	10 July	5½%
Ditto	*100,000	10 July	5½%
Ditto	50,000	19 August	6
Bank of New South Wales	*100,000	21 August	5½%
Queensland National Bank	100,000	24 August	6
Ditto	200,000	11 October	6
Ditto	*50,000	25 October	6
Ditto	*50,000	25 October	6
	£950,000		

* Savings Bank Funds.

I think it is incumbent on me, in dealing with these balances, to refer to the practice which appears to have been adopted of late of renewing fixed deposits for further terms before their mature dates. On the 25th October, 1883, two fixed deposits of £50,000 each, which would not reach maturity for more than six months thereafter—namely, on the 27th April, 1884—were renewed for a period of twelve months. It is difficult to find a justification for this action. At the time these renewals were authorised, £850,000 of public moneys was already lying at fixed deposit; the drawing account of Government was fast decreasing, amounting only on 31st December, 1883, to £290,785; Loan Expenditure was proceeding at an enormously increased ratio, and the loan balances were not only deprived of any expectation of early replenishment by the sale of the balance of debentures for £1,233,000 already mentioned, but were practically reduced by the withdrawal of £351,262, the amount of the debtor loan balances, or the expenditure sanctioned by the Executive out of loan, but without parliamentary authorisation.

Having now brought my hearers down to the end of December, 1883, I shall now deal with the 3rd head of my subject, in which I first proceed to lay before the Committee my expectations of Revenue for the financial year 1883-4. In treating with this subject I have the advantage of the actual results of the first six months of such year. Honourable members will observe that my estimate of Ways and Means amounts to £2,503,000, showing an increase of £121,141 over the receipts for 1882-3.

The actual receipts for the first six months just ended were £1,355,468. During the corresponding period of 1882-3 the Revenue amounted to £1,155,884, the year itself terminating on 30th June with receipts amounting to £2,383,859. Based on the results of last year, and of the first six months of the present, I might have presented to the Committee, with apparent justification, a larger estimate of Ways and Means; but having regard to the dry season through

which we are passing, the effects of which, if of further continuance, it would be folly to ignore, and also looking at the immediate effects on the Treasury of the Land policy of the Government, I have carefully prepared for the Committee an estimate, the fulfilment of which I confidently anticipate.

Under the head of "Taxation" I hope to receive the sum of £965,000, being an increase on the receipts of 1882-3 to the extent of £28,259. The Treasury receipts for the first six months of the present financial year amount, under this head, to £495,012, of which sum Customs furnished £421,744. I have every ground for believing that the Customs will exceed my estimate for the year of £800,000, but in view of the present drought—which, if of long duration, unmistakably means decreased production and restricted consumption—I have adopted figures capable of fulfilment.

In Excise and Export Duties I present a reduced estimate as compared with 1882-3. During that year £51,362 was received under this head; during the six months ended 31st December, 1883, £17,989 only was collected. The falling-off in excise receipts is owing to the decrease in quantity of spirits distilled; the action of the Legislature in 1880 in increasing the excise duties to the amount of the import duties on foreign spirits having discouraged distillation, the imported article is gradually displacing the colonial manufacture.

In 1881 excise duty was paid for colonial rum on 89,040 gallons; foreign rum, on 13,988 gallons. In 1883 (9 months to 30th September) duty was paid on colonial rum 62,429 gallons, and on foreign rum 28,593. It will thus be seen that the demand for the colonial article has decreased, while the imported foreign spirit has entered largely into consumption. Taking an average for the December quarter as the basis of the quantity consumed for the nine months ending 30th September, 1883, it will be seen that the consumption of the imported article in 1883 would be about 38,124 gallons—more than double that of the previous year. The collections for the half-years of 1882 and 1883 will serve further to show the extent of displacement of the colonial by the foreign article:—

FOREIGN RUM.			
Half-year ended 30th September, 1882	...	4,422	15 8
Half-year ended 30th September, 1883	...	10,952	7 7
Increase	...	£6,529	11 11
COLONIAL RUM.			
Half-year ended 30th September, 1882	...	28,638	11 5
Half-year ended 30th September, 1883	...	21,423	18 5
Decrease	...	£7,214	13 0

But although the increased excise duty has decreased the consumption of colonial rum, other spirits appear to have very largely increased. The Collector of Customs specially notes the greatly enlarged receipts for duty on whisky representing as follows:—

In 1880	...	65,820	gallons
1881	...	80,918	"
1882	...	121,755	"
1883	...	150,009	"

being in excess of brandy, which paid duty in 1883 on 143,843 gallons. The export duty on cedar will be materially affected by the continu-

ance of the dry season. Large quantities of cedar are known to be felled on our northern seaboard, but cannot be moved until heavy wet weather appears. Having regard to these circumstances, I have accepted £35,000 as an estimate of the year's receipts from Excise and Export Duties. The estimates of Stamp Duties and Licenses are based on the receipts for the year 1883.

The Land Revenue I estimate to produce £691,000, being £13,837 less than was received in 1882-3. Auction Sales I expect to produce £75,000, of which we have received up to the 31st December £36,610. In 1882-3 £114,227 was received from Auction Sales, an amount which the Government have no present intention of emulating, pending the consideration of the Land policy. From Selections we hope to receive £10,000, an amount considerably within what we might anticipate under a favourable season. The estimate for Pre-emptive Purchases of £78,000 has been already fulfilled. As the declared policy of the Government is to discourage this form of land alienation, I make no requisition for revenue under this head; indeed the amount already received may be considerably affected upon further Cabinet consideration. The estimate for rents of Homesteads and Conditional Purchases is within the receipts of the late financial year. Pastoral Occupation is expected to yield £240,000, of which sum £238,416 was received up to 31st December, 1883. The other items under Land Revenue are based on the experiences of the year 1883.

Receipts from Public Works and Services are estimated to yield £725,000, an increase of £94,265 on the year 1882-3. The sum of £359,060 has been received under this head for the six months ended on 31st December, 1883. The Railways, which continue to yield an increasing revenue, I anticipate will fulfil the estimate of £310,000 from the Southern and Western; £141,500 from the Central; £56,000 from the Northern; £36,500 from the Maryborough and Wide Bay; and £7,000 from the Bundaberg line. The total estimate of receipts from these lines amounts to £551,000, against which the Treasury has received up to the 31st December, 1883, £272,115.

From the Post Office I expect to receive £78,000, an increase of £7,709 over 1882-3, established by the six months' receipts from this service, which amount to £39,356. Electric Telegraphs should yield £75,000, the first six months of the financial year 1883-4 having produced £37,029.

From Miscellaneous Services I expect £124,000 to be forthcoming, an estimate which will be fulfilled from the bank interest accruing on our large deposits and public balances.

The Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1883-4 represent a total of £1,738,922 for civil and departmental expenditure, exclusive of £677,050 for interest on the Public Debt. The appropriation for 1882-3 amounted to £1,457,198, to which must be added further expenditure to the extent of £102,811 17s. 10d., which appears on Supplementary Estimates yet to be voted, showing a total for the year of £1,560,009; the requirements of 1883-4 exceeding those of 1882-3 by the sum of £178,913. Of this amount £11,754 is due to increased provision for endowments to municipalities and marsupial boards, whilst there is a reduction of £4,000 in the vote for Grammar School Buildings, as shown in schedules. The Colonial Secretary's Department shows an increase of £70,000, chiefly for increased requisitions from the Police, Government Printer, Colonial Stores, Defence Force, Charitable Allowances, and Miscellaneous Services.

The Attorney-General's Department shows a small increase of £2,217, chiefly departmental, while the Department of Public Instruction demands increased provision to the extent of £8,712. The Colonial Treasurer's Department requires additional provision to the extent of £20,317, but of this sum £10,000 is represented by increased vote for refundments, not an expenditure or actual charge on the Public Service. The balance of £10,317 is distributed in increased services required by the Customs, harbours and pilots, and lighthouses. The Lands Department requires £14,479 additional to the appropriation of 1883-4, chiefly occasioned by sale and survey of land. In the Department of Public Works £12,500 has to be provided for roads excepted under the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act, £28,300 for buildings beyond the requirements of 1882-3, and £3,000 for goldfields. Railways require increased provision to the extent of £70,000 over the preceding year—a requisition which the constantly increasing extent of mileage of lines available for traffic must continuously enlarge. On the 31st December, 1883, 1,038 miles of railway were open for public traffic, 304 were under construction, and 530 were under survey, making a total of 1,872 miles completed and being proceeded with throughout the colony.

The Postmaster-General's Department requires £34,200 beyond the appropriation for 1882-3 for increased postal and telegraph services, while these estimates show a considerable increase in the preceding year. It must be remembered that the appropriation for 1882-3 has been considerably enlarged under Executive authority, and which, while not appearing on the Estimates for 1882-3, has been operated upon throughout that year.

The estimate of Ways and Means and of the probable Expenditure for 1883-4 now submitted to the Committee leaves an apparent excess of Revenue over Expenditure for the year to the extent of £89,028, which will, I hope, be considerably surpassed, but which should of itself sufficiently provide for any supplementary claims which may hereafter arise before the end of this financial year.

I have now completed my review of the Consolidated Revenue Fund from 1st July, 1882, to the 31st December, 1883. I have also dealt with the administration of the Loan Fund during the same period, and have submitted my estimate of Revenue for the financial year 1883-4, accompanied with the proposals of Government for departmental expenditure during that period. It remains for me to explain to the Committee the action which Government intend to take with the surplus of revenue in the Treasury on the 30th June, 1883, amounting to £311,594 13s. 4d.

I have already shown that the Immigration Loan vote has been overdrawn to the extent of about £250,000, which will be considerably increased by London expenditure on account of this service up to the 31st December, 1883, not yet advised to the Treasury; and although Government have addressed themselves to its immediate curtailment, yet present provision is necessary to carry on the service until further appropriation is obtained under loan.

Honourable members will learn from the Special Supplementary Appropriation for 1883-4, accompanying the Estimates-in-Chief, that Government proposes to appropriate out of the surplus of 1882-3, for purposes of immigration, a sum sufficient to cover twelve months' expenditure—say £150,000; the prudence of which will commend itself to the Committee upon full consideration of our financial position as regards this service. I consider it sound policy to provide out of current revenue for such works as are

not directly reproductive, so that our loan requirements may be confined as far as practicable to works of a national character returning some contribution towards the interest on our public debt, and which may at all times fairly stand as valuable assets in our public balance-sheet.

The total Special Supplementary		
Appropriation amounts to ...		£310,000
Comprising immigration, as		
above	£150,000	
Two new dredges	60,000	
Buildings—		
Brisbane Immigration		
Depôt	10,000	
Charters Towers Court-		
house	4,000	
Ipswich Railway Work-		
shops	10,000	
Rockhampton Immigration		
Depôt	5,000	
Rockhampton Supreme		
Court-house	6,000	
Toowoomba Lunatic Asy-		
lum	10,000	
Other Buildings	10,000	
Bridges—		
Annan River, Pioneer		
River, and Ross Creek	30,000	
Divisional Boards Grants		
in aid of Bridges	15,000	
		£310,000

The rapidly increasing importance of our ports necessitates large and immediate additional provision being made for the improvement of the rivers and harbours along our extensive seaboard. The present plant possessed by the department is quite inadequate to perform all the work which is so urgently demanded along our coast. It is therefore proposed to proceed with the immediate construction of two dredges, one of which will be constantly employed in the Mary River and Wide Bay.

The respective items under the head of "Buildings" may be regarded as votes on account of the respective services provided out of revenue, and which, I hope, will be supplemented as may be necessary out of future surplus revenue accumulations without appearing in our Loan Estimates. The sum of £30,000 provided for the construction of three bridges—namely, over the Annan River, Cooktown, Pioneer River, Mackay, and Ross Creek, Townsville—will cover the cost of works of great local importance; and it is proposed to assist the divisional boards by grants in aid of bridges to the extent of £15,000. We have thus endeavoured to distribute throughout the colony a fair apportionment of the Treasury surplus balance of the Consolidated Revenue as it appeared on 30th June, 1883. I have already referred to the balance of our last loans, amounting to £1,233,000, which Government proposes to offer in London as soon as we are relieved of the condition attached to their disposal. It is also the intention of Government during the present session to obtain parliamentary authority for the renewal of our loan of 1861, amounting to £1,019,000, which falls due on 1st January, 1885; and I propose to add to this sum the amount of depreciation on our last loan issue, and a further sum sufficient to cover the unauthorised Immigration Loan Expenditure incurred during the past six months. This will enable Government to come forward with their own loan proposals at the regular session of

Parliament. Meanwhile our financial position at the end of the year 1884, in London, will be approximately as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Balance in London on 1st January, 1884, after payment of Debentures for £707,500 due on that date	245,504	3	9
Final instalment of sale of Debentures (£2,500,000) due 12th December. Advice not yet reached Treasury ...	679,187	11	0
Proceeds of Debentures for £1,233,000, in hand ...	1,185,000	0	0
	<hr/>		
	2,109,691	14	9
Expenditure in London to 31st December, 1884, say ...	1,300,000	0	0

Leaving a balance on that date of £809,691 14 9

On the 1st January, 1885, the Loan of 1864 for £1,019,000 matures, to be covered by the authority for renewal proposed to be asked this session.

I think, sir, I have now given, in full detail, the present position of our national finances. Its history within the period I have had under consideration is encouraging, and I see no reason to be apprehensive of the future. Undoubtedly, the present season affords grounds for anxiety, but if we are early visited with plentiful rains the prospects of 1884 may be considered as fully maintaining the progress of the colony. And that progress must tend to discourage the apprehensions which have been unwisely disseminated concerning our ability to undertake further loan obligations. I am of opinion that the loan indebtedness of the colony is a matter of congratulation instead of apprehension. With the assistance of sixteen millions of English capital we have within twenty-three years built up a prosperous nation. Starting in 1860 with a revenue of £178,000, and a population of 28,056, we are to-day in receipt of an annual revenue of over £2,500,000, with a population of about 285,000, whose individual average accumulations and industrial prosperity will contrast most favourably with any other portion of the British Empire. Will any hon. member say that equal progress would have been accomplished had we refrained from borrowing? Our indebtedness to the public creditor is generally represented to be secured by our great and valuable territorial estate; but, sir, I think I may truly urge that the great national works which, through our borrowing powers, we have been enabled to construct, are of themselves tangible assets as against our liabilities, and are rapidly and largely contributing to the liquidation of the annual interest accruing on moneys employed in their construction. Take, for example, our railways. The receipts for the year ending 31st December, 1883, from the Southern and Western, Maryborough and Wide Bay, Central and Northern lines, amounted to £541,616, while the working expenses for the same period amounted to £286,463, showing a net annual earning of £255,153; being at the rate of £3 1s. 11d. per cent. upon the sum of £8,240,544, the amount actually expended up to the same date in the construction of these railways. It will be seen, therefore, that the profit from these services during 1883 furnished a contribution sufficient to cover the interest accruing on £6,400,000 of our Public Debt, thereby virtually extinguishing that amount of our indebtedness and relieving the Treasury of an annual pressure to the extent of the interest on that sum.

And I think I may further point out that, while our total authorised debt amounts to £16,150,850, our debentures yet unissued, amounting to £1,233,000, reduce the debt to £14,917,850;

while our unexpended Loan Funds on 31st December, 1883, amounting to £924,690, still further diminish our actual loan indebtedness at that date to £13,993,160; which, if distributed over our present estimated population—285,000—would show a ratio of under £50 per inhabitant, or if we take the full amount of our authorised indebtedness, namely, £16,150,850, we find that the net earnings from our railways furnish a set-off against £6,400,000 of this obligation; while the interest accruing on the unexpended loan balances further provides for the annual charge on an additional £2,000,000. The Consolidated Revenue Fund is therefore burdened only to the extent of the annual interest on a loan capital under £8,000,000, being the amount invested in not directly reproductive works, but which sum has nevertheless been expended on, and is represented by, permanent and substantial assets, in the shape of various public works and buildings. The amount of such not directly productive Loan Expenditure—being under £8,000,000—gives a ratio of £28 per head of population; while the annual interest chargeable against the Consolidated Revenue on this unproductive portion of our debt amounts to about £400,000, allowing one-half of such unproductive portion of loan to be represented by the outstanding 6 per cent. debentures. And, in addition to our successful railway investments, let it be remembered that we have further spent out of Loan £500,000 in electric telegraphs, which transmit communication throughout the length and breadth of the colony and over an extent of territory at a rate relatively lower than in any other country. We have improved the interior condition of the country by the expenditure of £693,000 on our public roads, and have erected public buildings to the extent of £532,000. Our numerous harbours and rivers have been improved by the expenditure of £932,000, while local government has been encouraged by the timely loan aid of £367,000; and, in addition to all this, we have been continuously adding to our population by the expenditure of one and a-half millions for immigration purposes. Surely, Mr. Fraser, when objection is taken to our loan indebtedness, critics must deliberately shut their eyes to the magnitude of the benefits which the colony has derived as well as to the character of the investments which have been built up through such indebtedness. And as has been the case with the parent country so will it be with Queensland, especially if we borrow for reproductive works—the larger the indebtedness the greater will be the prosperity of the country, and greater still its ability not only to pay the interest but to contract, if necessary, fresh obligations. I submit, therefore, Mr. Fraser, that our present position, both as regards revenue and loan obligations, justifies us in pursuing a bold, vigorous loan policy, which I hope in the next session of Parliament may be announced. Meanwhile, sir, while clearing the way, we have before us the knowledge of the substantial progress the colony has made in the past, which will fully warrant the administration in pursuing an energetic policy of construction of public works by way of loan in the future.

Table O shows the arrivals and departures by sea for the year 1882, giving an excess of arrivals over departures to the extent of 17,043 persons; and Tables R, S, and T afford valuable information relative to the comparative condition of our imports and exports, increase in shipping, and the transactions of the banks in Queensland with the public. From the former table we observe that in 1882 exports per head of population amounted to £13 2s. 7d., being a reduction of £1 7s. 3d. on the ratio for the previous year. Imports had increased to

£20 16s. 4d. per head, or £4 18s. 11d. beyond the previous year. This increase is largely derived from the importation of metal manufactures, including machinery and hardware, the introduction of gold and silver coin, and from large importations under the head of flour, grain, maize, oats, barley, wheat, &c. From Table T we learn that the deposits in the banks, per head of population, stood in 1882 at £22 17s. 7d. per inhabitant—an increase of £2 4s. 5d. per head over the previous year. Table V deals with the pastoral interest, and shows that in 1882 the cattle in the pastoral districts of Queensland amounted to 4,324,907, an increase of 782,877 over the previous year; while from Table W it will be seen that on the 31st December, 1882, the number of sheep in the colony amounted to 10,000,000 or 12,000,000—a very large increase on the year 1881.

The Mining Industry is feeling the protracted dry season, and Gympie, Charters Towers, and the other principal goldfields are suffering in consequence. Discoveries of rich gold in some of the claims at Gympie, a few of which had been previously worked and abandoned, have infused new life into the mining industry on that field. On Charters Towers the effects of the drought, while severely felt, have not, it is reported, diminished the yield, but with a good season the produce of this established goldfield should be, as in the case of Gympie, considerably increased. It is confidently predicted that with change of season the mining industry throughout the colony will assume increased proportions. Trade and commerce have been prosperous throughout the past year, and both enterprise and industry have met with more substantial rewards than perhaps during any previous similar period of our history. I think, sir, it will therefore be admitted that the present condition of the colony is satisfactory; that she has attained a position wherein she is quite competent to carry out to a satisfactory issue, and without the intervention of foreign syndicates, whatever public works or services may be authorised by Parliament, and that the conduct of such services will be more advantageously directed, and in the truest interests of the country, if subjected to the control of Parliament than if handed over to the administration of an irresponsible co-partnership. I beg to move, sir, that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1883-4, a sum not exceeding £300 for the salary of Aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. ARCHER said that in moving the adjournment of the debate he would ask the Treasurer when it would be convenient for the Committee to continue the debate on the Financial Statement?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that of course he could not expect hon. gentlemen to enter into a discussion on the subject when they had only just been put in possession of the Statement and tables. If the hon. gentleman was agreeable he would name Tuesday next.

Mr. ARCHER said he had moved the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said the practice was for the Treasurer to move the Chairman out of the chair.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had formally made the motion for £300 salary to initiate the debate; but there was no intention of passing it at present. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it would simplify matters to hon. members if the supplementary tables were printed in the same type as the main tables.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the fact was, as the hon. member would be aware, that he had not had much time to get the tables prepared. He meant to have had them placed at the foot of the original papers. That was his intention; but he had not time to carry it out. He did not know what number of tables might have been printed at the office, but if there had not been many the alteration could easily be made. He did not suppose the hon. member would desire to destroy a great quantity for the sake of having the alteration made.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, to a certain extent, the duties of a leader of the Opposition were those of destruction—at least, that seemed to be the policy adopted by the present Government.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Committee had leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, forwarding a message to the effect that the several joint committees should be allowed to exercise their control over matters committed to their management during the recess.

The PREMIER moved that the message be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

ELECTIONS ACT OF 1874 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

The PREMIER moved that the Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to reconsider clauses 3, 7, and the title.

On clause 3—"Additional questions to be put to voters"—

The PREMIER moved that the words "or if a proclamation to the effect hereinafter provided is in force in the district" be omitted, as they related to clauses of the Bill that had been omitted.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 7—"Notice to be sent to persons whose names are intended to be omitted from rolls or lists"—

The PREMIER moved that the words "or lists" at the end of the clause be omitted. The word "list" was properly used in the first place, because clerks of petty sessions had to deal with the lists; but it had been inserted by mistake at the end of the clause.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the title be amended by the addition of the words "and Electoral Rolls Act of 1879."

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported the Bill with further amendments, and amended title; and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL—SECOND READ-
ING.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with one very important phase of the Labour question as we have it in the colony at the present time. Last week we passed through this House a Bill removing from our statute-book the Acts which recognised the possibility or probability of our having recourse to India as a source of supply for agricultural labour. I sincerely hope that the policy to which effect was given in this House on that occasion will be the permanent policy of this colony. The Labour question, as I have had occasion to say on many occasions both inside and outside of the House, is an extremely difficult one, but the difficulty of it is not apprehended by a very large number of persons. Some persons appear to think that the solution of it is perfectly simple. I do not agree with them. I am one of those who think that the question is not yet ripe for solution. Nor do I think that it will be ripe for solution for a considerable time. The advocates of one view, of course, if they are right, can say that this question is ripe for solution now. If the proper way to solve the labour difficulty in this colony is to look to India as the source from which we can derive our labour, that field is open, and a very large number of immigrants may be derived from there. That would be a solution of the difficulty, and it would be a solution of the difficulty once for all, for I hold it to be practically impossible, if we once establish the system of the introduction of coolies here from India, to get rid of them. They would become permanent inhabitants in this colony, multiplying from year to year, and finally bringing about, unless the laws of nature were reversed, that state of affairs which exists in other countries where they are employed. When that state of affairs exists here, the result will be what any men in our positions can predict. And what would be the consequence? In the first place it is quite certain that agriculture would come to be considered in time a degrading occupation—an occupation unfit for the superior race, the governing race—and that a state of affairs will be brought about which exists in the South American States, in Mauritius, British Guiana, the West Indian Islands, and other places. I would regard it as a great calamity for Queensland or for any part of Australia that there should be any part of it where agriculture should be considered as a degrading occupation. I believe further, sir, that if that idea of degradation should be once introduced into any part of the colony it will spread—perhaps by a slow process, but it will undoubtedly spread—over the whole colony. So much with regard to the effect of black labour upon the white population. We should have then a governing aristocracy, and between them and their labourers there would be the mean whites. I may be wrong, but I challenge any hon. member who disputes this proposition to point out any country in which black labour is employed to a large extent where those results have not been brought about. I hold further that it would inevitably lead to the destruction of our present system of government, for I believe that the Imperial Government would never submit to the existence of our present form of government for an enormous servile population. The only Government which is effective in governing a large servile people is a despotic Government of some kind or other. It should be a Government with continuity of purpose, a Government with a fixed policy, and a Government that makes it its business to protect the servile labourers from their employers.

Now I do not think that state of things is consistent with the free institutions we have in this colony. These are two very good reasons which will be sufficient—which will be overwhelming against the idea of looking to coloured labour as the future source of supply for the colony of Queensland. In the future it must be either one thing or the other—white or black. It may be said possibly that the colony will be divided into two parts. Well, it may be; but I do not look forward to that. I do not think that is a material element in the consideration of this question. I do not think the people of the North who want black labour would get much better treatment from the electors around them than from the electors of the colony at large. That, however, is a solution of the difficulty which I do not now take into consideration. Unless there is a territorial separation it would be quite impossible and impracticable to keep the surplus coolie population or coloured population from overflowing. I look at the question in this way—Is this colony of Queensland the inheritance of Europe or Asia? That question must be answered in one way or the other.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Certainly not the inheritance of Europe.

The PREMIER: I regard Queensland as the inheritance of our own people.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who do they inherit it from?

The PREMIER: I am not standing here to bandy words with the hon. member. If he wishes to deliver a lecture on grammar he will have an opportunity of doing so by-and-by. I use the word "inheritance" as it is understood by all intelligent persons. That is the question, and I trust that the answer will not be that this country is to be regarded as the inheritance of the Asiatic races. That is the way in which I look at the question as a large one. But it is not always possible to deal with things in a perfectly logical and symmetrical manner. At the present time we find that a large number of persons are engaged in the industry of sugar-growing all over the colony, and they have been allowed to introduce coloured labour to the extent of, at the present time, about 14,000 persons. Those persons are here, and we have to deal with the matter as we find it. I do not think that in introducing this Bill I am departing from the principles which I have just enunciated. The kanakas are here, and we must do something to see that they do not injure the other portions of the community. I look forward to the future agricultural labourers of Queensland as not being kanakas or coolies, but Europeans; and that is the point of view from which I regard the matter altogether. But at the present time we have to face the fact that these men are coming here. Under existing circumstances it is not practicable to prevent them from coming here, and that while they are here they are allowed to engage in such occupations as very frequently to discourage and prevent the employment of Europeans, and prevent the enlargement of our European population, is well known. We also find that in the bringing of them here such serious abuses have arisen that it is absolutely necessary for our fair fame that we should take some immediate and stringent measures to prevent them. Now, those are the points of view from which I regard the question. I think we are bound, although we have not much time at our disposal, to attempt to find an immediate remedy. This Bill has been accordingly framed to deal with those matters. It does not attempt a settlement of the Labour question; but it does profess to be an attempt to mitigate, if not to avoid, the present

evils for which we require a remedy. The Bill is framed so as to include all islanders alike—whether under their three years' indentures, or if their indentures have expired. One of the great evils complained of, and it is a very serious one, is that the Polynesians—the excuse for whose introduction here—is that Europeans cannot be found to do the necessary work that they are doing—are not confined to the work for which they were introduced. The excuse is merely used as a pretext. People are induced to tolerate their introduction on this pretext; but when the islanders are once here they are employed in all sorts of occupations—engine-drivers, grooms, coachmen, domestic servants, carters—

Mr. PERKINS; Nurses.

The PREMIER: Yes, and nurses, as the hon. member says. They are engaged in all these and other occupations. They would certainly not be allowed to be introduced for the purpose of engaging in any of those occupations. It is idle for anyone to say that white men cannot be found to do that work; and there is no doubt that every kanaka engaged in these occupations is displacing a white man. To tolerate the introduction of these islanders is only a temporary measure. I wish everybody to understand that it can only be a temporary measure—that is, the permission for their introduction at all. But while they are here I think that they ought to be confined to field work. I do not think for a moment that it will be found ultimately impossible to get Europeans to do the work. I believe that from my experience in the North; and every time I go there I am confirmed in this opinion, in spite of the admirable speeches which I hear on the other side. I wish the hon. member for Mackay could get some of the timber-getters and miners in the North, who are exposed to hardships infinitely greater than can exist in the canefields, and ask them if they think it impossible for white men to do the work on plantations. I have communications from them frequently, and I have never met one who has not scouted the idea, unless he has gone into some commercial speculation, the profits of which depend upon the introduction of black labour. White men may not be able to do such work in some countries. It may be so in India and in some other places; but I am speaking of Queensland, and I do not believe that it will ultimately be found necessary that, in order to carry on field-work, we should introduce black labour. Planters will find no difficulty in getting their land cultivated, perhaps not quite so profitably, but there will be a larger European population employed than there has been hitherto. If we go on introducing black labour into this colony, we shall have a number of large estates managed by a few owners; but more frequently by managers for absentee owners, with large gangs of the inferior races. Recognising that these men are here, and desiring to reduce the evil in some way, we propose to restrict the employment of Polynesians in this colony to the purposes for which employers ask to bring them in. I do not think there is anything unfair in that. Whether it will be found practicable to so restrict them in the face of the strong opposition in the form of passive resistance, which I fear will be found, I do not know; at any rate, I think it is desirable to affirm the illegality of employing Polynesians in other occupations. I do not know the arguments that will be used against this; but I shall be curious to listen to them for many reasons, and it is unnecessary to anticipate them now. Let me pass on to the details of the Bill. Under the present law Polynesians may be licensed for the purpose of engaging in tropical

or semi-tropical agriculture. The applicant, before he gets such a license, is bound to prove to the satisfaction of the Minister that he is engaged or is making provision for engaging in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture, and that the islanders he desires to introduce are intended to be employed in such agriculture only. But how often does he keep that promise, or, rather, how many applicants are there in the colony who completely set aside the promise and employ the islanders in all sorts of occupations? Tropical and semi-tropical agriculture is defined to include the business of cultivating sugar-cane, cotton, tea, coffee, rice, spices, or other tropical or semi-tropical productions or fruits, and "making the products thereof marketable." This last part may mean anything you please on a sugar plantation. There are no provisions in the present law relating to time-expired kanakas: they are free to go anywhere, and they are engaged in all sorts of occupations. They are engaged as splitters, fencers, carriers, and grooms; in fact, there is scarcely any occupation in which they are not engaged. We propose, therefore, to restrict their occupation to what we call proper field-work—that is work which many persons insist the kanakas are the only persons on earth who can be found to do. To define "field-work" is a difficult thing; and probably there will be some difference of opinion about the 2nd clause in the Bill, in which it is said that field-work shall not include—

"The working of or attending upon machinery used in making the products thereof marketable; the business of grooms or coachmen; the business of horse-driving or carting, except in field-work; or domestic or household service."

I think there will be no difference of opinion on this point that the business of grooms or coachmen and horse-driving or carting is not field-work. I myself have seen half-a-mile of drays all driven by kanakas; and it is no use telling me that that is work that cannot be done by white men. The 2nd clause and the clauses corresponding to it—clauses 7, 8, and 9—deal with the employment of Polynesians in other than field-work. Other parts of the Bill deal with other scandals. There is no doubt that the administration of the Polynesian Labourers Act has been, and is up to the present time, extremely defective. Most serious abuses exist in the labour trade. I am sorry to say that during the short time I have been in the Colonial Secretary's Office I have had a considerable amount of work to do in reading despatches received, requesting reports upon scandals that have been reported in the Colonial Office in England, to the Commodore in the Pacific and to other people. In every case I make it my business to make the best investigation possible, and I must say there have been abuses. In one or two instances, and in one in particular, I am glad to have been able to report that there has been nothing in the complaints. I may as well say that was the case of the "Lavinia" and the charges made by Mr. Morrison. The papers in that case have been ordered to be laid on the table of the House, and they will be as soon as possible. I think I may say that in that particular case the charges made were groundless, but there have been others in which very serious wrong has been done. At the present time, as far as I can understand, the practice is not to be too particular in selecting the masters and officers of the vessels engaged in the trade. The master was very often a most unsuitable person, and the recruiting agent was often an unsuitable person—sometimes a white man and sometimes a man picked up on the islands; and, further, they are now paid per head, a sort of head-money for the labourers recruited. Now, if you put two unscrupulous persons on board a vessel cruising in

the South Sea Islands for Polynesian labourers, and pay them so much per head for those they bring, it does not require any great gift of prophecy to say that there will be abuses committed. If the trade is to be permitted—and I mean permitted, not by the people of this colony only—if the matter is not to be taken forcibly out of our hands, we shall have to show that we are seriously in earnest, and intend to put a stop to these abuses. I say particularly to hon. members who believe it to be desirable at the present time to continue the introduction of kanakas, that unless we set to work seriously to prevent the abuses now disgracing the name of Queensland the matter will be taken out of our hands. But I believe these abuses may be done away with to a very great extent by stern and inflexible administration. I will give an instance of how the matter has been worked. About ten days ago I asked for a copy of the instructions given to agents on board Polynesian labour vessels, having one case before me which I did not consider satisfactory. To my very great surprise, however, I was informed that there were none—that the only instruction he got was that he was appointed as an agent. I regret to say that in the few days that have since elapsed I have had no time to issue instructions. This is, however, a matter more, I think, of administration, and there is no need that it should be embodied in the Bill. I am of opinion that the agents on these vessels should be provided with most carefully drawn-up instructions, and be called upon to report in detail as to how they have performed their duties. I think that if the persons employed in the ships are persons who can satisfy the Government that they are persons of respectable character, and if we take from them the pecuniary inducement to do wrong—an inducement which has led many good men astray—take away that pecuniary inducement to do wrong, for at present the more wrong they do the more money they will get—I believe that scandal at all events will be removed, or at any rate mitigated. The penalty for tempting men to do wrong in that way, proposed by the Bill, is very severe. I know it will be said that its very severity will prevent it being operative. Sometimes this is so, but no less penalty would be adequate in this case. At present, if a single native is kidnapped on board ship, the ship and everything belonging to it is liable to forfeiture. I think the owners of a ship, or other persons who give a master pecuniary inducement to kidnap, ought to be treated in precisely the same way. The 5th section of the Bill provides that a detailed statement of the expenditure upon every voyage must be sent in. That provision may be evaded, and so may the returns in the case of the income tax in Great Britain; but the risk and danger which must be run by persons attempting to evade will prevent its being evaded to a very great extent, as very few persons will care to run the risk; and honest persons who do not attempt to evade it will not be affected by the provision in the slightest degree—it will only affect those who desire and attempt to do wrong. The 6th clause raises another question—that it shall not be lawful to supply Polynesians with firearms. What do we find now in the South Sea Islands? They are becoming full of firearms, and when peaceable traders going there from here or elsewhere come near their shores, or come round a point perhaps, they are met with a volley of rifle bullets. These are some of our civilising influences in the South Seas. The natives have now been supplied with firearms for years and years, and I think it is quite time the practice was put a stop to. Since the present Government came into office we have taken the preliminary step and will not allow vessels

to carry firearms to the islands. I had an opportunity of bringing the matter before the Governments of some of the other colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, and Fiji—and they have undertaken to take precisely the same step. New South Wales has already issued a proclamation; the Government of Victoria have promised to take the same steps as we do, though I have not seen their proclamation yet; and the Governor of Fiji assured me that as soon as he returned to the islands—which would be in a very short time—precisely similar steps would be taken there. So that I believe the distribution of firearms in the islands will be put a stop to. I cannot say what the French will do; but even if the French offer to give them arms that can be no reason why we should imitate them. Another matter I must now refer to is dealt with by the 12th section. The present Act does not apply to islanders engaged in the pearl or bêche-de-mer fisheries at all. The 42nd section of the principal Act, which included a prohibition against supplying spirits to islanders, did not consequently apply to those employed in the fisheries; but, from the reports I have received sometimes from Torres Straits, most terrible orgies occur from the supply of spirits to Polynesians engaged in the boats fishing there. I think it better to put a stop to them, and for that reason the clause has been inserted in the Bill. I have now briefly explained the provisions of the Bill. I am not desirous of making an unnecessarily long speech, and I think I have explained the provisions of the Bill sufficiently to enable hon. members to become acquainted with its operations. I know a difficulty will be raised with respect to time-expired islanders, but I think we cannot help that. I have not the slightest intention of excepting islanders who may have been here three years from the same regulations which, I think, ought to apply to those actually serving their indentures.

Mr. BLACK said he had hoped, after the discussion on the repeal of the Coolie Bill the other night, that a lengthened debate on this disputed, evadable subject of coloured labour would have been avoided. But the hon. the Premier, in one of his characteristic speeches—a speech which, no doubt, from a legal point of view was a very able one—had still left them and left the country in very grave doubt as to what his intentions on the Labour question really were. He offered to assist the hon. gentleman as far as he possibly could in framing such amendments to the Polynesian Labour Act as would meet the undoubted abuses which that labour was at present suffering from, and he believed that the hon. gentleman, in all sincerity, had tried to bring forward a scheme in connection with that labour which should be satisfactory for some time to come. He regretted to say that, with the undoubted information which he had at his hand, as being Premier of the colony and Colonial Secretary—in which department the whole management of the labour rested;—he regretted that with that vast amount of information—information augmented during his northern trips—that he should have brought forward such a very meagre scheme as he had, a scheme which did not meet the requirements of the times. The hon. gentleman had stated on more than one occasion that the employment of kanaka labour was indispensable to the profitable carrying on of the sugar estates of the colony—an opinion in which he (Mr. Black) entirely concurred. The hon. gentleman was looking at him as much as to question the statements he had made. He made those statements in the House when they had the Coolie Bill under discussion, and he then gave him the occasion on which he made that state-

ment. As it seemed almost absolutely necessary that many of the matters referred to then should be repeated that evening, he would repeat the occasion on which that utterance was made and the name of the paper in which it could be found. In the *Courier* of June 19 last, during the hon. gentleman's visit to Mackay, he stated this :—

"He had always recognised the fact that kanakas were indispensable, and had never seen his way to interfere with their introduction."

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: But that was at Mackay.

Mr. BLACK: An hon. member said that was at Mackay. It was at Mackay; but he maintained that a gentleman holding the high position of Premier of the colony should not so shape his utterances as to make them acceptable in one portion of the country when they might not be to another—

The PREMIER: Who said, "That was at Mackay"? Anyone reading the hon. gentleman's speech would think that I said so.

Mr. BLACK: An hon. gentleman interjected, "But that was at Mackay," inferring that the hon. Premier's utterances at Mackay were not equally guarded to what they were in the House. What the public were crying out for in connection with the Polynesian traffic was the proper regulation of time-expired islanders. The working men of the colony—as he thought was reasonably proved in the petition he had read in the House yesterday, signed by 700 more or less working men in the Mackay district—did not say a word wishing any interference to take place in the employment of Polynesians on the plantations. They wished—and that the hon. gentleman himself had seen during his northern trip—that the time-expired islander should be properly regulated; but the hon. gentleman, in endeavouring in the Bill to do that, was also at the same time striking a blow—a most serious blow—at the whole sugar industry. He should be prepared to show how that would take place when he came to go through the different clauses of the Act. The hon. gentleman, in introducing the Bill, made use of many old phrases in connection with coloured labour. He said "This is a country for the white man; we have got it as an inheritance." He (Mr. Black) admitted all that; it was, undoubtedly, a country for white men, and, as he had said before, he would rather see the whole of their sugar land up north worked by white men if it could be proved that that were possible. But to ask a class who had made a most expensive experiment—who had founded an industry which would never have existed but for that experiment—to ask them, against their own convictions, to make an experiment merely for the satisfaction of some other gentleman, was unreasonable. There was no reason why hon. gentlemen holding similar views to those of the junior member for North Brisbaue and the member for Rosewood should not, by their example, prove that the principles they advocated could be successfully carried out. He need only say that those who had brought the industry to its present condition would only be too glad to avail themselves of the experience of gentlemen holding opposite views, if success could be shown to result from it. But to ask the gentlemen who had made the experiment—who had not only their own experience to guide them, but were fortified by the experience of all sugar-growing countries in the world—to make an experiment which they believed must inevitably result in disaster was, to say the least of it, unreasonable. He said undoubtedly, let them make this grand colony a colony for white men. He said that emphatically, and so far he agreed with gentlemen holding the most extreme views on the other

side. He wanted to see Queensland a country where their own countrymen could reside and benefit themselves. He wanted it to be a country in which they could hold out inducements to working men at home to come out and achieve an independent position for themselves, and not to come here to be a lot of "mean whites" working on sugar estates, doing the work of blackfellows. He could understand that they were endeavouring to make it a white man's country—that they were bringing out European immigrants and giving them work to do for which they were physically unsuited. The hon. the Premier also referred to what might be a possible solution of this difficult question—a question which successive Governments had hung up—he could only use that phrase. Every succeeding Government they had had for the last fifteen years had always endeavoured to shirk this very difficult question; and the time had now arrived when it should be settled once and for all. Those engaged in the occupation of sugar-growing had done nothing except in conformity with the laws of the country. Inducements were held out; they were invited to undertake that pursuit, and they had done so; and the Government at that time, being convinced that it was only with a certain description of labour it could be successfully carried on, gave them that labour. They had gone on through good and bad times until they had brought the industry to what it was at present. He need hardly refer to that. It was admitted by hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House that the result had been one of undoubted good to the colony at large. The question now arose whether by legislation they should foster that industry—whether the good results of the past were to be perpetuated in the future; or whether, now, for some mere sentiment—for it was nothing more—they were to strangle the industry and destroy it; whether they should give it a kick it could badly stand now. They had heard the hon. gentleman talk of absentee proprietors, and about the huge profits being made out of the industry; but he could assure him and hon. members that it was nothing of the sort. Referring to the value of the sugar exports in the Treasurer's Financial Statement, he found that in 1880 the amount was £129,000; in 1881, £106,000; and in 1882, £109,000. That did not show a very great increase. Last year and the year before the crops had not been up to expectation, and he could tell hon. gentlemen that it was the years 1878, 1879, and 1880 that were the prosperous years, and were the means of attracting a large amount of capital to the colony, which had been invested in sugar, and from which up to the present no proportionate return had been derived. It remained for hon. gentlemen to consider whether in times like the present—times in which the disasters to the squatting industry made the prospect look very serious, notwithstanding the Treasurer's glowing account of their ability to float loans—they were to destroy their producing industries. If they by their own acts destroyed them, or if through nature they were jeopardised, he maintained that the men from whom they borrowed money at home would say, "Where is your security gone?" They would say, "Of course you cannot be held accountable for disasters brought about by the seasons; but, on the other hand, you had an industry which was one of the chief securities you had to offer us, and you have chosen to destroy that industry for a mere sentiment." In that way he maintained they would be held accountable, not only by the capitalist at home who had lent them money on the security of that industry, but they would also be held accountable should any reverses overtake the colony, by the working men who would be shut out of employment which they undoubtedly

had now. Because they had 25,000 or 30,000 immigrants brought to the colony last year, they talked about immigration being carried on at too rapid a rate; but where had it been carried on at a too rapid rate? Was it down here or was it in the North? They heard no outcry on the subject along the Northern ports. They had had landed in the central sugar district of the colony, Mackay, during the last two years over 3,000 immigrants.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: How many came to Brisbane?

Mr. BLACK: He did not know how many came to Brisbane, but he had every reason to believe that the majority of the 2,200 who were landed there last year remained in the district, and for this reason: because there was ample employment for them. They had no object in leaving, but when immigrants came here they centred around the capital, were unable to find employment, they would not go north, and went away to Sydney. He maintained that the immigration system by which immigrants had been landed in reasonable numbers along the coast had been the best ever introduced to settle people in the colony. There were many causes which would almost prevent them from leaving the North, one of which was that it was too expensive to get away. From Brisbane they could get away to New South Wales for a comparatively small sum, but the expense was increased the further they went along the Northern coast. The hon. gentleman had spoken of separation. He (Mr. Black) deprecated any such idea as that of separation. He believed the time would come when better counsels would prevail—when this subject would be better understood, and when it would be clearly seen that it was impossible, with a colony possessing a coast-line of something like 1,500 miles, for a Parliament sitting in Brisbane to legislate for the various industries and conditions embraced in that huge distance. When he cast his eyes over the Ministerial benches what did he see? He saw nothing but the southern portion of the colony represented. It was essentially a Brisbane Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: Nonsense!

Mr. BLACK: He repeated that it was essentially a Brisbane Government. The hon. the Premier had attempted to avoid that accusation when he selected his Minister for Lands. He admitted that the hon. gentleman who occupied the office of Minister for Lands might fairly be considered a representative of Central Queensland; but the Premier, in making that appointment, did not make it on account of the experience that hon. gentleman was known to possess, but because he did not want to have it said "You are a Queen-street Ministry." Then look at the hon. the Attorney-General! Was that gentleman put in the Ministry on his merits, or was he not put in so that it could not be said it was a Queen-street Ministry? Did that hon. gentleman claim to be a representative of the North?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes.

Mr. BLACK: Had he any interest in the North?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Has he any principal?

Mr. BLACK: Had he any interest in common with the North? Had he not made the high position he occupies a mere stepping-stone for future advancement? He said the hon. gentleman had, undoubtedly; and he held that it was impossible, with the present constitution of the House, that the varied conditions and requirements of different parts of the colony could be properly considered. It was not separation they wanted, but federation.

They wanted to see the seat of government taken away from Brisbane. He would rather see the seat of government under federation in New South Wales, and believed that the colony would prosper more than under the present system. Otherwise they could bring the same result about by other means—by the removal of the seat of government to a more central position. It was unreasonable to suppose that hon. gentlemen could properly legislate for the varied conditions of the colony from Brisbane, with its large centre of population and with the preponderance of representation that the South possessed. They talked about giving Fortitude Valley another member. That was an attempt to retain the preponderance of representation which, he said, was injuriously affecting the interests of the parts of the colony away from Brisbane. The hon. the leader of the Government had said that he was going to educate the planters on that subject. That was a very bold assertion to make. He had never told them when he had been amongst them that they were in need of very much education; but he (Mr. Black) thought that if the hon. gentleman would only take into consideration what he had said, he would endeavour to bring his influence to bear against some of those gentlemen who opposed black labour, to try the experiment for themselves of growing sugar without that labour. That was the proper way to prove that the views held by them could be successfully carried out. They would never convince gentlemen who had spent the best years of their life and a large amount of capital in the sugar industry that they were wrong in their present views. They might try it; they might stifle the industry, they might ruin those men, but they must ruin with them the prospects of the colony in the future. Now he would review some of the clauses in the Bill. As he said before, although he considered the measure most crude, still he should undoubtedly do his best to make it a good working measure and an improvement upon the present Act. But he maintained that the Premier, having admitted the necessity of Polynesian labour on the plantations, and being at the head of a powerful Government with a large majority, should have gone a step further, and in the same way that he introduced European immigrants should have taken the whole task upon his shoulders of introducing Polynesian immigrants. It should have been taken out of the hands of the planters; and that was the direction in which the Premier would have been more deserving of his (Mr. Black's) support than he was at the present time. No one that he had ever heard denied the abuses that the industry was liable to. He had pointed out the direction that reform should take, but the Bill would not effect that reform. The Government would have no more control over the labour vessels under the provisions of that Bill than they had before. There was a weakness in the Bill, and that was that they had no recognised form of government down at the islands, and the Bill did not give any sufficient security that the captain and labour agent would be any better in the future than they had been in the past—

The PREMIER: That is a matter of administration.

Mr. BLACK said it was a matter of administration, and he knew how administration was likely to work in that particular. If the Government wished to do any more than strike a fatal blow to the sugar industry under cover of that Bill, they would have adopted his suggestions—made to the Premier when at Mackay—and undertake the whole matter of supplying the planters with Polynesian labour—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: At the country's cost?

Mr. BLACK said the planters had never come to that House to ask for any consideration or seek assistance. The planters had always paid every sixpence in connection with the labour they employed. If, therefore, the Government were willing to provide the labour which was considered essential, the planters undoubtedly would pay all expense. The 2nd clause of the Bill defined the occupation to which Polynesians should be confined. In subsection A it said, "the working of or attending upon machinery used in making the products thereof marketable." If that were a little more clearly defined he would be glad to adopt the other subsections. Again, in subsection A—"the business of grooms and coachmen." The planters could do very well without them. "The business of horse-driving or carting, except in field-work." Now, he quite agreed with that. He deprecated seeing a lot of kanakas driving carts with sugar into town. He would keep them out of the municipalities, and that was a thing which would meet the views of the whole of the sugar-growing districts. If they put in a clause keeping Polynesians entirely out of the municipality as working men, it would strike at the root of all the dissatisfaction now shown with reference to the employment of time-expired islanders. Then with regard to subsection D—"Domestic or household service." Well, that might go without a stand being made, but they must take into consideration what they did if they passed that subsection. That section would not compel the employment of European servants. Where the climatic conditions were such that European servants could be employed, they would be employed. Where the climatic conditions were such that European servants were not willing to do the work, coolie servants would be employed. Malays would be employed, or other labour suitable for domestic service could be imported; and he thought the Premier would admit that, when he said coolies could be employed for domestic service, he was saying what was correct, for, notwithstanding the coolie regulations of the Indian Government prohibited the emigration of labourers, they especially exempted coolie servants. He saw them employed in the vessels on the coast, and they were employed everywhere where Europeans could not be employed, with a few exceptions. If they chose to legislate for those exceptions, let them do so; but to exempt the Polynesian from household service did not necessarily mean that the employment would be transferred to Europeans. That should be understood. They were compelling the planters in districts where European servants were not obtainable—such as on the northern rivers and the new plantations—they were driving them, he said, if they wished to carry out the provisions of the Act, to do that which was the greatest danger to the country, the employment of unregulated labour. With regard to subsection A, he would point out that if it was intended to mean that from the beginning of the mill to the end of the mill—from the time the cane went on to the cane-carrier until it came out as manufactured sugar—the kanaka was not to be employed, they would ruin every small sugar-grower in the colony, and strike a blow against the initiation of the central mill system—a system which he, for one, desired should be carried out—for the reason that the planter who bought the cane from the cane-grower was not going to work at a loss. If they were going to add £2 or £3 a ton to the cost of producing sugar, he would take that out of the small cane-grower. Instead of giving 10s. or 11s. per ton, which was the current rate in the

North, he would only give 6s. or 7s.; he would give the grower a price which he (Mr. Black) could assure hon. members would ruin all the small growers in the North. The industry was not sufficiently good. There was a sufficient margin to induce men to devote their attention to the cultivation of sugar-cane, but if they attempted to legislate in the way proposed they would ruin some of the growers. They were trying by this Bill to legislate to ruin the planters. They would make a stand for two or three years; they could hold out because they had the money to back them. But it was the small men—the men who, he was glad to say, were settling near the big mills—who would suffer. Those men had just sufficient to carry them on from year to year until crushing time came. They did not cut a stick of cane themselves. Hon. gentlemen might say that those men did not employ black labour. He was glad to say that there were many cases where, by a combination such as he was sketching, cane-growers did not employ coloured labour. But what did such a grower do? He did not employ black labour himself, it was true; but he had his wife and children, who did a great deal of work for him. Occasionally he got a time-expired boy to lend him a hand, and sometimes an aboriginal. But that was not a system on which a big industry could be conducted. The man, as he (Mr. Black) had admitted, perhaps did not employ coloured labour, but did he not benefit from its employment? The planter gave him 10s. or 12s. a ton for his cane, and did he not send his "boys" to cut and cart it? Therefore, although the small grower might not actually employ coloured labour he benefited by it. If they compelled the planter to employ nothing but white labour from one end of the mill to the other they would increase the cost of production so much that it would at once act on the small growers throughout the colony. He did not know whether that view of the case had struck hon. gentlemen before; but he had pointed out what in his opinion would be the result. They would shut up all the small growers throughout the colony, and the very system they were wishing to introduce—the central mill system—would be abolished. No one would ever be tempted to put up a central mill, because he could not get people to grow cane. If the "working of or attending upon machinery" was merely meant to apply to the mechanical labour—that was that a Polynesian was not to be employed as an engine-driver—which was properly the work of a mechanic—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are shifting your ground.

Mr. BLACK said he was not shifting his ground. If it was intended to mean that no Polynesian was to be employed as a mechanic in a mill, then he agreed with the Bill. He did not think such a thing was right; but he also said that the cases in which it was done were so infinitesimally small that it did not make any difference whether the subsection was left in or not. He should be glad to hear in explanation that the working of or attending upon machinery was merely to prevent kanakas or Polynesians doing work which properly should be done by mechanics. Clause 3 would be all right if it were only carried out properly. They had seen instances where the occupation of agent on labour vessels was looked upon as a refuge for the destitute. Men who not only had no character at present, but had a very bad record for the past, were those who were generally selected as labour agents. He had always protested against that. It was not the planters who were to blame for it, but the

Government for the time being; he did not care whether it was the present or the previous Government. He had always protested against men being appointed as labour agents whose characters would not bear investigation, and who, in many instances, had been sent out by their friends because they could not be kept away from drink. They could not put a young man into greater temptation than by sending him as a labour agent in a vessel, unless they prohibited the carrying of any grog on board; even then they would go into any harbour to get it. However, he was glad that the Premier concurred with him that the selection of labour agents in the past had not been what it ought to be, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would endeavour to see that that part of the trade was properly carried out. He could mention one or two cases of very recent appointment since the hon. gentleman came into office which he did not think would bear strict investigation.

The PREMIER: I should be glad of the information.

Mr. BLACK said he would be most happy to give the hon. gentleman the information. The present system of recruiting was bad and rotten, and he thought the Government ought to take the whole thing into their hands; then there would be some chance of having it carried out properly. Coming to clause 4, it read as follows:—

"No person shall pay or give, or agree to pay or give, to the master of any ship employed in carrying passengers from the Pacific Islands to Queensland, or any other person employed thereon, any sum of money or other valuable consideration, the amount whereof is dependent either in whole or in part upon the number of passengers conveyed to Queensland. But the remuneration of the master of every such ship, and of every other person employed thereon, shall be at a fixed rate, either for the voyage, or dependent wholly upon the time occupied in the voyage."

The intention of that clause was very good; it was to prevent captains getting what was called "head-money." It was a usual occurrence for a captain of a labour vessel to get a bonus of 10s. a head for all the labourers he brought in; and the recruiting agent—not the Government agent on board, but usually one of the able seamen—also profited by it. But the Bill would not prevent it. In the majority of cases vessels went down to the islands with a captain as part owner. How was the Act to apply to him? The remuneration depended in whole or in part on the number of passengers such vessel brought. He believed that in the case of 75 per cent. of the ships that went down to those islands the masters were part owners, and their remuneration undoubtedly depended upon the number of passengers they shipped. He was pointing those things out to the Premier in order that he might, before the Bill got into committee, devise some scheme by which the very laudable object which the hon. gentleman sought to attain would be attained; but as the Bill stood now it was impracticable to carry it out unless the Government took the whole system of Polynesian immigration into their hands, and that was what they ought to do. What was the penalty in this case? The Bill said:—

"If the provisions of this section are violated in respect of any ship, whether by the owner, charterer, or any other person, the ship, her tackle, apparel, and furniture, shall be forfeited to Her Majesty, and the person offending shall also be liable to a penalty of one hundred pounds."

What was the meaning of the Bill at all? Was it meant really to strangle the sugar industry, or had the hon. gentleman framed it without understanding anything at all about the subject? It was one thing or the other. If that clause could possibly be carried out there was no doubt that

the object which some hon. members opposite desired to see attained—namely, the stoppage of all Polynesian immigration—would be attained; but he could not believe one-half the Premier's utterances on the subject, or that he really wished to do anything of the sort. Clause 5 would also prove useless, because it would be utterly impossible to detect or prove anything of the sort. As to clause 6—"Firearms or ammunition not to be supplied to islanders"—at the first glance that seemed to be a very good clause, but they must look to what would be the result of those strict regulations. The Polynesian would still get his firearms. He could tell the hon. gentleman what was taking place up in his own district. Time-expired men, who were in hopes of spending their £18 as they chose, were disgusted with us, for they considered there had been a breach of faith—and it was undoubtedly a breach of faith with them. They came to the colony with the distinct understanding that they could spend their wages as they chose, and they were encouraged to come in the hope of spending them in buying firearms, and when they were not permitted to do so they were justified in saying there had been a breach of faith with them; and yet the people here claimed to be a superior race and would scorn to take advantage of a semi-civilised race such as those islanders were. He said it was a great injustice to those men, who had no power to defend themselves. That House could step in and do what it liked, but they might do a thing under pressure which might be neither just nor right. That injustice was done, and yet hon. gentlemen on the other side professed to scorn to do an unfair action. Many cases had come before him in which those men were actually in possession of firearms; and although the hon. Premier told him that every case would be treated on its merits, he knew that in many cases that had not been done.

The PREMIER: It has been done.

Mr. BLACK said that in many cases time-expired islanders were actually in possession of firearms, but, fearing to take them on board ship lest they should be seized, they gave them away to other boys, for they could not know that all they had to do was to appeal to the Premier. They looked upon it as a grave injustice, and he should not be surprised if they considered themselves justified in retaliating upon some of the Europeans on the first opportunity they got after they returned to the islands. He sincerely hoped such would not be the result, but they could not blame them after the manifest breach of faith with which they were treated. The object of preventing their getting firearms was to prevent them firing at the ships as they were in the habit of doing. It was said that the abuses were so glaring that they were justified in retaliating. Well, it was rather hard to reconcile those two statements. If the abuses had been so glaring as to deserve retaliation, then those who were shot deserved what they got. Certainly, as amongst all savage races, they had not always taken care to visit the punishment upon the right persons, but he had the experience of men who thoroughly understood the whole question, and they said they would sooner run the risk of being shot by the firearms supplied to the islanders than by poisoned arrows.

The PREMIER: They have no poisoned arrows.

Mr. BLACK said the Premier said they had no poisoned arrows; and that was a proof of what he most complained of—the attempt of the hon. Premier to legislate upon a subject upon which his information was so extremely crude. He said they had poisoned arrows, and people accustomed to going down to the islands had stated they

would rather run the risk of being shot with such firearms as they had than with the poisoned arrows which they used with such precision.

The PREMIER: You know that careful scientific investigations made on the subject report that nothing of the kind exists. I have read the papers and medical extracts on the subject.

Mr. BLACK said another thing to look at was that the prohibition to take firearms from here would not prevent the islanders getting them. As a matter of fact the prohibition would simply injure their own traders. Why, time-expired islanders would go on board ship with all their wages, with the distinct understanding that the captain would take them to Havanna Harbour, and they could spend their money as they liked when they got there. So that while injuring a section of our own people they did not attain the result they wished to arrive at by the prohibition. Clause 7 might pass, provided that the subsections of clause 2 were properly explained. Clause 10 said:—

“All offences against this Act may be prosecuted in a summary way before two justices of the peace, and the accused person, or the wife or husband of an accused person, shall be a competent witness on his or her behalf.”

He took it from that that if they wished to get a conviction against a husband they might bring his wife into court and make her give evidence against him. He would like to ask the Premier if that was not so?

The PREMIER: It is in the interest of the accused, to enable him to defend himself if he is unjustly accused.

Mr. BLACK asked if he was to understand that if a man was charged with employing an islander as a domestic servant his wife might be brought to give evidence against him? If so, it was a very mean thing to stick in a Bill like that, when they had to descend to such petty means of getting evidence that they were to bring a wife into court to give evidence against her husband. He said the colony had descended to a very low stage indeed. By clause 12 it was intended to prevent islanders engaged in the *bêche-de-mer* fisheries from getting grog. That was a very good clause if properly carried out, but he would point out that not only the present, but previous Governments had refused to put the clause in the existing Act into operation. The police in the Mackay, Maryborough, and Brisbane districts had refused to take any steps to secure convictions against publicans selling grog to kanakas. Such being the case, how could it be expected that a clause of that sort would do any good in the Torres Straits? It would be utterly impossible to carry it out.

The PREMIER: The police are not likely to refuse very much longer.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to hear it. The root of the evil could be easily struck at, and if time-expired boys could be kept from coming within municipalities very little more complaint would be heard. Kanakas came to the colony under an agreement that they should be returned home at the expiration of three years, and sending them home was quite as much a part of the agreement as paying them their wages, and the agreement was not terminated until they were sent home. The Government had full power to send the islanders home. And when the time came when coolies would be introduced—as they undoubtedly would be—

Mr. BROOKES: Never!

Mr. BLACK said the time would undoubtedly come when the working men would rise and say, “We will not return any member to Parliament who will not import coloured labour under

strict regulations.” The present system was encouraging planters to go abroad and bring in coloured labour without any regulations. And they were doing so, as the Premier knew very well. If they did not do so, they would have to adopt a system which would be far more injurious to the working men, and that was, to bring out cheap mean whites to do the work on plantations. He believed in the working men sharing in the prosperity attending the sugar industry in the shape of good wages, and they certainly ought not to be brought out to do work which could only be done by blacks, not only in Queensland, but in every country where the sugar industry was carried on. He would not take up the time of the House longer. He had pointed out some defects in the Bill, which he hoped the Premier would see his way to amend when the Bill got into committee. He should do all he could to make it a good sound measure. The Bill was to be passed. It would not be to the interest of the country that it should be thrown out, because it was an attempt at mitigating to a slight extent the evils complained of; and he believed that if the Premier had not wished to do the best he could under the circumstances he would not have brought in the Bill at all.

Mr. BROOKES said he never rose to reply to the hon. member for Mackay without feeling that he was at a great disadvantage in not possessing that fluency of tongue which characterised all that hon. gentleman's speeches in the House. He rose not so much for the purpose of following that hon. gentleman through his speech, as for the purpose of presenting—as far as he knew it from all sources—the true nature of the Pacific Islands trade. It was scarcely pertinent to the debate to review the Coloured Labour question as a whole, for they were not dealing with that question as a whole. By the decision of the House last week the colony had decided that coloured labour should be got rid of, and all that the hon. member said on the general question of coloured labour might very well have been dispensed with. If that hon. gentleman entertained the slightest idea that the working men of the colony would ever come to regard him as their guide, philosopher, and friend, he was labouring under a dreadful mistake. Whenever the hon. member spoke of his desire to promote the welfare of the working men of the colony, he could not help it leaking out that it was not the working men's welfare he was looking after, but singly and solely the interests of the sugar-planters; and that was very obvious in the address just delivered. There was another defect he always noticed in the speeches of the sugar-planters, and that was that they could not look at the Coloured Labour question except from their own pecuniary point of view. He should now take the liberty of presenting the Pacific Islands trade as it was, as it had always been, and as it would ever be. The Pacific Islands business was introduced a little more than twenty years ago, and he challenged anyone to deny that, from the beginning to the end—from 1860 to the present time—that trade had not been one consecutive narrative of the foulest atrocities. The Premier was perfectly right when he said that, unless the colony did something to improve the character of that trade, a superior power would be stepping in and doing it for them. He would not take up the time of the House for a moment longer than he could help, but he did desire that justice should be done to the question; and he was sure that all who loved their species, whether black or white, would not consider that he was idling away the time of the House by reading a few extracts which he proposed to read. Thirteen years ago Bishop Pattison—whose name, he need hardly mention, was the name of a gentleman in every sense of the word—a gen-

tleman who knew no party feeling or political bias, but who possessed a very fine perception between right and wrong—said :—

“The trade—almost a regular slave trade—carried on by masters of small vessels, procuring, by fair means or foul, labourers for the Queensland and Fiji plantations, is interfering a good deal with the working of the mission. Any of these natives that may be taken back to his island will be sure to do harm. Under such circumstances, the South Sea Islander acquires all the low, vulgar vices of the worst class of white men, and becomes, of course, demoralised, and the source of demoralisation to his people. Any respectable traveller among ignorant or wild races will tell you the same thing.”

And again he said in the same year :—

“The deportation of natives is going on to a very great extent here, as in the New Hebrides and Banks Islands. Means of all kinds are employed, sinking canoes and capturing the natives, enticing men on board and getting them below, and then securing hatches and imprisoning them. Natives are retaliating. Lately, two or three vessels have been taken and all hands killed, besides boats’ crews shot at continually. A man called upon me at Mota the other day, who said that five out of seven in the boat were struck by arrows a few days before. The arrows were not poisoned, but one man was very ill. It makes even our work rather hazardous except where we are thoroughly well known. I hear that a vessel has gone to Santa Cruz, and I must be very cautious there, for there has been some disturbance almost to a certainty.”

He called the attention of the House to this particularly :—

“Whatever regulations the Government of Queensland or the Consul of Fiji may make, they can’t restrain the traders from employing unlawful means to get hold of the natives, and I know that many of these men are utterly unscrupulous.”

So much for an authority which he would assume that no one would contradict. But he would give an authority that some hon. members would prefer. He should read from a paper attached to the report of the Intercolonial Convention—a long paper written by Sir W. Des Vœux, the present Governor of Fiji, and Her Majesty’s Acting High Commissioner for the South Sea Islands. He need not necessarily say one word about that gentleman, but it was necessary on such occasions as the present to throw every possible light on every point they could. Sir W. Des Vœux was not only known as Governor of Fiji, but as a gentleman whose acquaintance with the Coloured Labour question had been in process of formation for a long time. He called the attention of hon. members to the fact that it was not a humanitarian paper at all ; it was a public paper, and dealt with the question of whether a protectorate should be established or not over the Polynesian Islands. The paper was a long one, and the conclusions come to were well worthy of the attention of everyone in that House and in the colony. After a long description of the islands of the Pacific, and after setting forth the political and commercial grounds, he said :—

“For these reasons I hold strongly that even for the purely economical interests of Australasia, and apart altogether from higher considerations on the score of humanity, the best policy to be pursued in Polynesia would be to discourage planting there except such as could be carried on in each island by the natives indigenous to it, there being no other apparent means of putting an end to the depopulation now going on, and of thus preserving the only secure foundation for commerce in the future.”

Sir W. Des Vœux had the idea—and it was worth the attention of hon. members—that under proper care and supervision the Pacific Islands might do a large intercolonial trade with Australia. He again said :—

“For the same reason the labour trade should be inexorably suppressed, land purchases should be placed under stringent regulations, and the sale to natives of firearms, explosives, and intoxicating liquors should be prevented by heavy penalties, all due encouragement being at the same time given to such legitimate trade as involves no recruiting and carrying away of labourers.”

Further on :—

“But, on the other hand, I fully recognise the difficulty in the way of Imperial control; which must, I fear, be regarded as out of the question. Assuming, therefore, that the policy above indicated would be pursued, I should immeasurably prefer the control of a confederated Australasia, even in the first instance, to the continuance of the present condition of things. The above assumption, however, I regard as all-important, and I make it in the confidence that the public opinion of a large confederation, as distinguished from one swayed by local interest, will be such as to warrant it. I am satisfied that when the true position of things comes to be recognised Australasians will refuse to permit a policy which, for the sake of a temporary and selfish end, would destroy a whole population, and would thus render eventually useless possessions likely, under better auspices, to be of inestimable value to their descendants.”

He considered that that testimony ought not to be lightly set aside. They were the deliberate and broad and statesmanlike and Christian views of a man who knew exactly what he was talking about, and who had taken a comprehensive view of the question of labour in the South Sea Islands. He wanted the House to learn something from the action of the colony at the recent general election. They saw hon. members on the Opposition side of the House posing as though a decided opinion on the Coloured Labour question had not been given by the colony. The public—not the working man alone by any means, but a large overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the colony—had said that they would not have coloured labour ; that the country should be a white man’s country ; that they wanted it as a country for Europeans, and nobody else. It might seem a very narrow view—anything but cosmopolitan—

Mr. MOREHEAD : Thoroughly Christian.

Mr. BROOKES : But hon. members of the Opposition might depend upon it that no theory—no trifling or non-sense—would ever avail against the loudly proclaimed voice of everybody in the colony. Although he was decidedly in favour of the abolition of coloured labour—and his were opinions which had not been hastily formed and from which he would never be diverted—he was prepared to accept the Bill. If he could not get 20s. in the £1, he would be very glad to get 5s., and it was on that principle he did so. Looking at the 2nd clause, he found the definition of “tropical or semi-tropical agriculture” to mean :—

“Field-work in connection with the cultivation of sugar-cane, cotton, tea, coffee, rice, spices, or other tropical or semi-tropical productions or fruits ; but shall not include—

(a) The working of or attending upon machinery used in making the products thereof marketable.”

Now when he was at Bundaberg, not very long ago, the sugar crop was being cut, carted, and crushed, and at the mills he saw kanakas doing work that not only whites, but European boys could do, and at the same time he was told by a resident of Bundaberg, who knew very well what he was talking about, that the boys in Bundaberg could not get employment at the mills because their places were filled by kanakas. That was one grand argument in favour of the 2nd clause. He was also at another plantation at Bundaberg, and he was very glad of the opportunity of going there because the steamer that conveyed him to Bundaberg also conveyed thirty-five islanders from Maryborough to that place. He would have a few words to say when the Bill was in committee on the fact of those islanders being taken from Maryborough to Bundaberg, because if they were engaged for Maryborough they ought not to have been taken to Bundaberg. However, those thirty-five islanders were in the fore part of the steamer, and every one had a string round his neck with

a label exactly like a prize bullock. He went forward and saw them, and his blood actually boiled to think that in this colony of Queensland, named after Her Most Gracious Majesty, and supposed to be the home of everything free, such a state of things could be found to exist. He afterwards saw twenty-five of those kanakas on a large plantation, and one of the servants there assured him that for the first six months no South Sea Islander was worth his salt; he did not say how much they were worth at the end of six months, but that during that period they were more trouble than profit a great deal. Again, at the sugar refinery at Bundaberg he found kanakas doing work that could be done not only by white men but by the white boys of Maryborough who were in want of something to do. He said such a state of things ought not to be allowed. With regard to the other subsections of clause 2, he confessed that he had been very much angered—perhaps that was too strong a word—but it had annoyed him very much to see Civil servants having their buggies driven by kanakas. He thought that if those Civil servants had any common sense, or thought where their salaries came from, they would not employ such labour. He was not at all favourable to the theory that a man could do what he liked with his own money. He did not believe in it, nor was it true. There were limits to the way in which men might spend their money, as every person of common sense and mature age knew. He would now throw some light upon the labour trade as it was at present conducted—not as it was twelve years ago, because his authority would not bear that; but still hon. members and the public would see that it had not improved one jot. In fact, they could not purify that trade or make it a trade in which they as a Christian country could any longer indulge; and their object should be to bring it to an end as soon as possible. He would now relate what had occurred not very long ago in connection with a vessel called the “Rhoderick Dhu,” which, as would be remembered, was infamous in connection with misdoings; in fact, misdoings was no name for what occurred on that occasion. That vessel was sailing past one of the Solomon Islands and saw signals; they sent off a boat with the Government agent, who went ashore, but instead of finding a batch of islanders, as he might have expected, he saw only one small boy about the height of the table. He said at once he would not take the boy as he was too little, and the chief said, “If you don’t take him I will kiki him to-night,” that was to say, that he would kill and eat him that same night. To save the boy’s life the agent took him, and he (Mr. Brookes) would state what he gave for him. He gave a musket, some ammunition, pipes, tobacco, calico, and beads to the chief. This chief, however, had very little power, and when the things were spread out the natives around thought they had as much right to them as the chief, and had a free fight for them. He (Mr. Brookes) would not detain the House longer, because he had a great deal more to say in committee as the clauses of the Bill came on for discussion; and he would epitomise what he had to say into this form:—Let hon. gentleman opposite and the sugar-planters of Queensland lay it to their hearts that Queensland would get rid of black labour, sugar or no sugar. That might seem extreme, perhaps; and if it laid those who held that opinion open to the charge of being indifferent to an industry which they had been told was beneficial to the colony, his answer was that the sugar industry on the basis of European labour was capable of infinite extent. The colony would never rest, but would keep the

question in a perpetual turmoil and agitation until the sugar industry rested on the basis he had pointed out. He, therefore, was very glad indeed that the Bill had been introduced. He could only say that when it went into committee he would endeavour to throw further light on the duties of a recruiting agent and a Government officer, and on the doings of shipowners, and on the way the whole Pacific Island business had been conducted; and he would further stake his character, as a man of any sense, that what he said would be what had actually taken place. After that there could be but one conclusion possible to arrive at, excepting among those who would make money out of that industry even though the heavens fell. If they legislated, it must be for the whole people, and they must take the only path which appeared to him to be right. That was the path they must ultimately take—the exclusion of the black man altogether. He would close what he had to say with this: that he was devoutly thankful that the coloured labour discussion in that House had come to the point it had. He had often wondered where it would end, but he thought they saw the end near now. They had been for many years rushing towards a precipice by falling down which the colony would be broken to pieces, and it would then be left to other hands than theirs to put those pieces together again. He was heartily glad to think that the time was now near when they would be out of danger.

Mr. HAMILTON moved the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said he saw no reason for the adjournment of the debate. It seemed perfectly absurd to adjourn at half-past 8 o’clock.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he saw three very good reasons for adjourning. First, that given by the hon. the Premier himself in concluding his speech, when he said it was too hot to stop there long and discuss a question of that sort. The second reason was that he should himself very much like to read very carefully what the hon. the Premier had said, because he was a gentleman whose utterances wanted watching, and wanted reading after they had been uttered, and wanted reading after they had been revised. He also wanted to speak himself and read what had fallen from the hon. member for Mackay. He thought his remarks were well worth the careful consideration of every hon. member before they voted on the Bill. The third reason was that, after the Christian member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes) had spoken, it would be only fair to allow them time to refer to the papers he had read from, and refute the arguments made use of by him. There was plenty of time to-morrow to discuss the matter, there being little private business on the paper, which hon. members he was sure would be willing to forego. They could then discuss the matter more fully and completely than at present.

Mr. MIDGLEY said it was quite probable that he should not be in the House when the Bill was discussed in committee, and he therefore took the opportunity of saying what he had to say about it on the present occasion. He had listened very attentively, as he always had done since he had been in the House, to the hon. member for Mackay, and he considered that anything that hon. member said was worth listening to. However, for the life of him he was unable to ascertain what the hon. member would do with regard to the Bill. His speech commenced with the declaration of his intention to do all he could to give effect to the measure, but every clause of the Bill contained some danger which to the hon. member was highly objectionable. He (Mr. Midgley) thought that,

if they adopted the proposals of the hon. member, it would result in the employment of coloured labour under less restrictions and regulations than at present. He (Mr. Midgley) was careful to make it known in his electioneering address that he held no fanciful, impossible, or extreme views on the coloured labour question; but he held his views decidedly, and he had pledged himself to his constituents that at all events to the end of the present Parliament he would not assist anything that was calculated to regulate and diminish the amount of coloured labour employed in the colony.

Whenever his views might be modified he would feel it his duty to consult his constituents or carry out his promise to the end. While he agreed with the Bill as a whole, he had one objection to it, and that was contained in the 2nd clause. As a member representing an agricultural constituency, he thought that the definition of tropical agriculture was faulty and partial, and if it remained as it was it would result in some degree of dissatisfaction among men who were engaged in agriculture, but not in the growth of sugar-cane, coffee, rice, or kindred products. He held that, instead of those various products, it would be better to insert in the clause "any kind of agriculture in Queensland." He thought it would be unfair and unjust to men who were engaged in other branches of agriculture other than those specified in the clause if they were to be absolutely excluded—although they might not care to avail themselves of it—from the possibility of employing coloured labour, because they were not engaged in those particular pursuits. He did not think any of them were worthy of consideration except sugar-cane. The position of affairs at present was this—the kind of agriculture which was doing the best in the adverse circumstances of the time was sugar. The sugar-planters were likely to do far better than any other class in the community engaged in any kind of agriculture whatever; and seeing that the gross and net results from the growth of sugar-cane were undoubtedly far higher than the results accruing from other kinds of agriculture, he thought there was an advantage to be derived from the employment of coloured labour by men engaged in any kind of agriculture, and that they should be allowed to avail themselves of the privilege. He felt sure that there were many hon. members on the Government side of the House, at all events, who would agree with him on this subject.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial Benches: No!

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought the hon. member for East Moreton, at all events, would agree with him, because he represented an agricultural constituency. As he had said, he thought it would be unfair. There were men in the Rosewood district who might, as an experiment, try a few acres of sugar-cane; they might also try to grow maize. They would be allowed to employ kanaka or Polynesian labour on their bit of experimental sugar-cane, but perhaps there was not nearly sufficient to keep them employed, and they would be precluded from being employed in any other kind of agriculture. At present many of the farmers had lost their crops; they were just hanging on; they would have no returns from the crops in now, and probably very little from the seed just planted. They were in a worse position than the sugar-planter. He did not believe the farmers would avail themselves much of the privilege he suggested; but he thought that to put on the statute-book that persons engaged in agricultural pursuits other than those mentioned in the Bill should not be allowed to employ coloured labour would be doing an injustice. Apart from that,

he agreed with the other clauses of the Bill, and certainly he sympathised with the objects of it. He considered that as the white men were the pioneers of the colony and had invested their money in it, they ought to say what the future population of the colony should be. The greatest and most objectionable feature of the employment of Polynesians or coolies was that they took places that Europeans would be glad to take. He would rather agree with the junior hon. member for North Brisbane, and do away with the labour entirely than that it should be confined to one agricultural pursuit and be precluded from others.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he had never heard a more incoherent and illogical speech than that made by the hon. member who had just sat down. In one part of it he said it would be an injustice to the farmers in his district not to be permitted to employ kanakas; and in another part he said the whole object of the Bill had his sympathy. He (Mr. Paterson) did not know what to make of the speech. The hon. member actually had the temerity to state that the member for East Moreton should sympathise with his views in regard to the employment of kanaka labour in farming in the southern and western portions of the colony. He (Mr. Paterson) would not be tempted to go into the whole matter; but the hon. member had in one part of his speech spoken in favour of free kanaka labour, and in another part gone adverse to it. It was just on a par with the hon. member's conduct in reference to the Railway Preliminary Bill. The hon. member got on to his feet, and he (Mr. Paterson) really believed that he did not know what he was talking about; at all events, he was perfectly certain he had said what was adverse to the wishes of his constituents.

Mr. MIDGLEY: You know nothing about it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the hon. member had started by saying that he had given a pledge to his constituents to do all in his power to prevent or diminish the number of kanakas to be employed; but at the end of his speech he said he would do everything in his power to encourage the employment of kanakas by farmers in his constituency.

Mr. BALE said he could not on this occasion be silent, because the question very substantially affected the constituency he represented, and the view taken by the hon. member (Mr. Midgley) was such that it would not be recognised by the electors of Enoggera. This was one of those difficult measures which looked like compromising a principle. He thoroughly agreed with the junior hon. member for North Brisbane, that this was a white man's colony; that was what he should like to see it. He looked upon the Bill as a deterrent to the introduction of coloured labour. He agreed that if they allowed the Polynesian labourer to be employed in sugar-cane growing he should also be employed in growing corn; but he thought he should not be employed at all. He said he should not be employed at all, and they should have nothing whatever to do with him. But he was here, and he had been introduced into the colony, he was sorry to say, under circumstances which should bring the blush to the face of any man calling himself a Briton. He said that advisedly, having taken great interest in the subject. He said it was better that they should never have the sugar industry at all than that it should be propped up by labour of that character, which was introduced under circumstances tantamount to slavery. Apart from that, there were some of them now here, and he thought the Bill proposed by the Premier would

have a very good effect indeed, and it would at all events prevent them from being employed as domestic servants, washing out houses, and nursing babies, as some of them were doing at present. The kanakas engaged in such employment were certainly filling places which should be filled by white men, and for that reason he would support the Bill. He represented a constituency principally composed of working men. He knew their feeling upon the question, and he knew them to be prejudiced against black labour, and he asked why should they not be opposed to it? The kanakas were keeping some of his constituents out of work, and it should be remembered that they had their families to work for, and had taxes to pay, while the kanaka paid no taxes and did not contribute in any way to build up the colony. He took the Bill as an instalment, and approved of it as a deterrent to black labour. He had not been up north, and he must honestly state that he did not know what the effect of the legislation would be there, but he believed the sugar-planters had got their land very cheap and were making large profits out of the industry; still he considered that in admitting coloured labour they were injuring men whom they were spending thousands of pounds to introduce into the colony. Black labour if brought here would be brought at the expense of the European population, which, as the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes) had said, should really be the population of the colony of Queensland.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was very thankful indeed that the Bill had been introduced. He could not but admire the address they had heard from the hon. member for Mackay. Whenever that hon. gentleman spoke he spoke to the purpose and to the point. From a sugar-planter's point of view, the hon. member had made a really good speech. He (Mr. Macfarlane) did not agree with the hon. member's side of the question, however, and was entirely opposed to black labour. At the same time he could say that the sugar industry was one of very great importance, and it should not be crippled. The question seemed to him to be—whether it would not be crippled by the employment entirely of black labour, or whether it would not be much increased by the employment only of white labour. He believed Mr. Black had said it was simply a matter of sentiment. He, however, did not think it was simply a matter of sentiment at all. So far as the members on the Government side of the House were concerned, he did not think there was a single member sitting on that side who had not at the last election to pledge himself to do away, so far as he could, with the employment of black labour. In his electorate, not only in the town but in the whole district, that was the question upon which the candidates were most catechised. It was a matter of stern fact with the members on the Government side of the House; and if any Government, and especially the present Government, attempted to do what the hon. member for Mackay recommended—that was, to take the whole of the legislation in connection with black labour entirely into their own hands—he thought that they would see the downfall of that Government in less than twelve months. The hon. member for Mackay, he thought, had contradicted himself in one or two points when referring to the small growers of cane. He said that if they passed the Bill it would simply have the effect of doing away with the small growers altogether, because the planters who gave them now £10 per ton for their cane would not be able to give them more than £7 per ton. The hon. member, however, admitted at the same time, while saying that physically white people were not equal to doing

the work of the kanaka, that the wives and boys of those small growers actually did the work the kanakas were doing. He said the wives and boys of the small growers did the trashing, the gathering of the cane, and the cutting of it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. MACFARLANE said perhaps the hon. member did not say the cutting, but he certainly said that the boys and wives of the small growers did the work which the kanakas were doing. If that were the case, the argument that physically white men were unable to do the work on the plantations was done away with, and they could not bring it up again. He admitted that the sugar industry was a very important one, and that the colony had derived considerable advantage from it. The working people had derived benefit from it, as they had been enabled for the last two or three years to get their sugar at a much cheaper rate than they used to pay for it. To that extent they were benefited by it; but were they, for the sake of a little profit—say a few pounds per ton of sugar—to employ coloured labour? or were they, for the sake of the additional expense of £2 or £3 per ton, to say that they would rather have white labour than black? What did £1 or £3 per ton additional mean? Why, £1 per ton meant only about an additional 3d. per pound, and for the sake of employing white labour rather than black he thought that no one would begrudge to pay 4d. for a pound of sugar where they now had to pay 3½d. Admitting the importance of the sugar industry, he did not think they should pamper one industry at the expense of others. With reference to the remark of the hon. member (Mr. Midgley), the House scarcely understood it correctly. He understood that hon. member to mean that, while entirely opposed to black labour, yet, if the sugar-grower was to have the benefit of it, the poor farmer, whose business was not nearly so lucrative, was equally entitled to it. The hon. member (Mr. Black) seemed to think that the Premier's object in introducing the Bill was to strangle the sugar industry. He felt sure that it was not the intention of the Premier or any other member on that side to injure the sugar industry. The same hon. member had talked about the Government being influenced by mere sentiment, but it was equally sentimental on the part of the Opposition to say that without black labour the sugar industry must go to the wall. Had anyone grown sugar successfully without black labour? Had any district succeeded in manufacturing sugar at a profit without the aid of black labour? Those questions could both be answered in the affirmative. There were sugar-growers who made large profits without employing a single kanaka. What was the effect of the abolition of slavery in the United States? Was not as much cotton grown there now as before emancipation?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes, more; and solely through black labour.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that probably more sugar would be grown at Mackay when black labour was replaced by white labour. He was quite in favour of the Bill, although there were one or two things in it of which he scarcely approved, and which he hoped to be able to refer to in committee. He would only refer now to sub-section C of clause 2, "The business of horse-driving or carting, except in field-work." That would allow kanakas to drive and cart in fields, and would lead to confusion and the evasion of the Act. By omitting the word "except" the Bill would be made more complete. He hoped to see the Bill pass almost in its entirety.

Mr. STEVENSON said that no doubt the Premier was greatly pleased with the support his Bill was receiving from his own side of the House. The hon. member Mr. Macfarlane had argued all through his speech against the Bill, and concluded by saying that he was entirely in favour of it. That hon. member said he was opposed to anything in the shape of class legislation. If that was not class legislation, he should like to know what class legislation was. Anyone reading the Bill could see that it was a Bill for the protection of one particular industry—sugar-planting. The hon. member for Fassifern argued honestly when he said he was opposed to the Bill because it was a piece of class legislation, and that if sugar-planters were to have the benefit of coloured labour farmers were equally entitled to it. But what confidence could be placed in men who would argue as the hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) had done? The Bill itself was of a piece with all the preceding legislation of the session. Faith had been broken with the selectors, the squatters, and the planters, and now the Government had descended so low as to break faith with the poor kanaka. The Minister for Works might laugh, but he (Mr. Stevenson) objected to see the poor time-expired kanaka slated in the way proposed. He had himself often paid time-expired kanakas £1 a week, and why they should be compelled to engage themselves to sugar-planters at £6 a year he failed to see. He would appeal on that point to his friend the Minister for Lands, who had not only employed kanakas but aborigines on his station: would that hon. gentleman permit the kanakas to be slated in the way proposed? The hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) had told them that it had not yet been proved that sugar could not be grown at a profit by white labour. He could tell the hon. member that the sugar-planters, with all their advantages in the shape of black labour, had had a very precarious existence, and he did not fancy they would be inclined now to try the experiment of starting afresh with white labour. He would ask those gentlemen who seemed so confident on the matter—and some of them, particularly the hon. member for Bulimba, he believed, were interested in the Northern sugar lands—he would ask them to go up north, try the experiment of employing white labour, and see whether it would be successful or not. That would be a good test as to the sincerity of their speeches. He knew nothing about the matter himself and he did not want to. He knew from all he had heard that a good many sugar-planters, some of them his own friends, had been wiped out altogether through it. They had never found it a grand thing even with black labour. They would not be likely to go and experiment by the employment of white labour. Some hon. members on the Government side had better show them that it was to be a success by white labour before they advised them, or any sugar-planters, to experiment in that manner. He had never had any sympathy at all with class legislation. He was of the same opinion as the hon. member for Fassifern on that point. If one class of people were allowed to employ kanakas another class should be allowed also, and if kanakas were introduced at all, after their time had expired with one employer they should be allowed to make the best terms they could with another. He had had a good deal to do with kanakas and was not ashamed to own it. Many of his constituents were selectors, and were with him in this respect: that they had as much right to kanakas to help them to grow maize as the sugar-planters had to help them to grow sugar. He gave the Premier every credit for trying to regulate that labour,

and he was with him as far as that went, although he would like to see every class of agriculturist have a right to employ Polynesians. He would not go so far as to seek to destroy the sugar industry by objecting to anything in the Bill, if hon. members were desirous that Polynesians should be restricted to sugar plantations. He should not like to destroy a very important industry, but, if kanakas were to be introduced and made profitable, they should be allowed to be profitable in the growth of maize and other products.

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not think the Bill was altogether what they would like it to be; but it could be improved. At all events it contained views that he had held for a long time, ever since the question had become prominent in the colony. He had always maintained that the sugar-planters, especially in the North, must have some kind of coloured labour to do the work. White men could not do the work, and could not be expected to do it. There was not the slightest use in hon. members on the other side arguing that white men could go and do work in the cane-fields of the North. Supposing 100 new arrivals coming from any part of Europe were set to work on a cane-field in the tropics, with cane standing six and eight feet high with a perpendicular sun, was it likely that they could stand it? He was certain that within a month there would not be one left; they would either desert or be sent to the hospitals to recover or go to the cemetery. The planters must have some kind of coloured labour for that work, and he was pleased that the Premier acknowledged that fact in introducing the Bill. He always maintained that kanaka labour was the right labour for the work, and always supported its introduction. They were in small numbers; they could not overrun the colony like coolies. They were distributed over a number of small islands, and could not interfere with the white population. To say that they were scarce was also a mistake. At present there were over 12,000 kanakas in the colony, and no one would believe that they were all engaged in the sugar industry; not one-half of them were engaged in field labour. Even in Brisbane he had counted thirty of them together, and there was not a town on the coast of Queensland that was not swarming with them. About twelve months ago he happened to land in Maryborough, and he was certain that one-half of the people he saw were kanakas, and at certain times of the day when the white people were at work one could only see a sprinkling of white people. The place was overrun with kanakas, and they were employed in all kinds of labour that white men were engaged in—in stores, as gardeners, house-servants, and he had even seen them carrying children in their arms. He had actually seen them carrying children in their arms, and acting as nurses in the town of Maryborough; and even in Rockhampton, which was more a white man's town than any other on the coast, he knew from his own knowledge that kanakas were engaged in situations that should be occupied by white people. Those were his reasons for approving of the Bill, because it would do away with that. One cause that made kanaka labour scarce was the system of recruiting that was adopted. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Mackay, that the recruiting of kanakas should be taken in hand by the Government. If the Government were going to deal with the matter at all they should take the whole system in their hands. There was not the least doubt that there had been mistakes and evils carried on in the recruiting of kanakas by the captains and crews of vessels engaged in the trade; but if the Government had the matter in their own hands it would be

carried out as it should be, and the islanders would soon have confidence in coming to the colony. He knew, from information he had received from people there, that there were several islands where there were hundreds of islanders who would not come to the colony at present owing to the way in which recruiting was conducted; but if the Government took the matter in hand, they would be sure of being properly protected. He thought the Government should establish a depôt or head station on some central island, and recruit islanders from the different islands as they were required. He believed, with the hon. member for Mackay, that the clauses referred to would only be a blank in the Bill, even if passed. He believed in kanaka labour for the reasons he had stated. He had always opposed the introduction of coolies and Chinese, who existed in such large numbers in their own countries; and he hoped that the Premier, in introducing his Chinese Restriction Bill, would increase the poll-tax, not to £20 but to £40 or £50. If he did he would deal effectually with the question. He (Mr. Ferguson) thought it was only playing with the question to increase the tax to £20. Why, a kanaka cost about £25 in course of time. However, he was in favour of the Bill, which he hoped would pass in an improved form. No doubt it could be improved in committee, and he should give it his support.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I had not intended to speak on this question to-night, and I thought that the feeling of generosity—which we all know always pervades the leader of the Government—would have led him to assent to an adjournment of the debate. However, his feelings in that direction seem to have fallen short on this occasion. I have no hesitation in saying that, had the hon. gentleman brought down this Bill when the late Premier went to the constituencies, he would not have been able to raise the war-cry he did, which was, “No coloured labour.” He has now brought down a Bill which certainly advocates the employment of coloured labour, with a similar limitation to that proposed by the hon. gentleman whom I had the honour of acting under a good many years ago—that is, to employ kanakas under the same limitations which, later on, it was proposed should be enforced with regard to the employment of coolies. I hold, myself, that it would be much easier to have dealt with coolies under such a measure as this than kanakas. We could have dealt with them much more strongly, and we would have the certainty that, in passing a measure limiting coolies to the employment suggested in this Bill, it would receive the assent of the Imperial Government. I, myself, have very great doubt whether the Imperial Government will assent to such a measure as this, which appears to me to be limited slavery, and nothing else. It appears that under this Bill you are to take a savage from his island, bring him to the colony, and, under some agreement, which, perhaps, he did not properly understand, you compel him to remain a certain period upon a plantation, doing certain work, and when that time expires he has to be deported back to his island. We have also heard that some of the men engaged in this service are the biggest ruffians on the face of the earth. Whether they are or not, I do not know. I know nothing about them, but I say we are absolutely asked to go into a system of limited slavery. It will bear no other interpretation. These black men are to be brought into the colony, and to be narrowed down to a single occupation, and limited in every way by the provisions of this measure. That has been well pointed out by the hon. member for Fassfern, who, however, did not put it quite so strongly in the direction that I have

done. I have no desire, and would be the last in the House, to endeavour to do any damage to the great sugar industry. I consider that it has great claims upon the colony, and that we should make every possible concession towards assisting an industry which has been the means of greatly advancing the prosperity of the colony. For these reasons I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill; but I desire to point out that, as it stands, should it become law, it will not redound to the credit of the hon. gentleman who has introduced it. I think the junior hon. member for North Brisbane will agree with me in the opinions I express—that it is simply a modified form of slavery—modified, not, I believe, at the desire of the leader of the Government, but simply to satisfy popular clamour. I am perfectly certain that the hon. gentleman himself would have dealt broadly and generally with the great labour question had it not been for the turmoil and popular outcry that has been raised. The hon. gentleman has been led too much by the bogus cry—“This is a white man’s country.” There is no man in the House more ready to admit that it is a white man’s country than I am. It is my country. I am a native of Australia, and I should be one of the last who would endeavour to convert what is—not our inheritance, but which was taken from a coloured race in a certain manner which does not redound very much to the credit of the white man—into anything else but a white man’s country. But we have possession of it, and I hope we will endeavour to use it with equal justice to all colours, classes, and creeds. That is what I hope we will yet do; but the Bill as it stands does nothing of the sort. I, myself, think that a very much better measure might have been introduced. In fact, this is like every measure that has been introduced by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government—a crude, ill-digested, and ill-conceived Bill. Perhaps the hon. gentleman does not think those epithets fitting, but I think those three are quite sufficient, and if he wants any more I refer him to the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, who is very strong in that particular line. He has got a magazine in reserve, and I would almost give anything to have such a member on this side of the House: in that respect only—do not let any hon. gentleman misunderstand me on that point. I think that there will be considerable discussion when the Bill gets into committee, and I feel sure that we shall get very great assistance from several hon. members who have spoken on this side of the House. I am particularly sorry that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is not in his place, because the only cry he had against me during the late election was, “Vote for Morehead and black labour.” If he had only given me this Bill it would have been, “Vote for Béattie and black labour.” I never advocated black labour in the shape contained in this Bill, and I will tell the hon. gentleman—in fact, he has admitted it—that he will have very great difficulty in dealing with the time-expired islanders. If he thinks this clause will meet the case, I doubt it very much. I very much doubt whether any law introduced will interfere with the freedom which already exists; I doubt whether they may not be brought under the Alien Act and naturalised. I do not know whether I am right or wrong; but whether right or wrong I say it will be a gross injustice if you deal with those time-expired islanders, many of whom have been here years and years; who are respectable men, who can sing psalms as well as hon. members opposite, and who have the same instincts. Is this man and brother, with whom we have shaken hands, to be turned into a slave? Is it to be considered

sinful to employ such a man? Is this a Christian way—a fair way—of dealing between man and man? I have had them in my employment; and only yesterday I saw a man who has been all over the colony. This man has been in the western interior, as well as in Sydney and Melbourne, and though, perhaps, not as good-looking as some members opposite, he is a Christian, an educated man, who can read and write as well as most of the electors of the colony. And is this man to be tied down under the 7th clause, by which it is only lawful to employ him at £6 a year for three years on a sugar plantation? The Premier must know that this is not a solitary instance, but that there are numberless instances; and are they to be put into the same position as those limited slaves he proposes to bring to the colony? I am certain that is not his intention, and I sincerely trust that in committee he will suggest some amendment that will save these men from being either starved to death in the colony or compelled to accept a rate of wages utterly inadequate to the services performed. I have one word to say to the junior member for North Brisbane. I do not often bother him with any remarks, but as he has chosen to quote a certain portion of Sir William Des Vœux's despatch, I will quote another:—

"As colonisation by white men is commonly regarded, especially in New Zealand, as one of the principal objects to be aimed at in the annexation of Polynesia, it may serve to clear the ground if I consider, in the first instance, how far this is practicable or desirable. With one or two trifling exceptions all the islands of Polynesia are situated within the tropics, and are thus places where, according to all previous experience, field labour must be exclusively that of coloured men. Many attempts have been made in various parts of the world during the last three centuries to carry on tropical plantations with white labour, but the result has always been failure, even in mountainous districts enjoying a comparatively temperate climate. In all cases the labourers have either died miserably, or have been compelled to seek other means of livelihood."

Now I am going to deal with the foot-note which evidently was put in by Sir William Des Vœux, after an interview with the illustrious gentleman who represented this colony at the Convention.

"Since writing the above, I have been informed that parts of Queensland furnish an exception to this otherwise universal rule. If so, it must be owing to a dryness of climate which probably exists nowhere else in the tropics, and certainly not in Polynesia."

Now, will the junior member for North Brisbane refute those facts? He has appealed to Caesar, and unto Caesar I have taken him. I trust that when he again quotes from an authority on any subject he will quote the whole and not one side only. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I reserve to myself the right to discuss the clauses when in committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: The hon. member who has just sat down directed his remarks chiefly to what he termed the monstrous tyranny of introducing kanakas and limiting them to certain work on sugar plantations and sending them back to their islands after their time is up. I think the leader of the Opposition was a prominent and distinguished member of the party and Government who stated over and over again that coolies were to be brought under regulations, and strictly confined to cane-growing, and cane-growing alone—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And sent back at the end of their time. If it is tyranny to do as is now proposed, it is still more monstrous tyranny to do as was proposed by the hon. member's party. The people we are dealing with now are comparative savages, but the others

are in many cases highly civilised. What becomes of the consistency of the hon. member? I cannot see where it comes in.

Mr. BROOKES: Nor anybody else.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A good deal was said about class legislation. Nobody is more opposed to class legislation than I am, and I think every member of the Government is opposed to class legislation. Hon. gentlemen must remember that the Premier, when introducing the Bill, stated that sugar-growing existed under certain conditions; that the industry was fostered and brought into existence by the employment of kanaka labour, and that to cut off the supply entirely must result in the destruction of the industry; so he proposes to put this part of the labour under restrictions which will lessen the evil acknowledged to exist. Squatters were referred to by the hon. member for Normanby as having employed kanakas. I was alluded to as one. I admit that I have employed kanakas; and if I considered only my own interest apart from that of the country generally, I should employ them all through if I could get them, both for outdoor work and as domestic servants—simply because they are cheaper and in every respect better.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hon. gentlemen cheer as if I had made a mistake; but I am quite prepared to say it over and over again, both in the country to my constituents and to the men who work for me. I have had plenty of white labour and I have no hesitation in expressing my opinions. I was forced into the employment of black labour, especially in the Mitchell district. I was the last man to employ kanakas, though I had them for only three years, and was obliged to do so because the employment of black labour had driven every white man out of the district. When the gentlemen on the other side who were then in power cut off the supply of labour in the country districts, the Mitchell district absolutely collapsed for a time. That was the reason why I and others had to employ them.

Mr. STEVENSON: You admit they were better.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I said they were cheaper, and on some occasions better for the work. In shepherding especially, I would rather employ a blackfellow now than put a white man to do the work. I would much rather do any of the work on a canefield than shepherd a flock of sheep. That is the last thing I would employ a white man to do, as it is infinitely worse and more degrading than anything that can be conceived in connection with a canefield. I was very much surprised at one admission on the part of the hon. member for Mackay, who said that the small sugar-growers would be absolutely ruined if the kanakas were prevented from coming in. He also stated that the families of small growers help them to produce the cane; yet he said that cane cannot be grown except by kanakas. That does not agree with the statement that men with their wives and young children grow cane and prepare it for the mill.

Mr. STEVENSON: He did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He said so distinctly and emphatically. I do not pretend to know much about sugar-growing, but my opinion is that it can be grown profitably by white men who have the help of their families, but that to employ ordinary white labour at high wages would leave no margin of profit. Where that kind of labour is performed by the family generally it is easily done, but if that

same family grows corn or wheat and has to employ labour the profits are so small that there is no possibility of carrying on the business.

Mr. ARCHER said: There are one or two matters which were referred to by the Minister for Lands which I cannot allow to go uncontradicted. The hon. gentleman said that he employed kanakas because the white men had been driven out of the district. Now, I employed them for a very different reason, and that is because they did work which other men could not be got to do. Especially was this the case in improvements in the far west in dam-making, and when it was impossible to get white men. It was not the kanakas who drove the white men out, because they had gone long before the kanakas had ever come. I deny *in toto* that kanakas drove the white men out of the Mitchell district. When I employed kanakas I had to employ white men as overseers, and these men did work on the station which I could not get white men to do. I repeat what I said the other night, that it is no use talking about what a white man can do. The only thing is, will he do it? He will not do the work that is really required to be done by the kanaka. As the hon. member for Rockhampton has told us, white men have been tried on Pandora sugar plantation. The owners made a resolution that they would not employ kanakas, and they hired white men at £1 a week and rations, and yet they could not get the men to do the work. I have done every kind of work on a sugar plantation. I have built houses, put up machinery, and even cut the timber; but I would most decidedly object to working amongst the cane. We must draw the line somewhere, and I would draw it at working in the canefield. These men at Rockhampton simply threw down their hoes and went away in disgust, and they have my greatest sympathy. These men said, "Is this work fit for white men to do?" and they were perfectly right in coming to the conclusion that it was not. We want to employ white men at skilled labour that will return something for the time they expend upon it. Why put a white man, who really cannot do the work, at a kind of work he is absolutely not fit for? The first lot of men who left Pandora went to gaol; but the second lot ran so far away that nobody could get at them. The question I maintain is not so much what a white man can do as what he will do. Of course, rather than go absolutely destitute I would go to work in a canefield; but as a rule I am prepared to say that you cannot get white men to do the particular kind of work that is required in the field. I want to see, as I have said, white men employed at all the different kinds of skilled labour we can possibly give them. I am using white men now at clearing scrub, but then using an axe is skilled labour, whilst taking a hoe and working among the cane is not work for an intelligent man. I probably know as much about cane-growing as any man in this House, and I certainly would be exceedingly sorry to see anyone I cared about doing canefield work. I hope that as long as I live in Queensland there will be no dearth of skilled labour for the white man to do, and that he will content himself with that class of labour and leave the unskilled labour to those for whom it is better suited.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Premier informed them a few days since that his object in introducing this amended Pacific Islanders Bill was to restrict the employment of kanakas to field-labour in semi-tropical pursuits, and that planters would thus have double the supply of labour they now had. Only a few months since the Premier proclaimed throughout the colony at public

meetings that after careful consideration he was convinced that it was perfectly impossible to restrict coloured labour to the sugar industry, and upon that peg he hung his objection to the introduction of coolies. The reasons he gave to prove they could not be restricted to semi-tropical agriculture applied equally to all kinds of coloured labour. He should prove this by quoting from some of the hon. gentleman's speeches. In the Town Hall on the 10th of last May, his own paper, the *Telegraph* said:—

"It is plain no such restriction is possible. Suppose we pass a law that Indian coolies should be allowed only to work on our sugar plantations; how could such a law be enforced? Suppose a sugar-planter dies or becomes insolvent, what is to become of his labourers? They would say, 'We are willing to work for our living'; and are we to send men to prison because they desire an honest living, or establish poor-houses until some other sugar-planter is willing to take them into his employ? Legislation like that would never be tolerated in any British community. I have therefore come to the conclusion that all such safeguards are impracticable."

Did not those reasons apply equally to kanakas? Again, in another speech made by the Premier in the Town Hall towards the close of last year, the *Courier* reported him to have said:—

"But supposing the informer got a conviction, would he not soon be hunted out of the place? No man would dare to lay an information."

And yet the Premier provides in this Act for information being laid by informers. He also in the same speech, in support of his contention that the late Government were deceiving the people by saying that they could restrict coloured labour to one industry, expressed himself in the following terms:—

"Some planter might grow sugar and maize, or sugar and potatoes. How were we going to make a law that would compel such a man to employ on one side of his path coolies, and on the other side white men? During the portion of the year when his cane crop did not require attention were his coolies to remain idle, and white men be got to attend to his potatoes or maize? No. Men would say they would never obey such a ridiculous law as that."

That was the term which the hon. gentleman applied to the law which he now proposed to introduce, at the time his opponents proposed it. He further, in the same speech, attempted to illustrate the impossibility of confining coloured labour to one industry in the following words:—

"Or suppose one man grew sugar, and his neighbour potatoes, was the farmer to be allowed to employ coolies while his neighbour on the other side of the fence must pay 20s. per week for Europeans? The thing was perfectly absurd, to bring a certain kind of labour into the colony, and say it should only be employed in one industry. (Applause.)"

Yes, that concluding sentence fetched the crowd. He (Mr. Hamilton) would repeat it:—

"The thing was perfectly absurd, to bring a certain kind of labour into the colony and say it should only be employed in one industry."

The Premier, therefore, was now doing that which he told the people of the colony only a few months since was a perfectly absurd thing to do—namely, bringing in a certain kind of labour into the colony and saying it must be employed in one industry. And it must also be apparent that every argument he used to prove that coolies could not be restricted to sugar cultivation applied equally to kanakas, for if it were absurd and impossible, as the Premier said it was, to make a law compelling employer to keep coolies on one side of the path growing sugar, and white men on the other side at higher wages growing potatoes, it would be equally absurd and impossible to impose the same restrictions on kanakas. If it was impossible, as the Premier deliberately informed the people of the colony he considered it to be, to restrict coolies to sugar cultivation because the planter might

die and the coolies might starve if they were debarred from entering any other kind of employment—then it would be equally wrong to subject kanakas to the same conditions. Every argument which the Premier used to show that coolies could not come here because it was impossible and wrong to restrict them to semi-tropical industry applied with equal force to the restriction of kanakas to one industry. As, therefore, the Premier had now introduced a Bill to effect that which he said he believed it was impossible to effect when proposed by the late Government—namely, the restriction of a certain class of labour to one industry—the only conclusion that could be arrived at was, that he either attempted to deceive the people of the colony to further his own ends, when he assured the colony that it was not only impossible but absurd to bring in a certain kind of labour into the colony and restrict it to one industry; or if on the other hand he did believe it absurd and impossible, then he must consider the Bill he had introduced a fraud on the public. There was no getting out of it. His (Mr. Hamilton's) own opinion was that they could be restricted to one industry. He had always held that they should be, and had the present Premier only supported an amendment which was introduced by one of his own followers, at his (Mr. Hamilton's) suggestion some years since, when the Pacific Islanders Bill was under discussion—which was to the effect that kanakas should be confined to the sugar industry—there would not at the present moment be one kanaka competing with white men off sugar plantations. Talking of kanakas competing with whites off sugar plantations brought him to another phase of the matter. The Premier gave as one reason for introducing the Bill that the supply of kanakas on sugar plantations would thus be doubled. Was not that rather an illogical reason, when they recollected that the Premier got into power by advocating that sugar could be grown by white labour? He should quote some of the Premier's own words on this question. The *Toowoomba Chronicle*, of last September, reported the Premier to have expressed himself thus at a banquet there:—

"It was said they were only wanted north of Mackay, because the climate was so terrible that the white man could not work in the field. Well, he had seen them do much harder work than working in the fields, and he said there was no work the coolie could do that the white man could not do."

At the Brisbane Town Hall the *Telegraph*;—and it should be remembered that the hon. gentleman treated the *Telegraph* as he did *Hansard*—that was, he revised the reports of his speeches;—reported him to have expressed himself thus to his constituents:—

"We are told that without coloured labour (mark the term 'coloured labour') the sugar industry cannot be developed—perhaps not in the manner now contemplated—but I confess I do not regard with any great admiration the formation of vast sugar estates owned mostly by absentees and cultivated by gangs of servile labourers. I hope to see rather a large number of white farmers living on their land and growing their own cane. The experience of Queensland shows, I think, that this can be done in every place where sugar has yet been successfully cultivated. To this and the introduction of European labour I look as the true solution of the difficulty."

Again, in the Town Hall, according to the *Courier* of the 11th of last August, he said:—

"Enormous profits could not be made by absentee capitalists without coloured labour; but he did not care if we could not. He would rather not see that kind of thing here. In this part of the colony, and at Maryborough, at Bundaberg, and even at Mackay, it had been proved that white men could grow sugar profitably."

If the Premier believed what he had thus publicly stated—namely, that white men could grow

sugar profitably throughout the colony—why was he taking steps, not only to double the supply of coloured labour to the sugar-planter, but also to make arrangements to continue the introduction of a race whom he admitted were doing work which white men could do with profit? The Premier's own words before the election were, that white men could grow sugar profitably, and that he looked to the introduction of European labour as the true solution of the question; and now he had already eaten those words by sending instructions to lessen the incoming flow of European immigration and at the same time he had taken no steps to lessen the incoming of a race who were employed in an occupation which he stated Europeans were quite suited for. One would imagine that if the Premier really believed what he said, he would, instead of sending instructions to lessen European immigration as he had done, have stopped the importation of kanakas. The term "tropical or semi-tropical agriculture," in clause 7, was not a sufficiently clear definition of the industry to which they were to be restricted. For instance, what was maize? Was it a tropical or semi-tropical industry? What were potatoes? The cultivation of sweet potatoes would doubtless be considered semi-tropical agriculture, but what category did ordinary potatoes come under? The Premier had in his illustrations at meetings shown that he considered neither maize nor potatoes semi-tropical productions; but the definition clause should be made more clear. He did not approve of the 6th clause interdicting islanders from purchasing firearms to take home. About £25,000 a year was now expended by kanakas in the colony in the purchase of firearms and ammunition to take home. If that were stopped, it would have no effect whatever in preventing kanakas from obtaining firearms. They would simply do as one ship from Queensland did the other day—call in at Havanna and buy them there. The only persons this prohibitory clause would affect would be the business people in the colony, for Yankee trading vessels and traders from Honolulu were continually visiting the islands and supplying whatever kanakas who wished with firearms. Again, why should kanakas be prevented from purchasing firearms? The papers were continually full of the enormities committed by captains of vessels on the islanders; it was said that even now kanakas were being continually kidnapped; that even the Government agents had failed to put a stop to it. Since the Government was unable to suppress such piratical practices, why should they attempt to deprive kanakas of the power of protecting themselves. The kidnapping and the cruel treatment of kanakas on board would very soon cease if those who were guilty of it knew that those who were so treated had the power as well as the will to punish them.

Mr. GRIMES said almost enough had been said on the second reading of the Bill. The hon. member for Blackall, however, has referred again to the Pandora Sugar Plantation, and said that white men had run away from the station because they were unable to do the work. That struck him as very strange, as he had found that when white men were made comfortable they would generally do any kind of work they were asked to do, and do it cheerfully. Since the hon. member had referred to the Pandora Sugar Plantation in the way he had done, he (Mr. Grimes) had made inquiries and had been informed on very good authority—the authority of a gentleman living in Rockhampton, and who was quite conversant with the whole of the affairs connected with that plantation—that it was not on account of the work they were required to do that those white

men ran away, but because they had nothing but an old open shed to sleep in and blackfellows to cook for them. They could not stomach that, and they determined that if they were not made more comfortable they would leave the plantation. That was the cause of their leaving the plantation.

Mr. STEVENSON: Who is your authority?

Mr. GRIMES said he had a very good authority. The Bill was, he considered, a step in the right direction. He believed the real difficulty in the minds of the European labourers with respect to kanakas was that the planters abused the privileges given to them by the Polynesian Labourers Act and allowed their kanakas to do all sorts of plantation work—work entirely apart from the cultivation of the cane. Had they restricted the employment of the kanakas to labour in the field, and had not allowed them to be employed in stumping, clearing land, fencing, and labour in which the Europeans were generally engaged, they would not have given rise to the strong objection on their part to kanakas being employed in the colony. He would be glad to see the Bill, which was striking at that matter, pass its second reading. As he would have a further opportunity of referring to the various clauses in committee, he would not take up the time of that House further that evening.

Mr. PERKINS said that at an earlier period of the evening the Premier spoke of the heat and fatigue of speaking, and said he did not care to make a long speech on the Bill before the House. I do not think that legislation upon such an important matter as this is should be hastily carried through, as appears to be the intention with respect to this Bill to-night. I therefore move the adjournment of the House.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said his hon. friend the Premier being absent from the Chamber he took it upon himself to reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Aubigny in moving the adjournment of the debate. He thought it would be admitted that a considerable amount of latitude had been given for the second reading of the Bill. Hon. members seemed to have addressed themselves to it to-day very fully, and the Government had not the slightest desire to stifle discussion upon it. Judging, however, from the number of hon. members who had spoken upon the second reading of the Bill on both sides of the House, he believed the debate had extended to the full length it was likely to take upon the second reading. He did not think his hon. friend the Premier was inclined to recede from the position he had taken up of passing the second reading that night. Any remarks which hon. members wished to make in detail upon the Bill could be delivered when it got into committee. He did not think it was reasonable to ask they should adjourn the debate that night, as they were quite prepared to hear hon. members on the other side who had not already spoken.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had only one word to say, which was that at a former period of the evening he suggested to the hon. the Premier that they had all to-morrow when they could go on with the second reading of the Bill, and go into committee upon it; but he had not given way, and as it was evident he did not intend to give way on this point, he thought it an act of discourtesy to the Opposition side of the House. He did not however propose at the present time to delay the Bill going to a second reading; he would only point out that by taking the course the hon. gentleman was pursuing that evening he did not think it was at all likely to facilitate the passing of the Bill through committee.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had been good enough to say that they would have the whole of to-morrow to discuss the Bill, when he was quite aware that he (Mr. Griffith) had given notice for an adjournment to Tuesday.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That was a motion of surprise.

The PREMIER said it could not be a motion of surprise, because he had given notice of it yesterday, and had given formal notice of it at an early part of to-day.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, in explanation, he might say what the hon. member had said yesterday—that the question of the adjournment for Thursday would be raised. He never said it would be attempted.

The PREMIER said he hoped the hon. gentleman did not intend to obstruct the Bill in committee because the Government wished to have the second reading over to-night. The Bill was one of great importance, and that it would take a considerable time in committee no one could doubt.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not say he would obstruct the Bill in committee, but that passing the second reading through to-night might perhaps lead to delays that would otherwise have been avoided.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said that, pursuant to notice given earlier in the day, he would move that the House do now adjourn till Tuesday next. There was no private business on the paper of such consequence that hon. members in charge of it would care to meet to-morrow for, and he did not propose to proceed with any Government business to-morrow. Hon. members on both sides, he understood, intended to go up to the show at Toowoomba to-morrow, at which His Excellency the Governor would be present; and having ascertained that under the circumstances it would suit the convenience of many hon. members not to meet again this week, he would move that the House do now adjourn till Tuesday next.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was very evident, looking at the notice-paper, that there was not much private business for to-morrow. But they were not summoned there this session to do private business, but Government business, and he had hoped that every effort would have been made to push that business through so that hon. members might get away as soon as possible. The Premier himself had admitted, earlier in the day, that he was suffering from the effects of the weather; and it was his duty, as leader of the House, to go on with the Government business when there was no private business to be attended to. The Opposition were quite prepared to go on with it, and he objected to the session being prolonged in order that they might go to Toowoomba. What were they to go there for? Let His Excellency—with all due deference—go to Toowoomba; his absence or presence would not affect the business of the House. He took exception to the way in which the Premier had put the matter before the House. What did they care whether the Governor went to Toowoomba or stopped away? It was not a matter that should affect the sittings of the House. If the Governor went thither, accompanied, as they were told, by the Minister for Works and the Colonial Treasurer, he would have civility and bluntness, and

between the two he might strike a fair average as to what a Minister should be. His Excellency would have oil and vinegar, and he would be able to make a very good salad if the "fifth wheel" went as well. He spoke liable to correction, but he was told that the show at Toowoomba would consist chiefly of preserved vegetables and imported hay and corn—that that was what the abnormal season had reduced the Toowoomba Exhibition to. It was positively cruel to take His Excellency up to Toowoomba to see what he could see with far more comfort, and possibly in better company, in Brisbane. He was not saying anything derogatory to the company the Governor might meet at Toowoomba. He supposed the House would be asked again in August to adjourn for another Toowoomba show, and probably they would then be asked to adjourn for a show at Woogaroo of members of the other side of the House. They seemed to be playing at legislation. A lot of work could be done to-morrow, even in the absence of the Minister for Works and the Colonial Treasurer. There was no one who enjoyed those vice-regal tours more than the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman hankered after those things; it was the breath of his nostrils; and he (Mr. Morehead) was only sorry that the "fifth wheel" was not going to make one of the company. What should he go to Toowoomba for to see? Nothing but a reed shaken by the wind. It was absurd that the House should be asked to adjourn, especially at a season like the present, when everybody wanted to finish work and get away. Such a motion came with a very ill grace from the Premier; in fact, no such motion had ever been made by any Government before. But it only showed what a weak-kneed, weak-backed, misguided Government they had.

Mr. PERKINS said he was as much surprised as the leader of the Opposition at the action of the Government. He believed it was the first time the House had been asked to adjourn for that Drayton and Toowoomba Aggravating Society, of which the Speaker was such a distinguished and ornamental president. The motion was particularly inopportune at this period of the year. Even the Premier, young as he was, had complained of fatigue, and had rushed an important Bill through, without giving hon. members an opportunity of criticising it and comparing the speech he made on introducing it with others made by him on the same subject—one at Mackay, another at Toowoomba, a third at Brisbane, and a fourth at the torchlight procession. He wondered if the hon. gentleman would have a torchlight procession at Toowoomba this time. He had noticed that generally the principal torchbearers were two or three persons who had just been let out of gaol. He rose to protest against the waste of time. He did not care for himself, but there were many members present from distant parts of the country, who did not want to be kept knocking around Brisbane and Toowoomba. It was cruel of the so-called exhibitors at Toowoomba to bring the Governor and others to see what they would see there. That was a trick that had been played for a long time between two members of the House who wanted to advertise themselves. It was not a kindness, after the season that the farmers at Toowoomba had passed through, to take His Excellency up there to spy out the nakedness of the land, or to invite the members for Mackay and Bowen and other places to make comparisons between what they saw there and in their own districts. The most they would see would be a few bundles of hay and a few grapes that could not be more zealously guarded if they had been worth a guinea per pound. Possibly the flowers and plants that had been stolen from the Toowoomba Gardens, which were distributed

around the town, would be there. The House should not be made a playground of, and an important measure rushed through before people realised the awkward position the hon. gentleman was standing in by measuring his statements there with those he made when stumping the country. He trusted that the Speaker, as guardian of the privileges of the House, and knowing that he had a desire to facilitate business and promote legislation, and knowing a good deal about this show, at which he might be the principal showman, would use his influence and save several hon. members the disappointment they would experience if they did go to Toowoomba. He had been tricked several times by going to those so-called shows, and warned hon. members against it. Just for the sake of parading their Speaker and other members who wanted to be hanging about the tail of vicereignty, he objected to it, and would rather remain and transact business in deference to the constituents of members who came from long distances.

Mr. ALAND said he hardly knew whether the leader of the Opposition and Mr. Perkins were really serious and meant what they said. He would rather believe that they did not, and had only said it for the sake of saying something. It came very badly from the hon. member for Aubigny to say anything about the Drayton and Toowoomba Horticultural Show, as until lately he was the vice-president; he thought he dethroned the hon. gentleman. He remembered being present at a banquet at which he spoke in very different terms of that show. He had also heard the hon. member speak in very different terms of the people of Toowoomba, and he thought that they would not thank him for what he had just said.

Mr. PERKINS: I said nothing about the inhabitants of Toowoomba, and I object to the remark being fathered upon me. Let the hon. gentleman preach in some other place.

Mr. ALAND: If the hon. member would allow him to finish his sentence he would acknowledge that he had been speaking against the inhabitants of Toowoomba. He referred to the torchlight procession, and said that some of those who carried torches had only just been released from gaol.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Ought they to have been kept there?

Mr. ALAND said he thought the society deserved every credit. It was their twenty-first annual show, and it would have shown a great deal of cowardice on the part of the committee if they had declined to hold a show because the season had been unfavourable. He was not a member of that committee.

Mr. PERKINS: You do not look it.

Mr. ALAND said he would ornament that committee as much as the hon. member did when he was vice-president. He thought the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, about its being a hay and corn show—

Mr. MOREHEAD: I said imported hay and corn, and you could have the chaff in.

Mr. ALAND said the Premier had put the matter in the right light. There was little or no private business on the paper, and the Government were taking pity on the House. They knew that a great many members wished to go to Toowoomba, and he did not suppose, in any case, there would be members enough present to form a House. He should support the motion.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down had tried to make out a good case for his own electorate. The hon. gentleman also knew that there

was really nothing, in a season like the present, to be seen. The hon. member had told him he did not believe they should even see a decent pumpkin there. Apart altogether from that, he objected on principle to these adjournments. He had done so always. The Speaker would have had some justification for moving the adjournment, because he used to move it for the annual show, while the present was some little peddling thing that was not worth seeing, especially in a season like the present. He did not see why they should be kept away from their work to attend that show. Many members were getting anxious to go back to their stations, and it was time some of them did get away. There were several members who would rather be at their stations looking after their own business than looking after that of the country. The Government should use all their power to push on their business at the earliest opportunity, and should not adjourn for some little peddling show at Toowoomba. He did not care who was president; whether it was the Speaker, whether the Governor was going to be there, or who was going to receive him; but he opposed the adjournment on the principle that many members had come down this session at very great inconvenience and expense to attend to the business of the country, and therefore they ought to have more consideration from the leader of the Government than to be asked to adjourn over Thursday. It was all very well to say there was no private business to be done. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that he could ask the House to go on with Government business; in fact, that side of the House had offered to do so. The fact was, the hon. gentleman had been simply run into a corner in that respect, as he had been in many other things, by the Minister for Works. He was the man who bossed the Ministry. Had not the leader of the Government had enough of applause at Cleveland, where he was told by his supporters that he was the finest man they had ever seen? Surely he had received enough praise and slobbering there to satisfy any man for the next five years, and yet he wanted to adjourn the business of the country to go to Toowoomba and have the same thing done there. He (Mr. Stevenson) knew he could not stop it, but he entered his protest against such adjournments. He would not say so much if the adjournment had been for the annual show at Toowoomba, but it was scandalous that they should be asked to adjourn for such a peddling show as the one in question.

Mr. BLACK said he had always protested on principle against those unnecessary adjournments, and no sufficient reason had been given to-night why he should depart from that course; on the contrary, the more they had heard on the subject the less reason could he find to justify such an unnecessary waste of time. He protested against such adjournments—as hon. members would recollect he had done on previous occasions—on the ground of the great want of consideration which the southern portion of the colony—represented by the present Government benches—showed to Northern members. He considered it disgraceful that every time a little frivolous show took place they should be asked to adjourn. He did not wish to say that the show to which he was invited to-morrow came under that designation, because he believed that if he went up there he should be very much pleased with the progress in agriculture which he had been led to believe had taken place during the last year. But still it was a matter for very serious consideration, because it was an absolute waste of time. Think of the whole business of the country being retarded because of a show at Toowoomba! Surely legislation was of more

importance than they would be led to infer from that. Their absence surely would not interfere with the Toowoomba Show; and if it was necessary that the Speaker should be there, could not the Chairman of Committees take his place in the chair to-morrow, and let the business of the country be proceeded with? He contended that the object of the adjournment was a frivolous one which it did not become the Premier of the colony to encourage in any degree whatever. The Premier had led Northern members to believe that they were to come down to pass the Estimates—that that was the only business to be brought forward this session for their consideration. They had drifted into legislation which had been justly denominated “crude legislation.” They had had Bills brought before them in the most immature state; legislation had been forced upon them; advantage had been taken of the absence of many members of the Opposition, who had been misled by the Premier’s promises, and the hon. member now took advantage of the paucity of members on that side of the House.

The PREMIER: What do you mean?

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman told him in the North that the only legislation contemplated this session was the passing of the Estimates, and he even told him that it was not necessary that he should come down.

The PREMIER: I said nothing of the kind. I told you you need not be here until the Tuesday after the House met.

Mr. BLACK: With all due deference to the hon. member, and the high position he occupied as Premier of the colony, he told him (Mr. Black) that the only legislation that would be attempted this session was the passing of the Estimates; and he (Mr. Black) could bring forward a member of the Press, who recalled the statement to his recollection the other day, to corroborate his statement. He then replied, “Well, I think, after all, I may as well go down.” Not that he mistrusted the hon. gentleman’s utterances, but he undoubtedly told him what he had stated.

Mr. GRIMES rose to a point of order. The hon. member was addressing the Premier instead of the Speaker.

Mr. BLACK said he was making a personal explanation. The Premier had thought fit to challenge his statement, and in justice to himself he was entitled to make a personal explanation. If he was exceeding the bounds to which he was justly entitled, he should be very glad for the hon. member for Oxley to put him right; but he maintained that he was not exceeding those bounds, and that as long as he confined himself to replying to the remarks of the Premier he should not be interrupted by the hon. member for Oxley or any other hon. member. If the hon. member for Oxley wished to get away speedily, it would be much better to allow him to finish the few remarks he had to make, because any interruption from that hon. member was not likely to bring the debate to a very speedy termination. He maintained that hon. members had been brought down under a misapprehension, to put it in a very mild form. Very important legislation had been attempted to be rushed through in a manner which would not reflect credit on the Premier and his supporters. What had been done would be brought forward as a precedent. As he had said before, advantage had been taken of the absence of many hon. members, and what did they find? After hon. members had come to town to pass the Estimates, the business of the

country was to be deferred for a whole day that they might go to Toowoomba. He had always protested against those adjournments. Of course if the House decided to adjourn he himself would go to Toowoomba; but it did not become the leader of a party to propose such an adjournment. It would have come far better from any of his supporters. It was derogatory to him as a statesman to lower himself so far as to postpone the business of the country for such a frivolous purpose.

The PREMIER said he did not intend to reply to the arguments used by the hon. member. The Government did not wish to go on with their business to-morrow, and they had the conduct of their own business in the House. No hon. member of the House was deceived by any promise he made, either to the hon. member for Mackay or to any other hon. member, as to the conduct of business. He (the Premier) distinctly recollected the conversation he had with the hon. member, and the only question asked by the hon. member was whether he should come to Brisbane one week or the next. He (the Premier) replied that it was not necessary to come the first week, and that he need not be present till the following Tuesday.

Mr. BLACK said he understood the Premier to say that he had no recollection of the conversation to which he (Mr. Black) had referred.

The PREMIER: I did not say anything of the kind; I remember what I said perfectly well.

Mr. BLACK: If the hon. gentleman admits what I said, I am willing to accept his explanation.

The PREMIER: I did not say anything of the kind. How could I have said anything of the kind when I had publicly pledged the Government to bring forward other business?

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman denied having told him what he had repeated. He was sorry to have misunderstood the hon. gentleman, who certainly led him to believe what he had said a few minutes ago.

The PREMIER: You were mistaken.

Mr. BLACK said he did not think that was the proper place to discuss what, after all, might be a misunderstanding between the Premier and himself, but he should give the Premier the name of the gentleman to whom he had referred, a gentleman on whose word he could place the utmost reliance. That gentleman could prove that he (Mr. Black) was led to believe that no legislation except the passing of the Estimates would be undertaken during the session, and that it was hardly necessary for him to leave Mackay. What particularly attracted the gentleman's attention was the fact that he (Mr. Black) smiled and said, "After all, it will be as well for me to go down."

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Buckland Dutton, Sheridan, Fraser, Brookes, Aland, Isumbert, Jordan, Foxton, Grimes, Beattie, Higson, Bale, Midgley, White, Bailey, Kates, and Macdonald-Paterson.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Morehead, Perkins, Chubb, Archer, Black, Stevenson, Nelson, Hamilton, Lalor, Palmer, and Lissner.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 11 o'clock.