Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 13 *February*, 1884.

Sutton Estate Enabling Bill.—Questions.—Printing Committee Report.—Divisional Boards Act Amendment Bill.—Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Bill—adoption of report.—Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Bill—committee.—Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act of 1877 Amendment Bill—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

SUTTON ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. BAILEY brought up the Report of the Select Committee on the Sutton Estate Enabling Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. When do the Government propose to commence the new Government Offices, competitive designs for which were recently sent in, and subsequently referred to a committee, and for which prizes have been awarded?

2. Which design has been approved by the Government?

3. What is the estimated cost of the approved design?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) replied—

The Government have not yet arrived at any determination on the subject; but it will receive their early attention.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. If the Government are aware of the proximity to the border of the colony of the rabbit pest?

2. Whether the Government are preparing, or have prepared, any measure to deal with the rabbits when they enter the colony?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied—

1. The attention of the Government was a few days since called by the Government of New South Wales to the fact that rabbits are approaching the border of the colony, and were now about 120 miles distant. There is reason to suppose that they are also approaching from South Australia.

2. The Government will introduce a measure to deal with the subject probably in the next session.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Works—

Is it the intention of the Government to take into consideration the request of the residents of the Isis district, as embodied in a petition presented to the House on Tuesday, 5th instant?

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), in the absence of the Minister for Works, replied—

The representations of the petitioners will receive careful consideration by the Government before a final decision is arrived at upon the route to be adopted for the railway from Burrum to Bundaberg.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—

Is it the intention of the Government to place the sum of £10,000 on the Supplementary Estimates for dredging the Burnett River, as asked by the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce?

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

The dredging of the Burnett River is being continued, notwithstanding that no provision was made to replenish the vote for that purpose, now exhausted. The Government will consider the requirements of this service when framing their loan proposals for harbours and rivers improvements.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works—

1. Is it true, as reported, that the construction of siding at 60 miles 50 chains, Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, has been countermanded?

2. If so, for what reason?

The PREMIER replied—

The Minister for Works has directed the erection of the siding referred to to be suspended for the present, pending inquiry into the question whether it is not entirely in the interest of the applicant, who is not willing to comply with the usual terms as to the cost of sidings erected for the convenience of individuals.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. Have the Government yet taken into consideration the necessity for providing Cooktown and Cairns with dredges?

2. If so, what decision have they arrived at?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied—

Government have before them the condition of the ports of Cooktown and Cairns in the matter of dredging, and will give due consideration to their requirements.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for Works—

Have any reports been received regarding any of the Railway Surveys from Port Douglas to Herberton; from Cairns to Herberton; and from Mourilyan Harbour to Herberton?—and if so, has the Minister any objection to put them on the table?

The PREMIER replied—

As stated on Thursday last, no reports on the Herberton Railway Surveys have been received from any of the surveyors. Diaries of exploration trips made by Mr. C. Palmerston from Port Douglas and from Cairns have been sent in.

PRINTING COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. FRASER brought up the third report of the Printing Committee, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

DIVISIONAL BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER moved that leave be given to introduce a Bill to further amend the Divisional Boards Act of 1879.

Question put and passed.

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

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL—ADOPTION OF REPORT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Order of the Day was discharged from the paper.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Bill was re-committed for the purpose of considering new clauses.

After a pause,

The PREMIER said that as there appeared to be no amendment, he would move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had been waiting for the hon. member for Oxley to move the amendment of which he had given notice. As that hon. member did not appear to be present, he would move that the following new clause follow clause 7, as passed:—

From and after the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, before any islanders shall be permitted to land from any vessel, the master of the vessel shall pay to the Collector of Customs, or other officer of Customs authorised in that behalf, the sum of fifty pounds for every such islander, the same to be paid into the general revenue of the colony.

If any master shall neglect to pay any such sum, or shall land or permit to land any islander at any place in the colony before such sum shall have been paid for or by him, such master shall be liable, for every such offence, to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds for each islander so landed or permitted to land."

Many hon. members last night said they were pledged to their constituents to oppose the introduction of black labour, and would support any measure to exclude it. He waited patiently until nearly the last clause of the Bill was passed, in order to see if any of those hon. gentlemen would attempt to redeem their pledges by introducing a clause to exclude black labour, but not one of them attempted to do so. Perhaps their reason was that the introduction of such a clause might be considered on their part as a direct vote of censure on the Premier for having failed to deal with the matter in his Bill. No doubt it was, for the fact of the Premier having taken no steps to do so showed tha the was averse to doing so. The hon. gentleman had, however, induced the people of the colony to believe that he was averse to all coloured labour. The clause he proposed would have the effect of forcing the hon. gentleman to show what his views were on the subject; and though the fact that no clause of the kind appeared in the Bill showed that the Premier was averse to the exclusion of coloured labour, still the hon. member and his party, if they wished to fulfil their pledges to their constituents, must support the clause he had introduced.

The PREMIER suggested that if the hon. member desired to introduce his amendment, he should move that it be inserted after clause 8, instead of before it.

Mr. HAMILTON moved that the new clause, as he had read it, should be inserted after clause 8, as passed.

The PREMIER said the Government, of course, could not accept the clause. The hon. member who moved it said he wanted to know what the opinions of the Government were upon the Black Labour question. His (Mr. Griffith's) views, and those of the Government, upon the Black Labour question were perfectly understood by the people of the colony, and it was certainly quite unnecessary, after the many debates which had taken place in that House lately, to enunciate them once more. When the Government thought the time had arrived for the prohibition of Polynesian labour, they would be perfectly prepared to take the responsibility of doing so. It was their function to do so. If the House thought it desirable to do so they could pass a resolution to that effect; but the Government were quite prepared to take the responsibility when the time arrived for such action. He thought himself that the prohibition of the introduction of black labour should be concurrent with the substitution of some other labour to take its place; and when, as he hoped would be the case in the course of a year or two, the Government would be able to make arrangements for the satisfactory introduction of all the labour required in the colony, they would be prepared to deal with the subject.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not wish to detain the Committee, and had but a very few words to say upon the clause. He wished to say that he disclaimed any sympathy whatever with the amendment. It was as much a surprise to him when the hon. member gave notice of it last night as to any member of the party opposite.

Mr. HAMILTON said the leader of the Opposition had disclaimed in the name of the party of having agreed to the clause which he (Mr. Hamilton) had proposed. That was true; he (Mr. Hamilton) was going on his own bottom. The Premier said that the people of Queensland perfectly understood his views on coloured labour. They did not. They had heard the views he had expressed, but they had no means of knowing what his real views were. The Premier also said that when the time arrived to exclude coloured labour the Government would take the responsibility. His refusal to accept the clause showed that he thought the time had not yet arrived. The step taken by him (Mr. Hamilton) would serve to show what the Premier's real sentiments were on the Coloured Labour question. If the Premier had been honest in the expression of his belief that white labour could grow sugar profitably, and that he disapproved of coloured labour, he would have supported his motion. How could he reconcile his action that night with his statements outside the House? He had publicly expressed his settled conviction, after thirteen years' study of the question, that the experience of Queensland had shown that sugar could be cultivated profitably by white labour, and that he preferred introducing Europeans for that work. He should, in proof of that, quote his own words from speeches made by him. At a banquet at Rosewood he expressed himself to the following effect:—

"It was no use saying sugar could not be grown without coloured labor. Let them try the experiment, and when they had tried it and failed it would be time enough to talk about the other alternative."

At a Toowoomba banquet he said:—

"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."

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."

Was the Premier, after thus arguing in favour of the white man, now going back on him? He also said in the School of Arts, last August, according to the report of his meeting in the *Courier*:—

"Another evil connected with this labour would be that in attempting to confine it to agriculture we should, by legislative enactment, create the idea that field labour was degrading, than which nothing could be more lamentable. The result would be that no white labour would be induced to engage in agriculture."

The Premier was now, therefore, by the Bill he had introduced, attempting to do that which, according to his publicly expressed belief, would cause labour to be considered degrading in Queensland, and would prevent whites engaging in it. After having informed the people of the colony that he considered white men perfectly capable of working in the canefields, and that he was opposed to coloured labour, he not only refused to stop the introduction of coloured labour, but refused to even put any clog on their introduction in the shape of a poll-tax. He refused to do that at the very time he had sent instructions to England to lessen European immigration. The fact of his having thus restricted European immigration at the very time he refused to restrict the introduction of coloured labour—although he had admitted that the work for which the latter was introduced could be performed by white men—clearly proved that all the agony he had piled on during the election, that this was a white man's colony, and that he would oppose coloured labour coming in, was done to deceive the people and catch their votes in order to vault into office off their backs. What did the hon. gentleman say in the Town Hall lately, according to the *Telegraph*? He should quote from one of the speeches to which he referred:—

"It is said, what do you mean by proposing to get immigrants from Great Britain to work in fields? Why is labour in fields more degrading in one portion of the colony than another? It is work that can be done in New South Wales, and why can it not be done here?"

Last night the Premier had said that the introduction of kanakas had driven immigrants from the colony, and after admitting that he now refused to exclude them. He had stated that white men could work in the fields, yet he was stopping their introduction, and at the same time introducing kanakas to supply their places. The hon. gentleman had, seven or eight years ago, said that the employment of kanakas was only a temporary policy, yet only that session he had introduced a Bill which he himself said would have the effect of doubling the supply to sugar-planters. No matter what their political opinions were they must be all satisfied on one point, that the Premier was not honest on the Coloured Labour question. The expression of his sentiments upon it varied with the latitude in which he expressed those sentiments. He, however, had by his motion succeeded in doing one thing, and that was, he had shown the people of the colony that the Premier's utterances on that subject were utterly unreliable.

Question—That the clause, as read, follow clause 8 of the Bill—put.

The CHAIRMAN declared that the "Noes" had it, whereupon

Mr. HAMILTON called for a division.

There being only one teller for the "Ayes," the CHAIRMAN said the question could not be put to a division, and must be resolved in the negative.

Mr. GRIMES said he begged to move the following new clause, to follow clause 11 of the Bill :—

It shall not be lawful to work an islander more than nine hours on each of six consecutive days in every week, commencing with the Monday of each week. The hours of work shall be estimated exclusive of the time allowed for meals.

It was not necessary for him to take up the time of the Committee with regard to it. He had spoken on the question the previous evening, and most hon. members were aware of his motive in introducing it. He moved that the clause be clause 12 of the Bill.

Mr. BLACK said he was quite prepared to give the hon. member credit for good intentions in moving the clause. At the same time he thought the hon. member had failed, at present, to show sufficient reasons for introducing a clause of that sort, making short hours prevail in connection with an agricultural industry, a custom which he might safely say did not prevail in connection with the agricultural industry in any country of the world. Hon. members of course knew that in mechanical pursuits short hours prevailed in many parts of the world, but for agricultural pursuits to be hampered by regular hours was not, so far as he knew, known anywhere, and he did not think that the hon. gentleman had shown any reason why the system should obtain the force of law in connection with the agriculture of the north of Queensland. The hon. gentleman especially weakened his case when, in introducing the clause, he admitted—

"That it was not well in ordinary cases for the Legislature to step in and interfere between employer and employé, but many cases had arisen in which it had been absolutely necessary."

And he went on to say—

"It had been deemed necessary to step in and make such legislation as he proposed in the case of the factory operatives in the United Kingdom."

There was no analogy whatever between that case and the present, because the Act referred to was passed to prevent young children being unduly tasked in carrying out the work of their employers. The hon. gentleman continued—

"Their hours of labour were excessive, and were found to be detrimental to their health, especially the health of young children and women."

That was no argument to bring forward in the case now under discussion. Then he also said—

"It was not his intention in the clause he had given notice of to interfere with the employment of kanakas where properly worked."

He (Mr. Black) maintained that, as a rule, the kanakas were properly worked, and no evidence had been brought before them to show otherwise. The plantations all over the colony were well known, and were frequently visited by people travelling, and the universal testimony of those people was that the kanakas were well and humanely treated. The hon. gentleman had, in corroboration of his arguments, referred to a report which was published in the "Votes and Proceedings" of the House for the year 1877. The hon. gentleman, in reading from that report, led the Committee to believe—or that was his impression—that it was a report on the treatment of Polynesians generally all through Queensland. He (Mr. Black) objected, when any hon. gentleman read from a report, that he should read only that portion which happened to suit his own particular views. That inquiry was authorised by Parliament to inquire into the condition of kanakas on certain plantations belonging to Messrs. Tooth and Cran in the Maryborough district only, and not plantations throughout the colony. Another thing which he did not think the hon. member for Oxley put fairly before the House was the death-rate of Polynesians in the colony, when he said :—

"He might refer to the report of the Registrar-General for 1882, as the mortality amongst Polynesians in that year was most alarming. He found it had risen to 82·64 per 1,000."

The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that was not a fair statement, because only ten days since he had moved for a return showing what the death-rate really was. He (Mr. Black) maintained that the hon. gentleman's statement was an attempt to mislead the House; because that return showed that the death-rate was about 5 per cent., or about 50 per 1,000, whereas the hon. gentleman, in order to force his views, tried to make the Committee believe that the death-rate was from 85 to 90 per cent. There was no doubt that the mortality amongst Polynesians was very much higher than amongst Europeans, but that was easily to be accounted for. It was well known that, at the time of the year when they came most freely to the colony, their supply of food, from the hurricane season and other causes, had run short on the islands. In many cases, when the islanders came on board the ships, they were in a weak and emaciated state. He appealed to anyone who had watched the Polynesians during their stay in the colony if, by the end of the first year, they were not materially improved in health; towards the end of the second year still further improved; and whether, when the time came for them to return to their homes, they were not in robust health? There was no doubt that it was during the first twelve months after their arrival in the colony that the majority of deaths took place. They were especially liable to disease of the lungs and diarrhœa; but he believed that every precaution was taken, not only by the planters, but latterly by the Government, to see that the kanakas were properly cared for and well treated. It was not to the interest of the sugar-planters to overwork them, nor did they do so. Hospitals were now being established at very heavy expense in different portions of the colony; the inspectors, he believed, did their duty to the best of their ability, and the Government were, he was satisfied, in every way anxious that complaints and abuses in connection with the coloured labour traffic should be done away with. He gave the Government credit for that, and should be always ready to assist them in every possible way, either by bringing complaints before them himself when he found their own officials did not do their duty, or by insisting that every protection should be given to Polynesians. They had an industry in the colony in connection with which there was an amount of very light work which could only properly be done by that class, and to pass a clause providing that they should only work nine hours a day was really unnecessary. It had never been called for. The amendments that had been made had been passed chiefly to regulate time-expired islanders. That was what the country demanded at the last election, and not, as had been represented by some hon. members, as if the whole subject of coloured labour had been under discussion. It was not; but the electors as a rule said that from the experience of the last fourteen years they found that the Polynesians had not done the country any harm, but they believed that that kind of labour required proper regulating; and if that was done, and the Polynesians were confined to the plantations, they had no objection to it. The electors, he believed, had recognised the necessity of coloured labour of that description for the plantations, and had no objection if it was properly regulated so that the abuses that had been carried on were no longer perpetrated. There they stopped,

but they put their foot down most emphatically against the introduction of coolies. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give him credit for putting the matter plainly before the Committee; and that, seeing that there had been no demand for such a provision—that no complaints had been raised about the hours of labour during which kanakas were employed—he would withdraw his really unnecessary and vexatious amendment. If he could show that those people were overworked then he would have some ground for proposing it, but he had not done so; and in the present unsettled state of the industry, when the planters were being unnecessarily harassed, to enforce such a clause would be perpetuating a feeling of irritation which he (Mr. Black) for one would be very happy to see subside. He gave the Government credit for being desirous to see that the islanders were properly protected, and also that the planters should not be unnecessarily harassed.

Mr. BROOKES said he was very glad to see the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Oxley, because everybody who was at all familiar with the history of coloured labour knew that the hours of labour were always too long. It had been so and was so at the present time in the West India Islands. It was so at Demerara; and wherever there was a slavish or semi-slavish race of labourers it had always been found necessary for the Imperial Government to step in and regulate it. The planters would never step in—no fear! and it had been found absolutely necessary for the Government to do so. He submitted that there was something like a contradiction in terms when the hon. member for Mackay pleaded for regulations and yet argued against the one regulation which, above all others, was most calculated to promote the welfare of the kanakas. He could not understand it; and he said there was no evidence to show that the amendment was necessary. What did he think of the report sent in by Drs. Thomson and Wray? Did that count for nothing? He maintained that it counted for a very great deal; and although the hon. member might say this provision was not necessary in his part of the world, how did they know that? They must fence in those planters with all manner of guarantees. He had yet to learn that the planters at Mackay, or other parts of the colony north of Maryborough, were any better than the Maryborough planters; and he said it did not look well for the planters to be arguing against a regulation which would prevent them from working kanakas to death. Was that too strong a phrase? They knew it was not. The report furnished by Drs. Thomson and Wray spoke emphatically of the cruelties that were practised upon kanakas in consequence of the extortionate hours of labour they were called upon to work; and all through the history of coloured labour they found the same thing perpetuated—working those people to death in the crushing season. If there could be more than twenty-four hours squeezed into the day, they would have to work more than twenty-four in the day. They were worked to death. That was not the language of rhetoric. Those were facts which could be extracted from thousands of volumes on the subject of coloured labour; and there was nothing upon which the Imperial Government laid so much stress as that the hours of labour should be distinctly and definitely fixed. The evil of coloured labour was that it placed the servile labourer too much under the control of the white man. They might not call that slavery, but it was akin to it—cousin to it; and unless they were very careful it would soon degenerate into slavery. The hon. member for Mackay stated that at the last general election the voice of the people was not against kanakas, but he (Mr. Brookes) could assure him that he laboured under a very grievous mistake. The voice of the colony was against coloured labour of all sorts, sizes, shapes, and descriptions, and not merely against coolies. He trusted that the hon. member for Oxley would press the amendment, because it was in the interests of humanity. It would be an immense protection to the kanaka; and if the barrier between the oppression of the planters and the kanaka were removed, they did not know what might be done; the door would be opened for cruelties at which he had not the slightest hesitation in saying even the hon. member for Mackay himself would stand aghast. The hon. member could not be responsible for all the sugar-planters. He might be a model sugar-planter; but sugar-planters had been noted for one consistent character ever since the cultivation of sugar by coloured labour working under white supervision.

Mr. JORDAN said he regretted the hon. member for Mackay could not agree with the clause introduced by the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. member for Mackay objected to the clause as unnecessary, and said it would hamper the industry in which he was interested. The hon. member said the proposition was unheard of in connection with any agricultural industry—that the people should be hampered by legislation. From his little experience in this matter—experience borne out by observation during the last ten years—be found that men engaged in sugar plantations—he meant European labourers—insisted upon having regular hours of labour. The hours were, he believed, from 7 in the morning, with an hour for dinner, to 6 in the evening, excepting on Saturdays, when they left off earlier. He thought those hours generally obtained on sugar plantations where white men were employed, and he felt certain that among farmers, generally, there were regular hours of labour. He therefore could not understand the hon. gentleman's objection—that the clause would hamper the agricultural industry. The hon. member had mentioned that the regulation of working hours in England applied chiefly to children; but he would point out that in this case many of the Polynesian labourers were children, and that was one of the worst features in connection with Polynesian labour in this colony. A very large proportion of the people brought from the islands were of tender age, and he could prove that by statistics in the Registrar-General's Office. The Census taken in 1884 showed what the ages of the Polynesians were. It was found in that Census how many were of a certain age, and he could read figures showing that a large proportion of them were not much over fifteen years of age, and with a very few exceptions the whole of the Polynesian labourers in the colony were between fifteen and thirty-five. The hon. member for Mackay had endeavoured to throw a doubt on the figures of the Registrar-General by saying that the member for Oxley had moved for a return which proved that the mortality among Polynesians was only about 50 per 1,000. He (Mr. Jordan) did not know how that return was obtained, but he had ascertained that it was not made up in the Registrar-General's Office, and he knew from his own knowledge that there was no certainty of ascertaining how many Polynesians there were in the colony, except through the Registrar-General's Office; nor were there means of ascertaining what the number of deaths were in the middle of the year. They did know exactly how many Polynesians were in the colony at the end of 1882, because they had the Registrar-General's report, and they knew also the number of deaths for the last few years.

Therefore it was childish for the hon. member to say that they should confine themselves to the figures which were given in the return, which was nothing but a mere approximation of the number of Polynesians and deaths among them. They could refer to their own undoubted records in proof that the death-rate had been from 60 to 85 per 1,000. There was not the slightest doubt about that, and so he should be obliged to inflict the following figures on the Committee:—In 1875, the death-rate was ascertained to be 85·11 per 1,000; 1876, 63·06; 1877, 57·39; 1878, 85·18; 1879, 55·78; 1880, 62·89; 1881, 64·74; 1882, 82·64. The bulk of the islanders are of the ages of between 15 and 35. This was ascertained by the Census of 1881, by which it was seen that 47 only were between 15 years of age, and 140 only were over 35, those between these ages numbering 4,397·11. Then came the most important part which he wished to direct the attention of the Committee to, and he hoped it would be remembered. He had been astonished for years that, though these reports had been published, no public attention had been called to the fact of the frightful death-rate among Polynesians—

"The deaths of persons between 15 and 35 in the Census year, exclusive of islanders, numbered 354, their whole number being 68,631; the death-rate was 5·60 per 1,000 only, while it is seen that the death-rate among Polynesians was 64·74 per 1,000."

Among white people the death-rate was about 5·60, but among the Polynesians it amounted to 82·64 per 1,000. Would anyone tell him that there was no other cause for that high death-rate than that the islanders were subject to phthisis? In the islands they had a very equable temperature. These people were enticed from their lands by all sorts of means—some were stolen and some were purchased—and they came here and died wholesale. Their constitution was not fitted for the labour of the field, or for the long hours of labour. His hon. friend, the member for Oxley, proposed they should work nine hours, but the work was altogether too hard. It was too hard for stalwart British labourers, and yet in the case of those poor delicate islanders the hon. member for Mackay objected to the nine hours' restriction. The hon. member wanted to have a sort of *carte blanche* about the hours of labour; and, without accusing the planters of intentional cruelty, he (Mr. Jordan) must say that the hours they compelled their labourers to work were altogether too long. Therefore he thought humanity required the proposed regulation, now that circumstances had compelled them to regulate Polynesian labour. The planters said they would be ruined if the proposition of the hon. member for Cook were carried into effect and black labour suddenly discontinued; and if it was necessary in order to save the planters from ruin that black labour should be perpetuated, it became necessary also to regulate that labour; and the clause proposed by the hon. member for Oxley was only a reasonable requirement. He had many times said that he believed Polynesians were generally kindly treated, and he would not say a word reflecting on the gentlemen who employed them further than that he believed they were lending themselves to an evil system, which was essentially and necessarily associated with cruelty. He would take the liberty of reading an extract from a report made, not so very long ago, on the alleged abuses connected with Polynesian labour. The report was contained in the following paper:—

"Return to an order made by the Honourable the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, dated 8th August, 1870, that there be laid upon the table of this House—

"All reports (received since the last session of this House) from the immigration offices in the different parts of the colony, on the subject of alleged abuses connected with the recruitment of Polynesian labourers and their treatment in the colony: also, any official reports on the subject of the extraordinary mortality alleged to have taken place amongst these islanders whilst on their road to the interior, or whilst employed in the western districts of the colony."

He found there one or two remarkable statements made by the gentleman who then occupied the important position of assistant immigration agent at Maryborough, as well as that of Polynesian protector. In reference to the treatment of Islanders by their employers that gentleman said:—

"I have very grave and serious misgivings as to the kind treatment Polynesians employed on plantations, stations, etc., receive from their employers. I am led to this conclusion by the fact that, even in the short period since my appointment, three complaints of ill-treatment have been made to me; in two of the instances alluded to, I am quite certain—although I cannot by white witness' evidence prove—that Polynesians were whipped on different sugar plantatations. I saw the marks of the blows cut through the skin in one instance; therefore, I respectfully suggest that some regulations be made for taking the evidence of South Sea Islanders, otherwise many offences against them must remain unpunished."

He was reading an extract from a return called for by the hon. member for Townsville. The report went on to say that there was no system of medical treatment on the plantations. They knew what an indignant protest was made some time ago by hon. members on both sides against the cruel treatment received by a girl on a sugar plantation, not in the North, but at Redland Bay. They were all of opinion that the treatment was cruel; and now they ought to be consistent. They were then transported, as it were, with indignation at the treatment that poor girl had received. It was not enough that the employer had been punished to the utmost limit of the law, but it was demanded that he should be immediately dismissed from the Commission of the Peace, and when it was found that he had been already dismissed it was demanded that he should not any more be allowed to employ black labour. He did not wish to defend the man, who was, he believed, very much to blame; but he would say that he had treated the girl, as he thought, skilfully. He happened to know that the employer of the girl was one of those singular persons who imagine themselves capable of treating disease better than almost any doctor in the colony, and he verily believed the man thought his treatment was going to be successful, and that the girl was in no danger of losing her life. No doubt he was very much to blame in not going to see the girl immediately he heard of the accident, but they had seen in the paper a statement from a very intelligent man, to the effect that he had ascertained that proper knowledge of the accident was not given to Mr. Dart at the mill. He had been told that she was burned—not that she was seriously burned—and when he went to see her he thought she would recover under his treatment. But the girl died, and he was very properly punished. While such things were on their parliamentary records it was evident thatthe men who derived their wealth from black labour to a great extent were not the men to go into ecstasies of indignation on such a question. He would state the reason given by Mr. Sheridan for the mortality among the Polynesians:—

"There is not any regular system of medical treatment of the Polynesians on the different plantations, nor is the cause of death in every case satisfactorily accounted for; whilst as to burial, I am led to believe that the interment of a South Sea Islander in no wise differs from the burial of a dog or any other carrion. As I am informed, a hole or grave is made in the most convenient

place: the body—as soon as possible after it has ceased to breathe—is rolled in the blanket in which it died, and put in its shallow last resting-place without further care or ceremony. As an instance of the necessity which exists for medical attendance"—

That was the part he laid stress upon—

"I may mention that the Maryborough district registrar's returns show for the last quarter that out of a population of 6,000 whites 59 deaths were registered, while out of a population of some 700 or 800 Polynesians 69 deaths have been reported. I would therefore most respectfully suggest that a regulation be made making it compulsory on the employer in every instance to produce a medical certificate as to the cause of death; also, that a medical man be appointed to visit every plantation; his salary need not cost the country anything, as a small sum per head per annum paid by employers on each islander employed would cover all expenses."

If it were true that there was a systematic want of attention on plantations to those who were sick—if it were true that medical aid was not called in as it should be, and that the lives of kanakas were held cheaply in many instances—if that were the case, they were not justified and were not consistent in exhibiting so much indignation at the melancholy case that occurred the other day at Redland Bay. They had sufficient material to show that a frightful amount of mortality had existed for many years, and to which attention had been called by the Registrar-General, and some consideration should be shown to those poor people more than had hitherto been shown. That consideration would take a very proper and effectual shape in the clause proposed by the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman who had just spoken had wandered considerably away from the subject, and some of his remarks were ill-advised, if not ill-founded. He did not think the hon. member could prove that there was any systematic want of attention shown to the kanakas by employers, and he had no right, in attempting to justify the conduct of his friend, to lay blame on the other planters of the colony. He rose particularly to ask what the leader of the Government intended to do with regard to the clause?

Mr. BROOKES said that when he last stood up to speak he had not in his hand the authorities to which he then alluded; but he had since got them, and would show the Committee how some things were managed. He would read the letter of Mr. Des Vœux to Lord Granville. He had been then five years in British Guiana, and knew what he was talking about. The result of that letter was that Lord Granville instituted a Royal Commission to inquire into the question. He found that the regular hours for coolie labour were seven and a-half hours on six days of the week; but what did Mr. Des Vœux say in his letter? It was divided into paragraphs, and in the 44th paragraph, page 388, he spoke of the manager of an estate having been brought before him on the complaint of a coolie for assault:—

"44. The manager of the largest estate, which, as making annually close upon 2,000 hogsheads of sugar, is second to none in the British possessions, was brought before me on the complaint of a coolie for assault.

"45. It appeared, from the evidence, that the man had been knocked down for leaving the sugar-house at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning (a day on which the immigrants are legally entitled to rest), he having been at work, with the mere intermission of meals, from an early hour on the Saturday previous."

There was a foot-note to the following effect:—

"I have strong reason for believing that the fact is concealed from the authorities, that it is no uncommon practice to enforce from immigrants (in spite of the law) from sixteen to twenty hours' work in the sugar-house. In proof, I may mention that a part proprietor of several large estates (Mr. Quintin Hogg, a partner in the firm of Brocquet, Curtis, and Co., expressed to me during his visit to Demerara last year his horror at finding that the immigrants on one of his estates had been for some days worked for twenty-two hours per day, and added that the manager was aggrieved at his interference in ordering the employment of relays. It is hardly possible to conceive that human nature could have stood so severe a strain, and the time may have been exaggerated; but, inasmuch as the statement as coming from a proprietor was in the nature of a confession, it could hardly have been far from the truth."

That he offered in confirmation of what he had said. There was no check whatever between the sugar-planter and the kanaka, who was liable to feel the full brunt of the cupidity of the sugar-planter. He thought while they were on that topic it was for the Committee to step in between them.

Mr. FERGUSON said he hoped that the leader of the Government would not entertain the amendment. It would only hamper and spoil the Bill. The Bill at present was one that would satisfy everyone in the colony if it passed as it stood. There had been a great deal said with reference to the hours of labour of kanakas, and so on; but if hon. members who had spoken with regard to that were consistent they would start at their own doors. For instance, the shopgirls in Brisbane and all towns in the colony were working ten and twelve hours in the day. How would it work if the shopkeepers were compelled to work their employés only eight hours? The sugar-planters could not be expected to restrict their hours of labour to nine in the crushing season. It would be right enough for some seasons of the year to work only six or seven, but during the crushing season the work must be done the same as on Saturdays in Brisbane, where shopkeepers had their employés working sometimes in the morning from 9 o'clock till 11 o'clock at night, though on other days they might be at work only eight hours. Kanakas were treated better than the majority of white people in Queensland with regard to their hours of labour and food and everything else. They were better off than the working men of Queensland. By allowing such an amendment to pass they would ruin the Bill. A great deal had been said with regard to the late elections; but he did not think there was a single elector in the colony who would oppose the introduction of kanakas if they were introduced under the restrictions mentioned in the present Bill. It would be satisfactory to every constituent in the colony.

Mr. BROOKES said he wondered at the hon. member for Rockhampton saying what he did, because he must be aware of the fact that the whole voice of the colony was against coloured labour in all sorts or shapes or sizes. He could afford to let that pass. He stood there in somewhat an awkward position. He would rather not be talking about how kanakas were treated in the colony, because that seemed to be question No. 2. The primary question was—How were they brought here? The general line of talk in the Committee seemed to him to imply that it did not matter so long as they were well treated when they got here—Christianised and comfortable. That did not satisfy him, nor would it satisfy the colony. They had a trade going on upon their coast that was a disgrace to civilisation—that induced robbery, lust, rapine, murder; he could extend the list indefinitely to every crime in the calendar. How were those to be dealt with? For the hon. member for Rockhampton to say that the colony did not care about the matter, and were only anxious that the men should be well treated, was a statement he repudiated most strongly.

The PREMIER said he was disposed to think that the amendment should not be entertained. A Bill was brought in of very pressing

importance dealing with the introduction of kanakas and their employment in the colony; but the subject of the restriction of the hours of their employment was another matter, and a very large one, which they did not contemplate dealing with at the time. Since the previous day he had had an opportunity of referring to the provisions made in England in the Factory Acts; and he found that the question was there dealt with in a much more elaborate manner than in a short clause such as that proposed. For a clause of that kind to be effectual, they must have some provisions compelling the registration of the hours in which labourers were employed, otherwise it would be merely a prohibition with no means of carrying it out. If they adopted the principle of restricting employment to a certain number of hours, to make it of any use there must be some means of ascertaining whether the provision was evaded or not, otherwise it would not be practicable to carry it out. He believed that sometimes during the crushing season kanakas were employed longer than they ought to be. A gentleman the other day, at a deputation that waited upon him (the Premier), spoke of kanakas being employed until after midnight; but he (the Premier) hoped that was an exceptional case. He did not anticipate much serious danger from kanakas being employed over hours, if for no other reason than this—though he should be sorry to think they had no other reason—self-interest on the part of the employers. Kanakas were so valuable, and were likely to be so much more so after what had happened during the last two months, that employers would take every care of them, if for no other reason than to prevent them doing anything to shorten their lives. He thought, therefore, it would be better to allow the Bill to go as it was. With respect to the mortality, it was no doubt lamentable. He had, since the return was given showing the number of deaths last year to be 693, received information that the number should be increased to 800, and was probably more. That was very lamentable. He might mention that the deaths had been enormously increased since new recruiting grounds, such as New Ireland and other places, were resorted to. As far as appearances went, the men who came from those places were totally unfit to work in the canefields in Queensland.

Mr. ARCHER said he agreed with what had been said about the lamentable mortality amongst kanakas. He had never employed many kanakas, but he had employed a few, and he knew that a great many came to Queensland who, when they left their homes, had the seeds of mortal disease in them. Probably many of them came here really ill, and were very glad to get away from their homes. Kanakas, as a rule, however, were not long-lived men even in their own lands, and that was not surprising. When the females were mothers at eight, eleven, and twelve years of age, the race could not possess great stamina; and he believed that in Queensland a great deal of the mortality was owing to their neglect of the laws of health. If steps could be taken to prevent islanders being brought from New Ireland and such places, he thought it would be a very good thing. There was no doubt that overwork did kill kanakas. He knew of his own knowledge that those who came from some of the islands were a very much more delicate race of people than were to be found in other islands: they came here in such a low state of health and strength, with disease contracted before they left, that they could not live long here. He himself had brought eight men, and out of that number he had to send one back, while another he kept the whole of his time, though he was worth comparatively nothing to him.

Mr. GRIMES said that the hon. member for Mackay had questioned the figures that he (Mr. Grimes) had referred to, and doubted whether the rate of mortality was as great as he mentioned. He (Mr. Grimes) had great doubts as to the accuracy of the return laid on the table. It showed that over 5,000 kanakas were introduced into the colony from June, 1882, to June, 1883, which was very improbable. Of course the number of deaths had been calculated by the estimated number of Polynesians in the colony, and it had reduced the death-rate. If hon. members would look at that return, they would find that the number of deaths of kanakas had increased rather than decreased during last year; and he believed that, had the return been given up to the end of December, there would have been a larger increase in the number of deaths, because during the last six months there had been fearful mortality amongst kanakas on some of the plantations in the neighbourhood of Maryborough. The hon. member said that it was only the plantations of Messrs. Tooth and Cran that were reported on by the Commission, but he was in error. There were seven plantations mentioned in the report, seven besides those of Messrs. Tooth and Cran. Those seven were: Jundah, Eton Vale, Antigua, Ferney, Magnolia, Alpha, and Nevada. Those were not Messrs. Tooth and Cran's plantations, so that the hon. gentleman was wrong on that point. He had, however, also quoted from the report of Mr. Horrocks, the Polynesian Inspector, and his report covered the whole of the Maryborough district. The hon. member said the Factories Act referred only to children, whereas it referred to all young people up to the age of fourteen, and to women. If the kanakas were able to take care of themselves better than children could do, he should not have moved in the matter. They knew very well that they were treated as children, and frightened as children, and were coerced into working over hours. He would just read an extract from the report of the deputation that waited upon the hon. Premier. One planter who was present—Mr. Palmer—said:—

"It was again often necessary to work mills up to 11 or 12 o'clock at night. Kanakas would work up to that time without grumbling, but he was sure Europeans would not unless there were relays, or they were paid double wages."

Was it right that they should ask the kanaka, because he daren't refuse, or if he refused he would get the overseer's fist in contact with his head?—Was it right that he should be obliged to work up to 12 o'clock at night and not be allowed any extra wages? He said it was shameful of Mr. Palmer to make such a statement. He did not know who he was.

The PREMIER: He is the late member for Maryborough.

Mr. GRIMES said he hoped there were not many planters like him. He had never thought of employing a white man half-an-hour beyond his time without giving him double wages. The hon. member for Mackay said they had no complaints from kanakas; but they were all aware of the great difficulty of getting complaints from kanakas. He would read a further extract from the report of the Commissioners to which he had already referred, to show the difficulty he mentioned. The report said:—

"The condition of the islander appeared to vary with his treatment. On one plantation he would seem happy and contented, would readily answer questions, and would have no complaints. On another, a very different state of things would exist—with a sullen doggedness, he would refuse to speak if any of the white bands were within earshot, and what then with difficulty could be elicited, was sure to be a complaint of either want of food or of harsh treatment."

They were frightened to lodge a complaint with the inspectors when they came round, and he knew for a fact that the visits of those inspectors upon plantations were of very little use. Generally speaking, they came and hobnobbed with the proprietor, the overseer, or manager. They sat round at table and drank toddy at night, and reported upon the state of the kanakas in the morning. They could not expect to get very truthful reports from the large number of the Polynesian inspectors at present appointed. The hon. member for Rockhampton said the Bill would be spoiled if they inserted his clause; but he did not think so. He said it was their bounden duty as legislators, when they found that the lives of kanakas were sacrificed to the avarice of the planter, to step in and put a stop to it. He was sorry he could not accept the suggestion of the hon. Premier and withdraw his clause. He felt bound to press it to a division, and, if the Committee rejected it he could not help it, and he would at all events have done what he believed to be right.

Mr. BLACK said he admitted the good motive of the hon. member who had just sat down, but he would point out that all his arguments were based on something alleged to have taken place five years ago. The management of the kanakas, their inspection, and the hospital arrangements provided for them, were far superior now to what they were then. The junior member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes) was also actuated, no doubt, by the purest motives from his own point of view, but his arguments were misleading. Quotations were always most dangerous things to use in argument in the House. He had on several occasions heard quotations from the book referred to by the hon. member in that House before as to what took place in British Guiana in the year 1869, or fourteen years ago. But that could not be compared with what was taking place now. That book—"The Coolie, his rights and wrongs"—came to be written on account of the very lengthy charges which Mr. Des Vœux made against the working of coolies in British Guiana. The Home Government having their attention called to the charges, sent out a Royal Commission to British Guiana to investigate the whole thing. One thing the hon. member did not tell them was, that the report which the Royal Commission brought up stated that the majority of Mr. Des Vœux's charges were not substantiated. That was a thing which the hon. junior member for North Brisbane should have told the Committee, and it was also a proof of the danger of the use of quotations. For instance, here was one short sentence which to a certain extent gave an idea of what Mr. Jenkins—who was, he believed, member for Aberdeen at the time—of what his impressions were after inquiring into the charges. In referring to one of the charges, he said:—

"The Commissioners were unable to follow Mr. Des Vœux to the extent of his inferences. Nor was he himself able to produce evidence that covered his statements."

That was the tenor of Mr. Jenkins' observations when he published the book. He was a man who was sent out by one of the societies in England for the protection of the native races. He went out to act thoroughly impartially in attending the Commission, and his report as published in the book was to the effect that, although no doubt many abuses had existed in connection with the employment of coolies in British Guiana, still the wholesale charges made by Mr. Des Vœux were not considered substantiated by the Commission. He (Mr. Black) therefore said it was dangerous to accept any quotations, especially as in the present case the hon. gentleman wished to base his arguments upon what had taken place in British Guiana fourteen years ago. The hon. member for Oxley based his argument on some other report drawn up five or six years ago. He (Mr. Black) said the present conditions were totally altered from the conditions which existed then. The kanakas at present in Queensland were, he believed, as the hon. member for Rockhampton had stated, treated as well as any white man in the country. He had invited the hon. junior member for North Brisbane to go up north and see for himself what was being done, and if he could point out any abuses he had no doubt that they would set their heads together and rectify them. There was no necessity whatever for the clause proposed by the hon. member for Oxley. The work that the majority of the kanakas were employed in was very light, especially the mill-work, and there was really no necessity to confine them to nine hours' work. They did work longer than that, but if they had to work late at night they were given a spell of three, four, or five hours in the middle of the day. In operations of that sort work could not be stopped, and the boys must be kept up pretty late at night; but wherever that was the case the planters gave them a spell in the middle of the day, and if the hours were extra long they had double shifts. To enact that the boys should not work more than nine hours would compel the planters to get an additional supply of coloured labour which they would not otherwise want. He hoped that the hon. member, after having done all that was necessary in drawing attention to the question, would see the advisability of withdrawing his motion.

Mr. JORDAN said his experience in Queensland had shown that it was not enough to draw attention to those facts. For the last eight years attention had been drawn to excessive mortality amongst Polynesians. The late protector of Polynesian labourers (Mr. Sheridan) had long ago pointed out that they were dying wholesale on the plantations. But what effect had it all had? He hoped the hon. member for Oxley would not content himself with drawing attention to the question, but would press his motion to a division; and if he did so he (Mr. Jordan) would sit by his side even if no one else did. He regretted exceedingly that the Premier would not accept the clause, although his attention had been called to the fact that Polynesians had to work very long hours, and he had expressed a hope that those cases were exceptional. He (Mr. Jordan) did not think that planters were generally cruel or unkind to their labourers; but the fact was that the Polynesians were persons of delicate constitution and were not capable of doing the work on a sugar plantation. He could not get over the fact that kanakas died at the rate of 82 per 1,000, which was more than fifteen times the rate at which persons of the same ages, who were not blacks, usually died. They had had those figures before them for years, and nothing had been done. The Premier said he thought it a sufficient safeguard that Polynesian labour was scarce, and the labourers were valuable. What was the price of Polynesians now in the labour market? What were they sold for? About £16 a head.

The HON. R. B. SHERIDAN: £25.

Mr. JORDAN said he knew that slaves in the Southern States of America were sometimes sold as high as £900 or £1,000; and yet that did not prevent the masters from grossly ill-treating them. To that system the black labour trade here must approximate more or less—the cruelty which had attached itself to slavery in every age of the world. He therefore hoped that the hon. member would persist in his motion.

The PREMIER said he did not think he ought to allow it to pass unchallenged that kanakas were bought and sold in Queensland. He was bound by his position in the House to say that that was not the case. With regard to the clause, he found that whenever an attempt had been made to regulate the hours of labour very careful provisions had to be made, not only for securing the enforcement of the law, but for allowing exceptions to be made in exceptional cases; and it would be necessary to deal with the present question in the same way. They could not lay down a hard-and-fast line applicable to all cases, and it was quite impracticable to deal with the subject in the present Bill. Such being the case, he had been obliged to come to the conclusion already stated to the Committee, that the Government could not see their way to consent to the introduction of the clause into the Bill.

Mr. FERGUSON said he would remind hon. members that some of the Government employés, such as engine-drivers, firemen, and guards on railways, had to work from twelve to sixteen hours a day, but because those were white men and not kanakas there was not a word said about them. Shepherds, too, were often compelled to work twelve hours or more a day, but not a word was said against it because they were not kanakas.

Mr. GRIMES said he was free to admit that if the men now under consideration had been white men he should have never interfered with them, because white men were quite able to look after themselves, knew what their hours were, and would not work overtime unless they were paid for it. It was because the kanakas were quite unable to take care of themselves that he thought it was their duty to step in and take care of them.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he hoped the hon. member for Oxley would press his motion to a division, for he was certain that it was proposed purely from motives of humanity. After they had listened last night to the arguments on the other side in reference to the slavery of the boys who had served their time he could not understand the arguments now used for the purpose of enslaving boys who had not served their time. The hon. member (Mr. Ferguson) had referred to the fact that employés on the Government railways had to work from twelve to fifteen hours a day. That was perfectly true, but those men were free to work or not as they chose, and when they worked more than eight hours a day they were paid extra for it. No comparison, therefore, could be made between them and the kanakas. Kanakas could not combine for their own protection as white men could. If they could, and would demand their own terms, he should not support the motion. But they were simply like children. They were far worse than the people of Egypt long ago.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the people of Egypt were all right.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the Committee were compelling the kanakas to do just whatever their employers chose. Those men could be worked for eight, or twelve, or even sixteen hours a day if the planter so willed, and they would have no redress whatever. If they were able to combine for their own protection he would not support the amendment; but they could not, and therefore he thought the Committee should protect them, simply because they could not protect themselves, and he hoped the hon. member would press his motion to a division on that account.

Mr. HAMILTON said he could hardly believe in the sincerity of the statements of the members of the other side of the Committee. It was very interesting to compare the words of these hon. gentlemen with their actions. He always believed that they could judge a man best by deeds, and not by words. When he proposed his amendment, which would have effectually put a stop to the black labour traffic, what did they do? Every one of them walked over to the other side of the Committee and voted against the amendment, although some of them had actually stated on the previous evening that if the exclusion of kanakas were proposed they would support it. He had taken the trouble of looking over *Hansard* of some two or three years ago when a similar proposition was made by Mr. O'Sullivan—indeed, his clause was copied from Mr. O'Sullivan's—and he would read to the Committee the names of the members who voted for it on that occasion. They voted against it now because on the former occasion they were secretly in favour of black labour, but wished to put the onus on the other side of the House of continuing it. Finding then, however, that in the way Mr. O'Sullivan proposed his motion they were equal in numbers to the Government members, they actually sent one of their number over to the other side, so that the motion would be lost on the division, as it was. The gentlemen of the Opposition who voted for the poll-tax on that occasion were as followed:—

"Messrs. Griffith, Douglas, Garrick, Dickson, Fraser, Macfarlane, Beattie, Grimes, Rea, and Rutledge."

Those gentlemen voted that the poll-tax should be imposed; and those who voted against it to-day were:—

"Messrs. Rutledge, Griffith, Dickson, Brookes, Smyth, Mellor, Isambert, Jordan, Dutton, Bale, Foxton, White, Midgley, Grimes, Macfarlane, Foote, and Sheridan."

Hon. members had stated that the present introduction of the question was only a temporary solution of the difficulty. By their voting they evidently considered themselves farther away from a solution of it now than they were three years ago. He simply alluded to the matter to show that the Government members were not sincere in the speeches they were making on the question.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought it only right that he should give an expression of his views, and explain his conduct with reference to the manner in which he should vote on the question. He was not one of those who were desirous of hampering the planter too much in dealing with the labour which he had from time to time obtained from the House the right to obtain. That labour was of such a character that it required to be protected by Act of Parliament. They had to legislate for the labourers almost as they would for prisons, or orphan asylums, or any other institutions which required to be inspected or directed with special care. At the same time he thought it was quite possible to go to extremes in the matter. The labour appeared to be so valuable to employers that he should hardly think such a clause as that proposed was necessary. They had heard a great deal during the debate about cruelty; there might be a great deal of it, but he assumed that most of it had passed away, and, that, as the result of the steps taken by the Government, in the appointment of inspectors of hospitals and other officials, they would not hear of any repetitions of the occurrences which used formerly to happen. The death-rate of the Polynesians was something astounding, and the statements made with regard to it had proved unanswerable from the other side. Even his hon. friend, Mr. Black, who was well up in the subject, and who had made a long speech about it early in the session, and had reiterated parts of it over and over again in the House, had not denied the statements. He looked upon the whole of the labour as very undesirable, and if possible he would be disposed to vote for a motion

that would prevent any increase of it, or even to say that it should be discontinued after a certain period. As for the motion of the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Hamilton), he had heard that that gentleman had been looking up *Hansard* for some weeks upon the subject, and that the Library messenger had been employed every day for a considerable period looking up books in order to enable the hon. gentleman to furnish the Committee with any information which he could bring to bear on the subject. The hon. gentleman ought to have brought forward a tangible motion which would have dealt with the question properly. He thought if the hon. gentleman, instead of bringing forward an amendment as he had done, had dated the commencement of the discontinuance of the labour from the 1st of April of the present year he might have had some support. But when the amendment was brought forward in such a manner as to leave the power open for the planters to increase the supply and stuff the country before the period arrived for discontinuance no one supported him.

Mr. HAMILTON : That is too thin.

Mr. FOOTE said it was not too thin. It was quite possible that it would have taken place if the amendment had been carried. The planters would have availed themselves of every opportunity, and have sent every rotten little schooner in the colony to bring in that class of immigrant before the time that had been specified arrived. The hon. gentleman, therefore, could not wonder that he was left by himself when the division came—that he had not even one solitary supporter from his own side, so ridiculous was the amendment he sought to introduce. He (Mr. Foote) did not see any necessity for the amendment of the hon. member for Oxley. It was quite possible that some abuses might have crept in in reference to working these "boys" over time; but in every branch of business, no matter what it might be, there were always busy seasons when all parties had to work extra time, and this was no exception to the rule. With the supervision now placed upon the employment of Polynesians, he did not think it likely that any abuses would exist.

Mr. HAMILTON said he should not attempt to contradict the absurd statement made by the hon. member for Bundanba—which, of course, was utterly untrue—as to the Library messenger running about for weeks to hunt up a motion which anybody could copy in five minutes, because the hon. member was so well known that any statements of his were not regarded as worth much, or accepted.

Mr. FOOTE: Your opinion is not worth much.

Mr. HAMILTON: He should be sorry for the praise of the hon. member, because that was the worst recommendation he could possibly have. He stated that, had he (Mr. Hamilton) proposed that his amendment should take effect from the 1st April, he would have voted for it. There was not a member of the House who believed that statement. It was an insult to the common sense of those to whom he was speaking to make such a statement, because he knew perfectly well that any member could have moved an amendment on his motion. He could show also that the reason stated was not the reason why hon. members opposite opposed his motion, because, when Mr. O'Sullivan in 1880 proposed to impose a poll-tax upon kanakas and to extend the period for one year longer than he (Mr. Hamilton) proposed—from 1881 to 1883—those members who voted for that motion voted against his. That would show the absurdity of the reasons given for voting against his amendment.

Mr. FOOTE said he had only given his own reasons for voting against the hon. member's amendment. It was very possible that the motion of the late member for Stanley fell through in a similar manner to the hon. member's amendment, simply because he proposed a lengthened period ahead, so that, had it been carried, Polynesians would have been poured in to a very great extent. The other remarks of the hon. member in reference to himself (Mr. Foote) were not worth answering. At any rate, there was not a member of the Committee who did not know the *prestige* of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member stated that the reasons given by him for voting against his amendment were his own reasons. Well, he had too strong an opinion of the hon. gentleman's common sense to believe that statement, because he had been sufficiently long in the House to know that it was in his power to propose a reduction of the time.

Mr. ISAMBERT said to propose a poll-tax of £50 was at once sufficient to prove the insincerity of the hon. member for Cook. If he had proposed that a tax should commence at once, and reasoned somewhat more sensibly than he did, it might have been accepted. For instance, if he had said that every white inhabitant was of so much value to the Treasury in paying taxes, and that, kanakas having very few requirements of civilised life, every such labourer was a loss to the Treasury, therefore their employers should make up the deficiency—say £4 or £5 a year—then he would have proved his sincerity in the matter.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had taken the trouble to translate into English the hon. member's last remarks. He stated that, had he (Mr. Hamilton) proposed that the tax should commence at once, he would have supported it. But surely he had had sufficient acquaintance with the rules of the House to know that he could have moved an amendment on his (Mr. Hamilton's) amendment. The fact of the matter was that members on the Government side were beginning to make excuses for their own insincerity in not having supported his (Mr. Hamilton's) motion. Of course they had to do so because they always voted together. More than once he had known hon. members on the other side actually speak in favour of a motion and then vote against it because their leader did so. Such a thing was never known in the last Parliament, and if such a thing had happened then it would have been scouted. During the whole of the last Parliament he never knew a single member to speak in favour of a motion and then vote against it. Such a course was dishonest in the extreme. As for sincerity, his sincerity was expressed by moving the amendment, and the insincerity of hon. members on the Government side was shown by their not proposing any amendment on his amendment, but voting like a lot of sheep against it.

Mr. FOXTON said before the matter came to the vote he should like to give his reasons for supporting the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Oxley. He did not altogether agree with the amendment, because he thought it was too crude; but it was necessary that this class of labour should be regulated, not only as to the occupations in which it was to be employed, but also as to the hours and manner of that employment. He quite agreed with the Premier that it was necessary that a much more elaborate scheme would be required to carry that out than was contained in the clause as proposed by the hon. member for Oxley. But he was inclined to think that unless some such clause was in-

serted in the Bill there would never be any regulation of the hours of labour at all. If the clause was passed those who wished to regulate that labour, or to see it regulated, would then have the co-operation of the sugar-planters in endeavouring to frame such a scheme as would be worthy of that House; but if the Bill passed without that clause those who wished to introduce such a scheme at some future time, so as to prevent possible abuses that now existed or might hereafter exist, would be met with the reply that the Labour question was settled so far as Polynesians were concerned—that a clause dealing with the regulation of hours of labour had been negatived in the Legislature. The passage of the clause might for a short time operate injuriously upon the planters, and therefore it would be to their interest to assist those who were in favour of the hours of labour being regulated in elaborating such a scheme as ought to be passed. The scheme which he should like to see was one by which at certain seasons of the year the kanakas might be employed for a longer period during the day, provided they were paid overtime, and subject to certain records being kept. But unless the clause was passed he plainly saw that no such scheme would come into operation.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the hon. gentleman had hardly grasped what the Premier said. He did not object to some such clause, but he stated it would be unworkable unless followed up by a large number of other clauses. No member, he (Mr. Morehead) trusted, would be willing to overwork a kanaka any more than a horse, but he thought that the member for Oxley, having achieved his purpose by ventilating the subject, might now very well adopt the suggestion of the Premier and withdraw the clause.

Mr. STEVENS said the arguments of the hon. member for Carnarvon were to the effect that he would support the objectionable amendment in the hope that a good amendment would be introduced at some future time. He was glad the Premier had objected to the clause, because it showed that the hon. gentleman was actuated by that spirit of fair play which he had shown all through the Bill. On the contrary, he thought the member for Oxley had shown the very bitterest spirit whenever this Kanaka question was brought up. He (Mr. Stevens) considered the amendment nothing less than a way of giving a mortal stab to the employers of black labour. The hon. member had posed as the champion employer of white labour in connection with sugar, and was as bitter as if he was in the position of a man who, having employed white labour, had failed with it, and did not care to acknowledge his failure. If the hon. member had any fairness, he would withdraw the amendment now. If the question was to be dealt with at a future period, a better scheme would probably be brought forward, and a scheme which would be much more satisfactory to the country generally.

Mr. BROOKES said he had heard several times that afternoon remarks which he thought should be at once met in the public interest, and if he found himself expressing different views from the Premier he could not help it. He was very sorry that hon. gentleman should, in speaking of the question, say that it was not in the interest of the planter to overwork his kanakas. He could only tell hon. gentlemen that all the facts were against that conclusion. They had every place in the world where coloured labour had been employed arrayed against such a conclusion. That it was not true in the Southern States of America and Cuba was notorious, because they deliberately imported slaves, and did now. He did not think he was exaggerating with reference to the present facts when he said that within very recent times it was notorious that it was part of the plan of the sugar-planters there to "work up" their coolies and slaves. They calculated the work that could be got out of them, and set it beside their deaths.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No, no!

Mr. BROOKES said he could substantiate that. The leader of the Opposition did not know as much of the matter as he did. He knew more than he (Mr. Brookes) on some subjects, and a great deal of what he did not care to know; but on this point the hon. gentleman must give way to him. He could produce chapter and verse for what he said with reference to the sugar-planters; he could say this: that half of their desire for black labour was that the labourers should be kept as a reserve force of labour for the crushing time. That was part of the value of black labour. Human life never did count for anything when placed in the scale of the profits of the employer. He was sorry to be obliged to speak in that way, but he must speak his mind. There was a deal of substance in what the Premier said, but he hoped and trusted that the time would never come when they would have a comprehensive code for the management of kanakas or any other kind of labour. The member for Oxley had said that he did not suppose his amendment would go to the root of the matter, but it would be a great deal better than nothing. It would come to the knowledge of the more intelligent of the kanakas, and would give them to understand that at crushing time they need not work day and night. He would put it to any man of common sense: was it fair that kanakas should work from daylight to dark, and from dark to midnight, for half-a-crown a week? The reason he should support the amendment was, that it was better than nothing; and when they had to argue for the coloured races they had to be thankful for small mercies, because they were placed in antagonism with those who knew nothing of fair dealing, but whose sole reasoning was pounds, shillings, and pence. He really could not see how anyone could argue against the clause—it could not do harm, and it might do a great deal of good. With reference to the remarks of the last speaker, he spoiled a good speech by the way in which he closed it. It was no use telling the hon. member for Oxley that he posed as the champion of white labour. The hon. member stood up for right, justice, humanity, human right for men and for women; and he (Mr. Brookes) took it that that was a very honourable position for any gentleman to be in. He was sorry that he was obliged to place himself in opposition to the Premier. He knew the hon. gentleman meant well, but he did not go far enough.

Mr. SALKELD said he had listened to the objections raised, one of which was that the clause was not called for. He presumed that meant that the kanakas had never agitated on the matter; but that objection had no weight, because it was perfectly well known that such an agitation got up by kanakas was the last thing they might expect. It had been pointed out that there was no legislation such as that proposed relating to the white working people; but he was not aware of any white people engaging for a period of three years like the Polynesians. White people generally engaged from day to day, or from week to week, or at the most from year to year; and they were far better able to look after themselves than the Polynesians. Objection had been made to the proposed clause as it stood, on the ground also that it was sometimes absolutely necessary to work kanakas more than

nine hours a day. The clause said, "It shall not be lawful to work an islander"; but he had an amendment to propose which would enable employers to come to terms with the men as to the number of hours they should work. He moved that the word "work" in the 1st line of the clause be omitted, with a view of inserting the word "compel"; also, that the words "to work" be inserted after the word "islander." The clause would then read thus:—"It shall not be lawful to compel an islander to work, etc." If the amendment were passed, kanakas might work longer or shorter hours, according to arrangement.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

Mr. GRIMES said he was quite willing to accept the amendment. It would meet the objection that had been raised by several hon. members that there were times when the work must be done, and it provided for men working overtime by being offered a consideration. In that way it would meet one of the strongest objections that had been made to the clause. He must express his regret that the hon. member for Logan had so far forgotten himself as to impute bad motives to him in introducing the amendment. It was all the more to be regretted because the hon. member was generally courteous and civil to hon. members, and he was sorry that he should have been the only member who had spoken against the clause in the manner he had done. It only showed how "evil communications corrupt good manners." The hon. member said that he (Mr. Grimes) showed the bitterest feeling to the planters; but he only desired to see justice done to the employés of the planters, and nothing more. He had also mentioned that it would strike a heavy blow at the planters. If so, that was one of the strongest arguments he could have given for the insertion of the clause; if it was so necessary, and made so much difference in the management of the planters' work that it would strike such a heavy blow, there was all the more reason why it should be passed. Some hon. members objected because the clause could not be enforced. But it was a transcript of a clause in the coolie regulations which were adopted by the late Government, and if it could be enforced under those regulations for the coolies, why could it not be enforced for Polynesians? The fact of its being known to the Polynesian that he was not obliged to work more than nine hours, and the planter knowing that he could not compel him, then he would take different measures to induce him. That was the best way of getting on with kanakas, and it was very likely that the purpose he had in view in introducing the clause would be achieved without any conviction being obtained under it. He accepted the amendment of the hon. member for Ipswich.

The PREMIER said he had pointed out that the Bill was introduced to deal with two matters. The hon. member for Oxley, with the best of motives, introduced an entirely different matter—a matter quite as complicated and requiring as careful attention as the other parts. The Government were not able to deal with the subject during the present session — that was, the subject of the hours of labour on plantations—and merely to put in a single clause of the kind proposed would be folly. He felt that the Government were responsible for the Bill, and were bound to see it passed through Parliament in an intelligible and workable form. If the clause were introduced into the Bill, either in its present or amended form, it would be apparently showing that they did not know how to do their business. He felt bound to point out that if the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich were carried it would be nonsense. There was no power to compel a kanaka to work at all. To lay an information against a man for compelling him to work would be nonsense. The only way would be by physical force, and that would not make him work, though it might make him sulk. It would be impossible to obtain a conviction, and it would seem as if the Committee had undertaken to deal with a matter it was not competent to deal with. He must therefore deprecate the amendment. The subject that the hon. member undertook to deal with was a much more complicated one than he gave it credit for being. He was very anxious that the Bill should become law, and therefore trusted that they might dispose of it and get to other work.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the clause was even more absurd than had been set forth by the Premier. If it was passed as suggested by the hon. member for Ipswich—that "it shall not be lawful to compel an islander to work more than nine hours"—the inference would be that it would be lawful to compel him to work nine hours. Was that a liberal and generous principle of doing justice to the black man—absolutely introducing a clause which, if passed, would give the power of compulsion to the employer of black labour? Hon. gentlemen had better go home and learn English.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. gentleman stated that the Polynesians could not be compelled to work more than nine hours, or even nine hours; but the fact was that they were compelled to work more than nine hours at present. He hoped the leader of the Opposition did not mean to say that an attempt was being made to compel anyone whom the planter had not in his employ to work nine hours.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the word "compel" in the Bill was quite a new word in any of their statutes dealing with labour. He hoped the hon. member for Ipswich would not persist in introducing any such word in the statute-book, in a measure dealing with the relations between employer and employed.

Mr. JORDAN said he liked the last remark made by the hon. member for Balonne. "I hope" was very different from telling hon. members to go home and learn the meaning of a simple English word. The hon. member had said that he (Mr. Jordan) tried to justify Mr. Dart. What he said was that Mr. Dart was deservedly punished.

Mr. BLACK said he would point out to the hon. member for Ipswich that there was not a single clause in the Polynesian Act compelling islanders to work. It was a well-known fact that it was only by judicious treatment and kindness that the islander could be induced to work. It was true that if he refused to work he could be taken before a bench of magistrates under the Masters and Servants Act.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is compelling them.

Mr. BLACK: But that was a measure which was not adopted by the planters as a rule. There might be exceptional cases; but as a rule kanakas were never taken before a bench of magistrates when they refused to work. As he said before, there was not a single clause in the Act to compel them to work. If a kanaka refused to work he did not lose his wages. At the end of his three years, no matter whether he had worked or not, he was paid the wages provided by the Act for the whole term without deduction. If the amendment was carried, t

would be necessary to introduce a further clause providing some punishment in the event of the kanakas refusing to work as enacted.

Mr. JORDAN said the amendment did not mean that a labourer was to be taken into the field and flogged to compel him to work. "Compel" was a plain English word, and the meaning was obvious. The hon. member for Mackay had admitted that under the Masters and Servants Act the kanakas could be punished for not doing their duty.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think, when the hon. member had really thought over what he said, that he would be prepared to justify his words. He had spoken of kanakas being flogged to work; at any rate, that was the only conclusion that could be arrived at from his words, though he did not say that the hon. member intended that.

Mr. JORDAN: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Certainly the hon. member's words conveyed that meaning. The hon. member, especially when speaking to a large audience, should be more careful and exact in saying what he meant. With reference to the original clause, if it were not altered in some way it would be the most absurd clause ever put on the statute-book. He would ask every hon. member of that Committee what was meant by "working an islander?" What interpretation did the hon. member for Oxley put on it? As he said before, they could not compel an islander to work. He hoped that the hon. member for Oxley—if he did not mean to obstruct, though he was rather inclined to think he did—would accept the proposition made by the Premier and let the Bill go through. They all desired to deal with the question with as little delay as possible. The whole of the delay now was caused by the hon. member.

The PREMIER said the clause would have to be amended, so as to read "it shall not be lawful to employ an islander more than nine hours."

Mr. BROOKES said he was sadly afraid they were beginning to talk nonsense. The leader of the Opposition talked about "work" in a way which he (Mr. Brookes) could not denominate by any other term than "nonsense." They knew what working a horse was; and there was not the least difference in principle between working a horse and working a kanaka. The idea of the leader of the Opposition endeavouring to play the schoolmaster to hon. members on the Ministerial side was a farce. The fact of the matter was, that the more they touched that Polynesian question the more entangled it became in their hands; and the only refuge was to get rid of the labour altogether. The hon. member for Mackay objected to the clause because he regarded it as a regulation, and he wanted to have his kanakas without regulations. He (Mr. Brookes) did not profess any extreme brilliancy or shrewdness, but he could understand the clause perfecty well, and he could see its imperfections. With the amendment that had been made by the Premier——

Mr. NORTON: He has made no amendment.

Mr. BROOKES said he took it that the hon. member for Oxley would not object to use the word "employ" instead of "work," though he (Mr. Brookes) thought "work" was quite as good English. He was there for the express purpose of protesting against the kanaka labour. He did not want any hon. gentleman to be under any delusion on that point. Whatever the hon. member for Mackay might say, his (Mr. Brookes') constituents sent him there to erase the whole thing—every fragment of it. They should have no peace in Queensland until they got rid of kanaka labour. It would be always a vexed question, like a splinter in the hand or a grain of sand in the eye. He wanted to get rid of it. He was sure the clause could only work for good, and there had been no objection urged against it that would hold water for a single moment, except the one mentioned by the Premier, and that—asking the hon. gentleman's pardon—he did not think of much account, because he was pressing on to a certain mark—to get rid of the thing altogether. Meanwhile he would accept the clause and the Bill as an instalment. The clause would put a little barrier between the selfish, cruel planter and the defenceless kanaka, and for that reason he should vote for it.

Mr. JORDAN said the Premier had told them earlier in the session that the Bill was only a temporary measure, and, as he understood the hon. gentleman's meaning, he believed the hon. gentleman meant that black labour was doomed. That was what he (Mr. Jordan) meant, and it was what the junior member for North Brisbane meant. They had been sent there to do away with black labour, and he would never rest until black labour no more existed in the colony. The verdict of the people of the colony had been very clearly and distinctly expressed in every corner that they did not want black labour in Queensland. They could not vote for the clause introduced by the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Why not?

Mr. JORDAN said he would tell the hon. member if he would wait and would not interrupt him. They did not wish to injure the sugar-planter and his industry. If they had voted for the amendment of the hon. member for Cook they would have damaged them immensely. If by one single blow they swept kanaka labour away immediately, they would do the planters a great injustice, as they had embarked their capital under the sanction of Queensland law, and the Queensland Legislature had helped them to obtain kanakas. But on the same principle that the British Government established and sanctioned slavery in the American colonies, and subsequently paid £20,000,000 to get rid of it, they were determined eventually to get rid of coloured labour. It was an evil thing for the islanders who were taken from their islands on false pretences and were often bought and stolen; it was an evil thing for the captains, part owners of vessels, whose proceedings they could not control; it was an evil thing for those unhappy men the agents, whose hands were tied; it was an evil thing for the sailors, whose hands were often stained with blood in getting men for Queensland; it was an evil thing for the colonists, whose fine sense of British freedom was damaged; and it was an evil thing for the colony, because it had interfered with the inflow of British labour from Great Britain; and for the planters it was also an evil thing, for they would have done much better with a regular supply of British labour. Being an evil thing they were determined to get rid of it, but they intended to do so intelligently and justly to the planters, and hence the Bill. With all deference to the Premier he contended that the clause would not damage the Bill. As the hon. member for Carnarvon had pointed out, it would at all events show to the planter that the eye of the Legislature was upon that frightful mortality amongst the kanakas, and that they looked for the cause. The planters would, if the clause were passed, adopt some regular system, and the clause would be operative. He gave his impressions and his convictions upon the subject as an individual member of the Committee, and he should vote for the clause.

Mr. HAMILTON said they were all glad to hear the beautiful sentiments expressed by hon. members opposite, when speaking of what they

intended to do for the kanakas. The junior member for North Brisbane stated now that the only way of dealing with the question was to get rid of it altogether. If so, why did not the hon. member walk over to the same side as he (Mr. Hamilton), when the division was called for on the clause he had introduced? The hon. member for South Brisbane said they were sent to the House to do away with black labour; if so, the hon. member had refused to do what he had been sent to do, although he had had an opportunity to do it that evening. He would remind the hon. member of the old saying, *qui s'excuse s'accuse*, and the hon. gentleman's excuse was his accusation. The hon. member gave, as the reason for opposing his (Mr. Hamilton's) amendment, that he did not desire to do away with the sugar industry, and that the amendment would have the effect of immediately excluding kanakas. That was not so, for the amendment stated that they were to have two years before the kanakas were done away with. Therefore the reason given by the hon. member was not the correct reason. It was really amusing to hear the various reasons and excuses given by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for South Brisbane thought the time allowed by his amendment was not long enough, while the hon. member for Bundanba thought the reverse. Then the reason given by the Premier was that when the necessity arose to do away with black labour he would take measures accordingly; evidently showing that he did not think the necessity existed at present. Two hours after they had voted against a motion for the exclusion of blackfellows—though they admitted they were sent to the House to exclude them—the members on the Government side got up and attempted to excuse themselves, and the beauty of it was that each member gave a different reason, and each contradicted the member who preceded him.

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

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 13.

Messrs. Brookes, Smyth, Isambert, White, Buckland, Bale, Higson, Grimes, Jordan, Salkeld, Foxton, Midgley, and Macfarlane.

NOES, 26.

Messrs. Morehead, Norton, Archer, Perkins, Dickson, Chubb, Mellor, Macrossan, Stevenson, Black, Lalor, Foote, Dutton, Bailey, Nelson, Sheridan, Rutledge, Griffith, Macdonald-Paterson, Palmer, Lissner, Beattie, Moreton, Hamilton, Ferguson, and Stevens.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. GRIMES said that, as the vote just taken had tested the opinion of the Committee on the subject, and as he could gain nothing by pressing it any further, he begged to withdraw the clause.

Clause withdrawn accordingly.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair and reported the Bill to the House without further amendment.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

CHINESE IMMIGRANTS REGULATION ACT OF 1877 AMENDMENT BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: I do not think it necessary to take up the time of the House at any very great length in moving the second reading of this Bill. The Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act was introduced in 1877 by the Government of which the Hon. Mr. Douglas was the head, because at that time a large influx of Chinese into the colony was taking place, and at that time there was no law in force to prevent it. The hon. gentleman found, as I have said, that a very large influx was taking place, although in 1876 we had endeavoured to discourage them from mining on goldfields. The Bill which was passed in that year was not assented to by the then Governor, Mr. Cairns, and it was subsequently also disallowed by Her Majesty. In 1877 we passed that Bill again with verbal amendments, but with no real change, and it was assented to, and in addition we passed the Bill now in force, the Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act of 1877, by which it was provided that every Chinese landing in the colony should pay a sum of £10 before he was allowed to land, and that not more than one Chinese for every ten tons of the tonnage of the ship carrying them should be allowed to be brought by any ship arriving at a port in Queensland. The Bill with regard to goldfields—we having maintained our right to pass such legislation, although it was at first vetoed by the Governor—was subsequently repealed. It had served the purpose we intended it to do, and so it was repealed. The other Act has remained on the statute-book ever since, and has had the effect of diminishing the influx of Chinese to a very great extent. I believe that New South Wales has since then passed an Act which is more stringent than ours, while some of the other colonies have been contented with Acts passed on the more moderate lines of the Queensland Acts of 1877. Of late there has been an increasing influx of Chinese into this colony; and it is considered desirable, I believe, by all parties in the House, that we should make more stringent regulations to discourage that influx as far as we possibly can. The proposals made in this Bill with that intention are, in effect, three in number. The first is that the tax to be paid by the Chinese on landing here shall be £20 instead of £10. I believe that is more than is charged in any of the other colonies. The second provision is that the number of Chinese on any ship coming to a Queensland port shall be one for every fifty tons, instead of one for every ten tons; the result of these two changes will be to make it ten times more difficult for Chinese to come here. The poll-tax is to be raised from £10 to £20, and only one passenger is to be brought for every fifty, instead of every ten, tons of the tonnage of the ship carrying them. In addition to that, the money paid is not to be refunded. These are the principal provisions of the Bill. I am afraid that some hon. members will say I have not gone far enough, but I am under the impression that the proposed changes will to a great extent deter such a large number of Chinese from coming to the colony. The number of ships which come here which could bring thirty Chinese on board, and which would have to be of 1,500 tons register, is very small. Indeed, there is no ship I know of trading with such a tonnage. Provision is made to reserve the rights of those Chinese who are already in the colony, and those who are entitled to have their £10 back will get it back again, as that is of course a vested right. Those are the provisions of the Bill, and I do not think it necessary to say anything more about it. We have heard a great deal lately about the large number of Chinese who have come to the colony during the past year, but I find that the net increase on the year was only about 1,000 or a little over. About 2,000 arrived, I believe, and more than 1,000 left.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Some of them will come back again.

The PREMIER: Yes; some will come back again, no doubt. I find from a return with which I

am now provided that the total number of Chinese who arrived in the colony during the year 1883 was 2,578, and the total number who left the colony during the same year was 1,269.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is 1,300 increase.

The PREMIER: That is the increase during the past year, and I think the effect of this Bill will be that the number which arrive in the succeeding twelve months will be very much ess. I will not say any more on the subject, but move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MACROSSAN said: The hon. gentleman began by stating that he did not think it necessary to say much about the Bill now before us. I certainly, for one, think the hon. gentleman has not gone far enough. He stated that he expected some hon. members would be of that opinion, and I for one am quite sure that he has not gone sufficiently far, and I think that if he were in earnest on the question, as he ought to be, he would have gone a great deal farther. Before going into the merits of the Bill, and comparing it with other measures on the same subject, I must correct him in regard to the number of Chinese who came to the colony during the last year. The hon. gentleman read a statement to the effect that 2,578 had arrived in the colony during the year 1883, and that 1,269 went away; but out of that number 677 will come back again. They have only gone under permit, and that gives a total of 2,000 as the permanent addition to the Chinese population of the colony during the year 1883. The provisions of this Bill are that the Chinamen who come to this colony in the future will have to pay a £20 poll-tax instead of £10, and that the ship that brings them shall only bring one Chinamen to every fifty tons of her registered tonnage. What has the colony of Victoria done at different times to prevent the influx of Chinese? What has New South Wales done at different times to prevent the influx of Chinese; and what has America done with the same object? When I compare what they have done with the provisions of this Bill, I think I shall prove to this House that the Premier has not proposed to do enough. In reference to the Chinese in Victoria, there was a very great influx at one period, but there was never so great an influx in proportion to population as there was into the colony of Queensland when the Palmer River Gold Field started. At one time there were a little over 30,000 in Victoria, but there was never so great a number in one place as there was at one time on the Palmer Gold Field, when there were 17,000 there.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker, I beg to call your attention to the fact that the Premier is reading a newspaper, evidently with the intention of insulting the hon. member.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows I am in the habit of reading the paper every evening.

Mr. MACROSSAN: The first thing they did in Victoria was, in 1857, to impose a £10 poll-tax, and in addition to that an annual tax of £6, or what was called a residence license. That was much greater than is proposed here. That remained in force for some time, and had a strong deterrent effect upon the influx of Chinese into Victoria. When the goldfields began to fail, of course the number of Chinamen coming to that colony began to lessen, when in 1864 they passed the Chinese Immigrants Act. In 1865 they passed another Chinese Immigrants Act amending the previous one, and in 1881 they passed another, not upon the more moderate lines of the Queensland Act as stated by the hon. gentleman, but a much more stringent Act than we passed in 1877, and in one respect much more stringent than the measure now proposed by the hon. gentleman. Instead of allowing one Chinese passenger to every 50 tons, under the law at present in force in Victoria only one Chinese passenger can be brought to every 100 tons. That is also the law in New South Wales; it is the same in both; therefore the hon. gentleman is quite mistaken in saying that those Acts were based upon the more moderate lines of the Queensland Act. They are not. Now let us see what the Americans have done in the way of trying to keep out Chinese. The Americans have treaties with the Chinese Government in the same way that the Government of Britain has. One was made in 1858 and another in 1868, known as the Burlingame treaty. By that treaty the Chinese were guaranteed unlimited ingress to the States; that is to say, they had the same right to go and come into the States as any other of the most favoured nations of Europe. Previous to that, a very large influx of Chinese took place in connection with the Californian Gold Fields; and when those goldfields began to fail, they became a greater nuisance than they were when those goldfields were in their most palmy days, for this reason: that they were introduced by capitalists in the same way as they are being introduced here now. They were introduced and worked in gangs upon the land. We have all heard of the great farms that they have in some parts of California, and the great undertakings in connection with public works that have been carried out by Chinese there. They were introduced by capitalists, through the "six companies" in San Francisco—companies composed entirely of Chinese. The consequence was that, almost immediately after the making of the Burlingame treaty, Congress was petitioned to limit in some way the influx of Chinese to the country. Congress, of course, could not do so after having agreed to a treaty that the Chinese had a perfect right to come. The result was that Chinamen almost took possession of the labour field of California. The Californian State Legislature passed a restrictive measure several times to prevent, or rather to regulate them, so as to make their presence in the country as uncomfortable as possible; but those Acts were disallowed by the Supreme Court of the States. Of course the hon. gentleman knows that any Act passed even by Congress may be reviewed and disallowed by the Supreme Court of America. The agitation against the Chinese, however, became so strong that in 1876 the Senate, by resolution, appointed a select committee of three, and the House of Representatives appointed another select committee of the same number, and by resolution those two committees were joined together, to proceed to the Pacific coast and investigate and report upon the character, extent, and the effect of, Chinese immigration. The report of that committee is within the precincts of the House; in fact, it is one of the books in the Library, and every member can have access to it and make himself acquainted with the information it contains. Those gentlemen examined about 130 witnesses, and the report occupies more than 1,200 closely-printed pages—a very voluminous work indeed. I will read one or two paragraphs from the report to show what those gentlemen thought of the Chinese population in California. I may here say that the report and evidence show that the only people in California at that time who were in favour of Chinese immigration were capitalists and religious teachers, and those who made a profit through the importation of Chinese. The report says:—

"Opposition to any mode restricting the immigration of Chinese was also developed among religious teachers, who testified before the committee that the presence of Chinese among us imposes a duty and gives an opportunity of Christianising them. On the other hand, the committee found that labouring men and artisans, perhaps without exception, were opposed to the influx

of Chinese, on the ground that hard experience had shown that they are thereby thrown out of employment, and the means of decent livelihood are more difficult of acquisition. But the opposition to Chinese immigration was not confined to labouring men and mechanics. In the testimony will be found that of lawyers, doctors, merchants, divines, judges, and others, in large numbers, speaking of their own observation and belief, that the apparent prosperity derived from the presence of Chinese is deceptive and unwholesome, ruinous to our labouring classes, promotive of caste, and dangerous to free institutions."

Although religious teachers were very much in favour of introducing Chinese, it was proved by testimony that notwithstanding the large number of them that were supposed to be Christianised, out of the whole number that came there they numbered less than 300. This paragraph, which I shall read, shows exclusively the danger which we are running at the present time from allowing Chinese to come here, and I shall show before I sit down that the danger here is greater than ever it was in California :—

"To anyone reading the testimony which we lay before the two Houses, it will become painfully evident that the Pacific coast must in time become either American or Mongolian. There is a vast hive from which Chinese immigrants may swarm, and circumstances may send them in enormous numbers to this country. These two forces—Mongolian and American—are already in active opposition. They do not amalgamate, and all conditions are opposed to any assimilation. The American race is progressive, and in favour of a responsible representative Government. The Mongolian race seems to have no desire for progress, and to have no conception of representative and free institutions. While conditions should be favourable to the growth and occupancy of our Pacific possessions by our own people, the Chinese have advantages which will put them far in advance in this race for possession. They can subsist where the American would starve. They can work for wages which will not furnish the barest necessities of life to an American. They make their way in California as they have in the islands of the sea, not by superior force or virtue, or even industry, although they are, as a rule, industrious, but by revolting characteristics, and by dispensing with what had become necessitous in modern civilisation. To compete with them and expel them, the American must come down to their level or below them; must work so cheaply that the Chinese cannot compete with him, for in the contest for subsistence, he that can subsist upon the least will last the longest."

That report was presented to Congress in 1877, and a Bill was introduced into Congress and passed both Houses which provided a much more stringent measure than the one we have now before us. It was to this effect: No ship coming to California, no matter what its size, could bring more than fifteen Chinese passengers; and at that time a line of subsidised steamers was running from China to America *vid* the Sandwich Islands, every one of which was capable of carrying 1,200 passengers. By the Bill that was passed not one of those steamers was to be allowed to bring more than fifteen passengers. A very heavy penalty was also placed on the captain of any steamer for infringing that law. That Bill was vetoed because it was contrary to treaties then existing between China and America. Then the agitation grew stronger, and the Executive, which had always been opposed to dealing with the Chinese question, was at last compelled, in the face of the Chinese agitation both on the East and West sides of America, to send an embassy to China for the purpose of arranging for an alteration in the treaty, so as to allow the Americans to control the immigration. After some negotiations the Americans obtained permission to alter the treaty, and I may say that the general opinion of the Americans was that had an alteration in the treaty been asked for two or three years earlier no obstacle would have been put in the way, because at that time the Chinese were opposed to emigration, although they were not at the time the alteration of the treaty was proposed. Well, the treaty was altered, and a record of that could also be found in the Parliamentary Library. The alteration made was this: that the American Government had permission by the treaty to control, limit, or suspend Chinese immigration, but it was to be done in a reasonable manner. Immediately the treaty was amended the ambassadors returned to America, and a Bill was introduced into Congress in 1882 which entirely prohibited Chinese immigration for twenty years. That Bill was passed upon the authority obtained to suspend or limit immigration; but it prohibited it for twenty years, and President Arthur vetoed it, because, as he said, that could not be construed into being a reasonable manner of limiting the influx of Chinese. But immediately after another Bill was introduced, prohibiting immigration for ten years into America. That is the condition of the law at present, and any captain who attempts to bring a Chinaman to California now is liable to a penalty of 500 dollars for every Chinaman he brings, and to one year's imprisonment. Now I ask hon. gentlemen if there is any comparison between that law and the Bill introduced here to-night? Let us compare the conditions of the two countries as to the relative population and the number of Chinese in each. The number of Chinamen in America in 1880, according to the latest returns made by the six companies on the Pacific coast, was 148,000. There were a few outside of that number of whom the companies could give no account, but that makes no great difference. Now, the population of America at that time was about 50,000,000, and 148,000 Chinese compared to the population of America ·3 per cent. of the population; but taking the population of the Pacific coast and comparing it with the number of Chinamen, the percentage would be raised. The population of the Pacific coast is about one and a-half millions, so that there were at that time 10 per cent. of Chinamen on the Pacific coast. Now, what is our population, and what is the number of Chinese? By the latest reports in the newspapers our population amounts to 248,000—that may be correct or not. Our Chinese population is over 12,000, and the proportion of 12 to 248 is nearly 5 per cent. The proportion of the Chinese population to the American population was at the time I speak of ·3 per cent. But the great influx of Chinese here is to one part of the coast—that is to the Northern part of the colony. The population of the Northern coast is, say, 40,000, so that 20 per cent. of the Northern population is composed of Chinese. The law we propose to enact is nothing in comparison to the law passed by the Americans, and not so stringent, as far as passengers are concerned, as the law existing in New South Wales and Victoria. The hon. gentleman should have said much more than he did say on the second reading, and if he is as sincere upon the Chinese question as some members of this House are he would have introduced a very different measure. If it were left to me to frame a measure dealing with Chinese, I would make it such that no Chinaman could come here at all. I would control and suspend it entirely. Our great danger is from the Chinaman. We experience little danger from the kanakas, and the Government has taken care that there shall be no danger from coolies, so that our great danger is from the Chinese. It must be borne in mind that the 2,000 Chinese who came here last year came without regulations, and each man when his time is up—whatever engagement he may have made with the planter, I do not know—each man can go over the colony as he pleases; but the kanaka, by the Bill just passed, is limited to the plantation, and can go nowhere else. I may be told that the tax of £20 will prevent Chinamen coming: that the £10 tax still in

existence has to be returned at the end of three years, when the Chinaman leaves the colony, but that the £20 will go into the Treasury. That may be very plausible at first sight, but let us compare the cost of obtaining a kanaka—or the cost planters were willing to pay for obtaining a coolie—with the cost of obtaining a Chinaman even with the £20 tax, and hon. members will see that the danger is little lessened by the proposed change. The planter will have to pay a little more than last year, but not enough to prevent him obtaining Chinamen. The cost of obtaining a kanaka landed on the plantation is on an average £25. In addition to that the planter has to pay £6 for his return passage-money, making £31. That is the least cost, and that cost is increasing every year, as hon. members know very well. The Bill we have just passed will probably make the cost £35. The planters were willing to pay £30 to obtain a coolie; that is, £18 down, which they had to pay on making the application, and £12 for the return passage, making in all £30. Although we impose a tax of £20 on the Chinaman, which must be paid when he lands, the only other cost the planter incurs is the cost of his passage from Hongkong, with whatever commission he may have to pay for obtaining the Chinamen. That will be no more than the cost of obtaining a kanaka; and if we are serious on the subject we should make the cost such that the planters cannot afford to get Chinamen. I have no wish to injure the planters, but I have a strong desire to protect the Europeans. It is the Chinese we have to fear. It is proved in the report, a paragraph of which I have read, that the Chinese, after being brought into the country by the capitalists of California—some to work on the railways, and some on the large farms—after fulfilling their engagements there, floated into the town, and that San Francisco was in such a state that the white men who came across from the eastern seaboard to settle in California had to leave for want of employment. It was proved that the Chinese elbowed the whites out of several branches of trade; they were engaged in making shoes; they got possession of the whole of the slipper trade and the whole of the slop trade; they were in the woollen factories; they had driven certain kinds of wood-workers out of the field, and many other descriptions of labour besides. They were found to be so pliable, so easily taught, that it paid capitalists to take a few of them into their workshops and train them; and when they were trained they trained others; they worked for one-third and one-fourth of the wages for which white men worked, and the consequence was that employers dispensed with the services of white men. That is the state of things that will be here, because it was not the Chinese who went to work on the goldfields in California who proved so dangerous—it was the Chinese who came to engage in agriculture and other works. There is no danger to fear from the Chinese now on our goldfields—the danger is to be feared from a different class of Chinamen—men who will spread over the colony after the planters have done with them or when they have fulfilled their engagements. In September, 1879, the Californian State Legislature called for a vote of the whole of the electors of California for or against Chinese immigration; there were nearly 160,000 voters in the whole of the State, and out of that number 154,638 voted against Chinese immigration. The total number that could be found in the whole of the State of California, after the bitter experience they had, to vote for Chinese immigration, was 832. The vote in San Francisco was even more decisive than that in the State. In that city the voting was 41,000 and some odd against, and only 230 odd for the Chinese. I think I have shown the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill that it is a very moderate one indeed compared with the law in the other colonies at present. The colonies of Victoria and New South Wales are not in the same danger that we are. They have no large capitalists wishing to introduce Chinese in gangs to work on plantations or to do any other kind of work; but the Chinese go to those colonies, and there are still a great many going there in spite of the law which limits the number brought by each vessel to one for eve ry 100 tons, and imposes a poll-tax of £10. Hon. members can see from the reports of vessels going to Sydney and Melbourne that, in spite of laws more stringent than the Bill now before the House, Chinese are still going to the southern colonies. They have the same inducements to come here as to go there, and the additional inducements which can be offered by our capitalists who wish them to come in large numbers. I give warning that, while I do approve of the principle of the Bill, I shall try when in committee to make it as prohibitive as I possibly can; and I hope I shall be assisted by those on the other side, as I am sure I shall by those on this side. Let there be no milk-and-water legislation in regard to the Chinese. We have dealt firmly with the kanakas—let us be firm with regard to the Chinese also, and keep them out entirely. We need be under no apprehension that the Imperial Government will refuse to assent to any Act we may pass—at any rate the Imperial Government cannot plead the existence of treaties, the same as the American Government did. There is no treaty by which the Chinese have an unlimited right to come here. The treaties of Nankin, Pekin, and Tien-Tsin do not give the Chinese any right to come to this country. We can keep them out if we choose, and it is our bounden duty, once and for all, to make this a final measure to prevent a single Chinaman from coming to the colony after the Act passes.

Mr. HAMILTON said that an inspection of the Bill would prove that which any impartial person who had studied the public utterances of Mr. Griffith must have long since felt—namely, that he had undoubtedly a secret *penchant* for Chinese; for an examination of the Bill clearly showed that although the Premier was forced, in deference to public opinion, to appear to take steps to stop their introduction, the Bill was framed so as not to have that effect. Here was a race consisting of hundreds of millions, who were in close proximity to our shores, who could not be confined to one industry, and who could not only compete successfully with whites in every other industry in the colony, but had actually commenced doing so. They were infinitely more dangerous than coolies or any other coloured labour. They were coming in by thousands to sugar-planters. They were also depriving white men of employment in towns. In Rockhampton, as he had been informed by the hon. member Mr. Ferguson, there were about forty Chinese cabinet-makers, and not half that number of white ones. In Brisbane he knew a cabinet-maker, a late immigrant, who was actually returning to England, because he informed him he could get no employment at his trade in Brisbane, on account of the Chinese being able to make furniture and sell it cheaper than he could buy the wood. That would be fine news for intending immigrants, yet the Premier was actually introducing a Bill which would allow Chinese to enter the colony on far more favourable terms to the sugar-planter than kanakas. It cost a planter £30 to obtain a kanaka, independent of rations or wages; yet the Premier would actually enable them by the Bill to get Chinese on more

favourable terms. The poll-tax proposed to be placed on Chinese was £20. Chinamen were paying only £6 10s. for passage money, therefore, after paying the poll-tax, they could be obtained by the planter at £26 10s., which was £3 10s. less than it cost him to get a kanaka. What an absurdity it was to pretend to protect the working man by confining kanakas to one industry, and at the same time legislate so as to allow of the introduction of a far more dangerous class of labour, which could not be restricted, at a lower price! The Government that would introduce such a Bill must have a very low opinion of the discrimination of the public, to think they could, by such a transparent fraud of a Bill, make them believe they were legislating to stop Chinese when they were practically encouraging them. The clause which stated that only one Chinaman should be carried to every fifty tons of a ship showed that the Government were not in earnest in restricting them. The member for Townsville said they would have no milk-and-water legislation on the subject. He would support him in that idea, and so would every man on that side of the House, and when the Opposition were done with that Bill they would see that it was so altered that it would carry out the wishes of the people, which it certainly did not at present.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge): I shall only say a few words with reference to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Townsville. I quite sympathise with that hon. gentleman in his anxiety to limit the introduction of Chinese into the colony to the furthest possible extent, but it seems very remarkable that the hon. gentleman, who was an influential member of a powerful Government, should have been content during his five years' tenure of office to see Chinese coming in in the way they have been with very small restriction; and that now, when this Government, which really can lay claim to be influenced by honest and patriotic motives, desires to make it ten times more difficult to bring Chinese into the country, he should get up in the House and say, in the interests of the white working men of this country, that he will make the Bill so stringent as to be absolutely prohibitive. I think the hon. member's constituents, and the people of the colony as a whole, ought to take the hon. gentleman's protestations for what they are worth and no more. I acknowledge that the hon. gentleman is sincere in his anxiety to see Chinese immigration considerably restricted; but I cannot allow the hon. gentleman, so far as I am concerned, to pose as the champion of the working man as against Chinese, and hide from the constituencies the fact that when he was in a position to give effect to the views he now professes to hold he did nothing to carry out those views. I think I can see something of the true nature of the anxiety which animates the hon. gentleman now to prevent Chinese coming altogether. The country has pronounced very emphatically against coolies, but the hon. gentleman is still of opinion that the introduction of coolies is absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the colony, and the hon. gentleman desires to place the Government in such a position that he can force them into any corner at all by which he will be able to go to the country and say, "This is the condition of things: unless you let the coolie come in, the country is certain to drift on to the rocks of bankruptcy." Then the way is open to the coolies to come in. I think the hon. gentleman has raised this bogie about Chinese, and another bogie that he has been giving considerable prominence to lately, with certainly not the success that he has desired it should achieve. The hon. gentleman has been talking about Malays and about Chinese. Suppose, for the purpose of argument, that during the past year there were 1,300 Chinese absolutely brought into the colony, if we make their introduction ten times more difficult the number of Chinese coming in will in future be almost infinitesimal. Hon. members opposite are always talking about the necessity of guarding against extreme legislation. They are always saying that members on the Government side are too extreme in their ideas; but if there has been any extreme idea promulgated in this House it is by the hon. gentleman, who has suddenly come to the conclusion that the Chinaman is so undesirable an individual and that he is a contamination to the country, and who now turns round and says, "We will absolutely prohibit Chinese." The hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes) has never said anything in reference to black labour of a more extreme character than that. It is the custom to speak of that hon. member's advocacy of the non-introduction of Chinese as extreme, but his advocacy is sincere, and he has always proclaimed those views. But there must be some reason when the hon. member for Townsville, who did nothing when he had the power to limit the introduction of Chinese, turns round and wants to "out-herod Herod," and go to extremes and say a Chinaman shall not set his foot upon Queensland soil. As I said before, I have nothing to say against this. I wish to prohibit the introduction of Chinese into this country, because I regard their coming here as a great evil; but I am also an advocate for not going too far at a bound. I think if we find from experience, after two or three years' working of this Bill, should it become law, that the restriction is not sufficiently prohibitive, that we can then take the advance which the hon. gentleman desires, and make the Act so stringent that it shall be entirely prohibitive.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman has talked a good deal about bogies. If this is another bogie, so far as his conduct is concerned, he may find that there are others for which he may be sorry. The hon. gentleman has made an attack on the hon. member for Townsville. I know very well why he has done that. The hon. member for Townsville happens unfortunately to have more ability, and certainly more eloquence, and he is certainly much more respected in this House, than the Attorney-General. The hon. member for Townsville has made the most masterly speech on this Chinese question that has been delivered in this or any other Australian Parliament. I say that without fear of contradiction, and the hon. member for Kennedy naturally feels a little aggrieved because he has thought himself the most eloquent man in the world up to this time. The hon. gentleman has asked the question—"Why did not the hon. member for Townsville, while he was in power, take the opportunity to decrease the introduction of Chinese into this colony?" What are the facts? During the time that the hon. gentleman was in power the number of Chinese who came to the colony was greatly decreased until the hon. gentlemen now on the Treasury benches did away with the coolie regulations, and declared that no labour, except European and kanaka, should be introduced. Since then there has been a marked increase in the introduction of Chinese. The number of Chinese who came here decreased from year to year until within the last twelve months. They increased during the last twelve months, the number approaching within 14 of 2,000—that is to say, including the 677 who have permits by which they can return. Now look at the present astonishing attitude taken by the Government in reference to the Kanaka question and the Chinese question. It quite bears out

what has frequently been denied by the Premier, and more strenuously denied by his supporters, that he "leans towards the Chinese." Those are the words that were used at Roma, at that banquet which has become almost historical. The Premier of course denies it; in fact, he has so consistently denied it that the public believe him. But the hon. gentleman has protested too much. I am convinced that the hon. gentleman made use of those words.

The PREMIER: I never used anything like them.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Whether the hon. gentleman persists in saying that he was misreported or not, I am convinced that he did make use of those words; and I say that the Bill I hold in my hand confirms it.

The PREMIER: I never was so reported.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I say that this Bill favours the introduction of Chinese. I say that the hon. gentleman, although trying to convince us in every way he possibly can that he is opposed to the kanaka labourer mixing or competing with the working man of this colony, takes no such step against the Chinese. He allows the Chinese, who, by competing against the working man is a most dangerous element in the State, to come in. The Chinese can compete in every branch of trade and industry, and are very successful. That can hardly be said about the kanaka. We know, and the hon. gentleman knows, that the tendency of the Chinese is to migrate in great masses. He knows that they swept almost all over Europe in days gone by. We see a tendency of unrest amongst the Chinese people at the present time; and I say that at a time like this, when we have an opportunity of altogether prohibiting them from coming to this colony, and competing with the people here, we ought to seize that opportunity. That is the contention on this side. While we look upon it as a greater danger than the introduction of a few kanakas, who are dying out and who are not likely to affect our labour market much, we are bound to take up that position. As I have said, the Chinese are a most dangerous element to introduce; and I certainly shall do all I can, with the hon. member for Townsville, to prevent any further introduction of this dangerous race into this colony. I hold that the Premier has certainly borne out everything he said at the historical banquet at Roma, and that he much rather favours Chinese than kanakas. He would make one a slave and the other he would put into such a position that he would compete against the working man so long as he paid a certain amount to get in here. I am for prohibition pure and simple; and I should like the Premier to fall in with that view. If he does not, it will be a long time before he gets this Bill through committee. I am quite certain that the whole colony is with the hon. member for Townsville and myself, and will say "We will have no more Chinese." They are a dangerous people, and the sooner we keep them out the better; in fact, the sooner we get rid of those amongst us, the better for the colony.

Mr. BROOKES said it was clearly impossible for the Premier to do anything that could please hon. gentlemen opposite. It was clear to him that they were pushing matters rather too far. He admitted that the hon. member for Townsville had made as good a speech as he had ever heard in that House on the Chinese question. It was a carefully prepared speech, and, so far as he could judge, the hon. member was right in his facts. But surely they could discuss the question without bringing in taunts in the way the leader of the Opposition had done! Could they not talk it over in a quiet, respectful way, and see whether they could not devise some method to restrict Chinese immigration? The Premier had brought in a Bill which restricted it ten times more than it had ever been restricted before; and all of a sudden it brought up the hon. member for Townsville and the leader of the Opposition, and probably other hon. members who followed their lead, until he was sadly afraid even the good effects of the speech of the hon. member for Townsville would fade away, though he should be sorry if that were so The leader of the Opposition could not make a speech like that. It was a speech which would read very well, but if it was intended to produce a damaging effect upon the Government he did not see it. It seemed to him to have come at the wrong time. The hon. gentleman could not get out of that. He might have made that speech many times before, and making it just now he had made it for party purposes. What he (Mr. Brookes) complained of was that the Chinese question should be made a bone for them to wrangle over. Here was undoubtedly a great question. His own leaning upon it would be entire prohibition, as he would like to go to the far end of all those things. Some hon. gentlemen did not like his extreme views upon the Kanaka and Coolie questions; but how should it be if in these expressions of extreme views the leader of the Opposition and his supporters were trying to shove the coolies in under the Chinese? He might tell those gentlemen, through the Speaker, that he would not trust them as far as he could see them. Every syllable they had said on the Coloured Labour question so far made it very difficult for him to accept in good faith what they might say about their intense horror of Chinese. He did not see it. Their professions required proof, and he had not seen the proof. It had come to be a stereotyped form in the mind of the leader of the Opposition to say he would do this and that, and he was determined to do this and the other; it had become almost as stereotyped as the expression of the hon. member for Normanby — "If I stand here by myself, I will do so-and-so" — and what did he do, after all, but make himself ridiculous? Indeed, if anyone protested too much he thought it was the leader of the Opposition. He would like to see the second reading pass at once, and if they had a bone to pick they could do it in committee. He did not like to sit down again without repeating that the hon. member for Townsville had made a very good speech.

Mr. CHUBB: I think that the point upon which all members of the House are agreed is that the present law dealing with Chinese is not sufficiently stringent, and the question is how stringent is it necessary to make it to attain the end we desire. It is no use making the measure too stringent if a more moderate measure will effect the purpose in view. I agree with the hon. member for Townsville and the hon. junior member for North Brisbane that we should make the prohibition complete, if possible, but it does not appear to be the wish of the House to go to that extent at present. The hon. member for North Brisbane said he thought we should pass the second reading quickly and fight it out in committee; but I think this is the time when hon. members who do not quite agree with the Bill should express their opinions and make any objections they may have to it, so that the hon. gentleman in charge of it may give his attention to those objections, and consider the advisability of accepting suggestions made before it goes into committee. The first objection I have to the Bill is one which may be easily put right. It is in regard to the penalties. I do not think they are high enough, and, further, I do not think they should be imposed in this way. I do not think we should

make a maximum penalty, and leave the minimum at the discretion of the magistrates. I think, with regard to this matter, that it would be better to adopt the Victorian principle, and make the penalty absolute. I do not think it should be left to the discretion of the magistrates entrusted with the administration of the statute inflict a fine, say, of 1s. if they chose. That is one objection I have to the Bill. Again, I think the certificates of exemption allowed under the present Act should be done away with. It has been said, and with a good deal of truth, that Chinamen resemble each other as much as peas, and for that reason the country has very often been defrauded to a large extent by Chinamen obtaining these certificates of exemption and passing them on to fellow-Chinamen. I think it would be a good thing to knock that out of the principal Act, or, at all events, to make it more difficult for Chinamen to defraud in that respect. That is all I intend to say upon the Bill. My objection, as I have said, is that the penalty is too small, and that the penal clauses should be drafted more in accordance with the Victorian Act, which I have had an opportunity of looking over. I repeat that the provision in the principal Act for allowing Chinamen to go out of the colony upon certificates of exemption is a bad one, and, if possible, it should be abolished.

Mr. SMYTH said he thought nearly every member of the House would agree with the hon. member for Townsville that the Bill was not strict enough, and he hoped that all hon. members would work amicably in Committee to improve it. Some members had stated that a £20 poll-tax on Chinamen was not heavy enough. He thought it was quite heavy enough. His first objection to the Bill was contained in clause 3, and he thought the tonnage might well be increased to 500 tons. He remembered being in Brisbane last year, when Chinamen were coming to the colony in great numbers, and one line of ships—he believed it was called the "Stevens" line—brought a great number of them. The leader of the Opposition had said that they had tried to stop coolies, and intended to stop kanakas, and the consequence was that they were forcing Chinamen to come into the country. That was a very poor argument to use. And hon. gentlemen opposite were found saying that the Bill did not go far enough. Hon. members on the other side had a very good opportunity to bring in a measure to prohibit Chinamen from coming to the colony when they were in power, and they would have been supported by the then Opposition. But they had not done so. There were several things in connection with the Bill which he thought might be improved. For instance, he did not see any reference to miners' rights in the Bill, and he thought there might very well be made an extra charge for miners' rights to Chinese. They should be charged, say, £5 for a miner's right, or, at all events, some prohibitory sum, to prevent them from engaging in mining. Licenses ought not to be granted to Chinese hawkers. There were a great number of Chinese hawkers, many of them living under one roof; they were single men and could afford to sell their goods much cheaper than the storekeepers who had to pay heavy rents and taxes, to maintain large families, and contribute to various institutions. Chinese cabinet-makers should also be dealt with, and a clause should be introduced to prevent Chinese sailors from being discharged in Australian ports. At present there was nothing to prevent Chinese landing at Port Darwin and walking over into Queensland, and if they came for the purpose of engaging in mining the only way to get at them would be to put a heavy tax on their miners' rights. The hon. member for Townsville would remember that Chinese used to land at a bay near Adelaide and tramp over into Victoria by thousands, until they were stopped by the imposition of a heavy tax. A clause should also be introduced whereby Chinese settled in Queensland, and returning from a visit to China or any of the southern colonies, should not be compelled to pay the poll-tax. A case recently occurred at Maryborough, as hon. members were well aware, where that was done. The Bill, as he had said before, was not half strict enough, but if the Opposition would not obstruct, and would assist them to carry the measure, he believed it could be put through committee in a few hours.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member need not be alarmed. The Opposition were not going to oppose the Bill. They were going to make it a good Bill, and he expected they would have to complete it, as they had done all the other Bills that the Government had brought in. Not a single Bill had been brought in that could be recognised as the same Bill when it went out.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: What did you do to the last Bill—the Polynesian Bill?

Mr. BLACK said he would ask the Colonial Treasurer if he took the credit for that Bill upon his shoulders. The credit of it rested with the Premier, and even the Premier would hardly recognise the original Bill in its present shape. That very Polynesian Bill was another instance of what he had referred to on previous occasions as the primitive and crude legislation of the present Government. It was the weakest bantling of a Bill when introduced that was ever laid on the table, though it was a reasonably good Bill now; and the Opposition would make the Chinese Bill a good one if the other side would only let them. There was no doubt as to the feeling of the House that the introduction of Chinese was injurious to the colony, and they were bound to take such steps as had become necessary to prevent any further influx of them. He did not entirely agree with the hon. member for Townsville, that they should adopt the extreme measure of entirely excluding Chinese from the colony. That hon. member had pointed out, speaking of the relative cost of coolies, kanakas, and Chinese, that it was almost as cheap, as far as poll-tax and passage money were concerned, to introduce Chinese as to introduce coolies or kanakas. But that hon. member also said that in order to prevent Chinaman from coming into the colony the tonnage per passenger should be indefinitely increased. If the object of the Bill was simply to keep Chinamen from plantations, one passenger to fifty tons would be virtually prohibitive; it would entirely prevent the planters from bringing them here. He did not therefore think it necessary to make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world by passing what he might call extreme legislation. By passing a reasonable measure, also, it would be much more likely to pass through the other Chamber, and to receive the Royal assent. If they were to show that they were afraid to allow a single Chinaman to enter the colony, by extreme legislation, it was very probable that the Bill would not pass through the Upper House. With the Americans it was different. Queensland was a portion of the British Empire, and they had to conform to the laws and traditions of the Empire. He took that for granted. He himself wished to see the Chinese excluded; he had always said so, and should take his stand on that position: but it must be remembered that England had spent thousands of the lives of her people and millions of money in compelling the Chinese to open their ports to Europeans, and he did not think it would

be in accordance with the traditions of the Empire to say, "We will go to China, but we will not allow the Chinese to come here." Any reasonably moderate legislation they might devise would therefore be favourably received, whereas if they were to resort to extreme legislation they would only frustrate the object they had in view. The present Bill, with certain reasonable modifications, should receive the assistance of hon. members on both sides, and he believed it would. He entirely endorsed what the leader of the Opposition had said as to what had led to the increased introduction of Chinese into the colony—that it was owing to the action of the present Government. Had the Government recognised the necessities of tropical agriculture when it was attempted once for all to settle the question of labour for plantations, and allowed the coolie regulations to become law, the Chinese would not have come. But they, seeing the strength of the parties then in the House, and knowing that they could safely appeal to the prejudices of the people on the Labour question at the elections, refused to pass those regulations, although knowing at the time the dire necessity of the planters for labour. The consequence was that the planters had to resort to what they had always been opposed to—they had to resort to Chinese or any labour they could possibly get, in order to enable them to take their crops off. Hence there had been an influx of something like 2,000 Chinese during the past year. The planters were nearly driven to it, and he still took his stand on what he had before stated. Until the labour market was put on some more satisfactory basis than it now occupied they might shut the door to the Chinese, they might make it more difficult to get Polynesians, but as soon as they shut the one door some other door would be found to give them the necessary result. They could not prevent the labour coming, and the sooner that fact was recognised the better it would be for the colony. They did not want Chinese, as it was the most objectionable description of labour that could come to the colony. They were not a cheap class of labour, and they certainly did not add to the prosperity of the colony. He had intended to make a few remarks about the speeches of the junior member for North Brisbane (Mr. Brookes), and the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan), but as the former hon. member was not in his place, he would not do so.

Mr. SMYTH: He is listening to you.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to hear it, as he had always considered the hon. member to be the best advocate the planters ever had in the House, because his views on the subject were such as to make him ridiculous every time he gave utterance to them. He believed that men of extreme views very seldom got what they wanted. It was the men of moderate views who did so. The hon. member accused them of holding extreme views, but coming from him the remark was very much out of place. He hoped that the Bill would not only pass its second reading, but that it would, when it got into committee, be so modified as to cause it to receive the assent of the House without any unnecessary delay.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: It was stated of old, "I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts," and, although I am not afraid of the gentlemen on the other side of the House, I am very suspicious, at the present time, of their conduct. I am driven to this conclusion by the opposite manner in which the hon. gentlemen have addressed themselves to the House when speaking on the present Bill. The hon. member for Townsville goes in for total prohibition, and the hon. member for Mackay—who has just sat down—advocates moderation, while at the same time he leaves us in complete uncertainty as to the effect of his moderate counsels in regard to the influx of the Chinese. The Bill is a moderate measure, and is much more likely to pass through the House, and to be a good one in working, than any such extreme measure as that spoken of by the hon. member for Townsville. I contend that the change in the three principles proposed by the Bill will in themselves be sufficient at the present time to regulate and check the influx of Chinese. So far as legislating with a view to finality on the subject, it is impossible. The conditions of the colony are always changing, and for us to aim at finality would be perfectly futile. We are called upon to act differently from time to time as the colony progresses; and, as the colony might be menaced by the Chinese or any other class of immigration that might be disadvantageous to the colony, if we can prevent or check the system of objectionable immigration for a time that is all we can do. What is the principle of this Bill? It is this: We double the poll-tax; and not only that, but we do not make any refund of money at all. The late Attorney-General referred to the refund which we have made to the Chinese who have left the colony, and said that many abuses existed under the system. So far as I am aware of the working of these certificates, the greatest care has been exercised in granting any remission or refund of money on account of any Chinese leaving the colony; in fact, the Customs have frequently been applied to that the sub-collectors of the various ports should be allowed to exercise their own judgment in the matter. That has been persistently refused, and no application has been granted without reference to the Treasury, and approved by the Minister; so I think the abuses which the hon. member for Bowen has spoken of hardly exist.

Mr. CHUBB: I referred to the certificates of exemption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I may have misunderstood the hon. gentleman. Further, the Bill, as hon. gentlemen are aware, provides that the poll-tax shall be paid to the Consolidated Revenue, and not to the Trust Fund, as before; and, therefore, the total amount of capitation money will be paid into the Treasury without any refund. The matter of tonnage I do not look upon as being of very great importance. We might very well assimilate it to the Victorian or New South Wales statutes. In that respect I am of opinion that the Bill will be sufficiently restrictive as it stands. Hon. gentlemen opposite have thrown the blame of the great increase of the Chinese lately on the action of the present Government. In saying that I cannot avoid arriving at the conclusion that it was their intention to flood the colony with coolie immigration, because that seems the reason why this matter was in suspense, as when they were in power there seemed to them no danger from the introduction of Chinese. I am forced to the opinion that the prohibitive action so determinedly expressed by the hon. member for Townsville is based on his intention to exclude Chinese with the intention of re-opening the question of coolie labour, and in that I do not think he will find any support from hon. members on this side of the House at any rate.

Mr. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman has misquoted me.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am not quoting the hon. member at all. I am simply referring to what the hon. member for Balonne stated on the point; that is to say, that the present Government were to blame for the great increase that has taken place in

the number of Chinese immigrants who have arrived in the colony on account of the door to coolie immigration being now closed. I therefore contended that the advocacy of the Bill by the hon. member for Townsville and hon. gentlemen opposite was based upon the view that if Chinese immigration were closed entirely the colony would be driven to reconsider the question of coolie immigration.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It was never said.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I say that is my inference. I did not say it was said; but I say that it is a natural inference to adduce from the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite —that if this question of Chinese immigration is settled in a prohibitory form the country will be driven to the necessity of reconsidering or reopening the question of coolie immigration. That is a legitimate deduction from their arguments. I know, of course, that hon. gentlemen opposite will disclaim it, but we will see during the course of the debate what their views really are. At present they are surrounded by a haziness that makes them somewhat ambiguous, and it is rather difficult to ascertain what they really are. They are only unanimous in blaming the hon. the Premier for what they call "crude and hasty legislation," and taking credit to themselves for the assistance they have rendered in passing Bills this session. I should like to know in what tangible form that assistance has been rendered. I say there has not been a single practical amendment suggested by hon. gentlemen opposite in any of the Bills that have been under consideration this session.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Elections Bill, and the last Bill passed through committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I say no substantial amendment has been framed by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House on any Government Bills introduced this session. Why, they even voted unanimously this evening against the only amendment moved on their side of the House on the Polynesian Bill. They could not even support one of their own number in endeavouring to amend that measure. This, however, is by the way. I was betrayed into an interruption by asking the hon. member for Mackay what alterations had been made in the Polynesian Labour Bill during the three or four nights it had been under discussion; I contend that the charge of "crude legislation" has been most unwarrantably launched against my hon. friend the Premier. I only hope the assistance that is so freely tendered in connection with this Chinese Bill by the other side will assume a less tedious form than the assistance we have received in dealing with the other measures introduced this session.

Mr. ARCHER said: I shall not detain the House very long, because I think the hon. member for Townsville has put the matter so clearly that the sympathies of most hon. members, at any rate on this side, are with him in regard to the form in which we should like to see the Bill carried through. I rise more particularly for the purpose of pointing out the utter mistake that several speakers opposite have fallen into through the ill-advised statements of the hon. the Attorney-General, who, after remarking upon the thorough change that had taken place in the views of the hon. member for Townsville, said —"Why did he not do this when he was in power?" Then the hon. junior member for North Brisbane followed in the same strain, and he was followed by the hon. member for Gympie, who repeated the same thing—"Why did not they do it when they were in power?"—implying that the late Government neglected to do what they now see to be an absolute necessity. The hon. member for Balonne did explain shortly that there was no necessity during the time that the hon. member for Townsville was in office to do anything of this kind. During the whole time since the Palmer Gold Fields began to decrease in output, Chinamen in Queensland have steadily decreased, and it was only in the beginning or towards the middle of last year that they came down in any such quantities as to show us that measures would have to be taken to prevent them coming in the future. We did not neglect the matter. I remember a conversation taking place, after the hon. member for Townsville left the Government, upon this very subject, and what were the means that the late Government took to show that they were perfectly aware of the necessity for legislation, and were prepared to legislate upon the matter? Here is the last Queen's Speech which has been delivered to us. I notice that hon. members opposite are laughing; when they are tired of laughing at their own imbecility in not having seen this for themselves, I will proceed. It is a perfect absurdity to say that the late Government were not awake to the fact that the Chinese question must be dealt with. They were quite aware of the fact. When the hon. member for Townsville was one of the Government the influx of Chinese had not then begun, or was only just beginning. Here is the clause in the Governor's Speech :—

> "The influx of Chinese, under engagements and otherwise, has of late very much increased. The evils of this class of labour have been in past years clearly proved, not only in our towns, but on our goldfields and plantations, and your immediate attention will be invited to consider what measures may best be adopted to effect its diminution."

That is a complete disproof of the charge brought against the hon. member for Townsville, or against the late Government, that they had not their eyes open to the necessity for legislating on this matter; and when hon. gentlemen opposite are so ready to find a flaw, as they tried to do, with regard to the hon. member for Townsville, I think they might have taken the trouble to discover whether the Government, of which he was once a member, was not as fully alive as they were to the necessity of dealing with the question. As to the Bill before the House, it will probably, as the hon. member for Mackay said, be a good deal altered in committee. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer asks what the Opposition have really done in the way of altering Government Bills? Will the hon. gentleman take the Elections Bill and compare it as it came out of the House with the form it was in when it was introduced, and see if the opinions of this side of the House have not been inserted. They were accepted, of course, by the Premier, and adopted by him. And to say that it has not been altered is perfectly ridiculous.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not by you.

Mr. ARCHER: By the opinions expressed by this side of the House, which were adopted by the Premier.

The PREMIER: The most contemptible argument I have ever heard.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to know if the hon. the Premier is justified in using the word "contemptible" to the hon. member for Blackall.

The SPEAKER: If the word "contemptible" was addressed to the hon. member it is not in order.

The PREMIER: I interjected the word "contemptible" as referring to the argument of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. ARCHER: And I return the compliment in the same manner. I can only say that if the hon. gentleman will take the trouble to look at

the last Bill passed through committee this evening, and compare it with the Bill as it first came into the House, he will see the enormous amount of alterations that were suggested or spoken freely of by hon. members on this side of the House, and were adopted and embodied in the Bill. We would of course have made it still better, and if we had had more assistance, we would have expunged that most miserable clause making the Bill retrospective. There is no use in saying that the late Government were not alive to the necessity of restraining Chinese immigration. Nor do I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer need try any further to persuade anyone who has listened to the debate that the Opposition have not had enormous influence in changing the character of Government Bills this session.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he was very glad that the hon. member for Blackall had read the quotation from the last speech of the late Government in reference to the control of Chinese labour in towns, goldfields, and plantations; but it was somewhat remarkable that the Government had not referred to the control of that labour in the interior of the colony. In his tour through the Mitchell district, that was a point upon which he had to speak very frequently, and in no one place that he held a meeting at did he omit to introduce the subject of Chinese labour. In travelling through the district he found that the people were unanimous in their determination to wipe out those people if possible. He wished to take that opportunity of stating that the evils of that class of labour were much greater than most men were aware of. He could state unhesitatingly that he had seen himself sufficient to justify him in stating that the Chinese were positively edging the white men out of the Western districts. He would give a case in point. At one station he saw that, with the exception of two white men, all the others at the washpool were Chinamen. Three or four days subsequently he met one of those white men in want of employment, and he informed him (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) that two days after he had left the washpool some Chinamen came along from another station, and the two white men were discharged and the Chinamen put on in their places. He had found it to be the case in many parts of the district, that Chinamen, on account of what was termed their "reliability," were preferred to the white men, although they got the same wages. For what reason he did not know, but there was the fact that on many of the stations Chinamen were really preferred. At another washpool he asked one of the men who were there if he found the work unhealthy—that was because the manager had told him (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) that he could not get white men to do the work—to which he replied that many Europeans in the old country would stand up to their waist all day salmon-fishing, and not be the worse for it. The reply he got from the man in question was that he could stand it very well, and that it was capital work, but that whenever a Chinaman came along wanting work the white man was told to go and the Chinaman taken on. He wished to relate to the House what had happened in Brisbane within the last few months. A very old and respected tradesman in this city had told him that he was just about to give up the cabinet-making business, by reason of the competition of Chinamen. Although he had endeavoured to compete with them to his very utmost during the last six or seven years, he admitted now that they had got the best of him, and that he had lost all the capital he started with seven years ago. Those were instances of what was going on at the present time. He had not intended to say so much, but while speaking he would take the opportunity of saying that the Bill did not come up to his expectations in its restrictive character. He did not know how he had formed the opinion, but he had formed it most definitely that £50 should be the minimum sum to be paid by Chinamen coming into the colony, and if necessary he was prepared to go as far as £100, and even further than that if it would help to keep Chinamen out of the country. They were already the cancer spot in our social structure, and he really hoped that the good sense of both sides of the House would lead them in Committee to make a really first-rate measure of the Bill that had been presented to them that afternoon—at any rate, the Bill should have every assistance from him, and he would like to go a little further than even the measure provided, and he hoped the action of the House would be in that direction.

Mr. NORTON said: I quite agree with what has fallen from the member for Mackay as to the danger of holding extreme views, and the risk we run in holding those views in preventing the object one has from being carried out. But I cannot help remembering that there are no rules without their exceptions, and this is one of the cases in which I think an exception can be and ought to be made. Now I have listened with a great deal of pleasure and attention to what has fallen from the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, and I thoroughly endorse what has been said by the leader of the Opposition, that that gentleman's speech was probably the most masterly speech ever made in the Australian colonies upon this subject. The hon. member was very brief, but every word he said went direct to the point. I shall not attempt to take up any of the arguments of the hon. member for Townsville, because he has already said in a much better way than I could do anything that I might have to say. But there are other points to consider, which I think hon. members of this Chamber are not fully acquainted with. I refer more particularly to the bad character which many of these Chinese bear. Of course in my remarks I wish it to be understood that when I speak of the Chinese in condemnation, I do not include the whole of them. I believe there are just as good men among the Chinese who come here as there are in any other class of people in the colony; but I believe also that the great proportion of those who come here are men of very low character. Some years ago I remember reading what I thought at the time was probably a very exaggerated account of what took place in some of the populous parts of Victoria. That account referred to the manner in which young girls were induced to go to the haunts of the Chinese on some of the goldfields. They were induced by presents, and in different ways to go there. They were then gradually persuaded to try the effect of opium, and when they had got into the habit of smoking, and when they had acquired that habit they were treated in the most barbarous and abominable fashion. At the time I read those reports I thought that in all probability they had been very highly coloured, and that they had been got up for a sensational purpose. Since that time, within the last few years I had placed in my hands by a friend in Sydney a paper connected with the Parliament of New South Wales. I may say that the paper to which I refer contains the report and evidence of a select committee appointed to inquire into the state of the common lodging-houses in Sydney. In the course of this inquiry the lodging-houses not only of the white people were included, but also those occupied by the Chinese. The evidence elicited was of such an extraordinary and disgusting nature that the report was never circulated except among members of Parlia-

ment, and it was one of those copies which he placed in my hands. The witnesses who were examined were chiefly members of the police force, who had, during the course of their duty, to go a great deal into those lodging-houses. In addition to them there were medical men and some others, and the evidence of all entirely agreed with regard to what took place. I intended to have brought a copy of the report with me, but as I have not done so I cannot repeat what is there stated; I may say, however, that round the houses kept by the Chinese were found waiting to be admitted a considerable number of women and young girls—girls from the ages of ten and twelve years up to twenty years. A number of these women were, of course, of the most immoral character, but many of the girls had been induced by some means or other to go to the houses kept by these men, where advantage was taken of them after they had been induced to smoke opium. In the course of this inquiry it was elicited that these unfortunate women had acquired such a taste for opium that, knowing the terrible ordeal they had to go through when they were under its influence, they could not resist the craving for the horrible drug; and they went there, knowing that they would have to undergo what no woman, if she had command of her reason—if she had not been rendered insensible to what was going on—could possibly tolerate. I will not pursue the subject further; but I may tell the Premier and other hon. members that if they care to peruse this document I shall be happy to place it at their disposal; and when they read the evidence in connection with those houses they will feel that they have entered a chamber of horrors of the very worst description. The things brought to light before that committee are too extraordinary and too abominable to repeat; and yet all the witnesses who had opportunities of knowing the facts agree that the things stated really exist. In connection with the Chinese question, let me remind hon. members that in allowing the Chinese to come to this colony we admit men who come alone, who bring no wives or families, but who, by way of consolation, bring that abominable drug opium. With the help of that drug they are, no doubt, able to effect the same amount of debauchery here as in other places. If it has not entered into the consideration of hon. members before, they will now be able to see that the question is of such a serious social nature that, if they do not agree in excluding the Chinese altogether, they will see that there is sufficient justification for those who hold the opinion that they should be excluded. After the paper to which I have referred was placed in my hands, I made inquiries on my return to Brisbane with regard to what was going on here, because it appeared to me that if this state of things exists in other large towns the probability was that it would exist here also. In answer to those inquiries, I have been told that there are no Chinese lodging-houses here, and that such a state of things as exists in Sydney does not exist in Brisbane. I am obliged to accept that answer; but at the same time I think I was misinformed. I believe that in every large town or place where the Chinese congregate in large numbers the same state of things will exist; and, viewing the matter from that point, I have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion—a conclusion I long since adopted—that it is desirable wherever it is possible to exclude Chinese, to exclude them. If it is decided that the Chinese shall be allowed to come here—and I hope that will not be decided—then I hope the Bill will be made infinitely more stringent than it is at present. I had great pleasure in listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Moreton, because I believe that he and other members on both sides of the House will do their best to make a measure which, if it will not altogether prohibit Chinese from coming to the colony, will at any rate be next door to prohibiting them.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that the powerful and vivid descriptions of the danger to be apprehended from an invasion of Chinese were but faint descriptions of the danger which actually existed. But when they considered that those arguments came from men who had been in power for the last five years, during which time they did nothing to mitigate the evil or avert the danger — when they considered that those arguments came from men who had persistently and eloquently advocated the introduction of Indian coolies—and when they considered that those Indian coolies were able to starve out even Chinamen;—those arguments must be looked on with grave suspicion. They could only conclude that the Opposition intended to force the Government and the Liberal party into a corner—either to accept the Indian coolie or to adopt such an extreme measure as they would try to force on the Government. If the Government adopted such extreme measures, it would do such a great amount of injury that many people would turn against the Liberal party, and that was what the Opposition wanted; what the Opposition were afraid of was moderation and fairness and honesty of administration. As had been inadvertently admitted by the hon. members for Mackay and Port Curtis, extreme measures defeated themselves, and moderation was more likely to attain the purpose the Government had in view. The fact of the matter was, the present Government intended to take such steps as would mitigate the evil and avert the danger of a crisis; and, as had been indicated by the Premier, as soon as the Government had accomplished the arrangement they had in view —of supplying the necessary labour so that they could do away with cheap labour of every description without causing a crisis—further legislation would be taken. The extreme measures of the Opposition would not be as effective as the moderate measures of the Government.

Mr. PALMER moved that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put.

The PREMIER: I do not think there is any necessity for the debate being adjourned. There is no difference of opinion on either side as to the Bill passing its second reading. I agree with the hon. member for Mackay—I do not often agree with him—that when we want to attain an object we should adopt reasonable and moderate steps to attain it. Our object is to stop the immigration of Chinese, and we intend to do that by measures which are likely to become law and which will effect that object. There is this difference between the policy of the other side of the House and the policy of the Government: We are determined not to allow the introduction of coolies into the colony, and we are drawing up all our legislation with that object in view. The other side apparently are determined that they will have coolies introduced into the colony, and I cannot help thinking whenever they deal with the Labour question they have that object in view. Hon. members on this side of the House should bear that in mind very carefully in considering amendments that may be proposed by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House in dealing with the Labour question. I will take this opportunity of saying a word with respect to some observations made by the hon. member for Blackall with respect to the amendments made in Bills, although it is really a matter that scarcely deserves notice. On several occasions during

the last few days the Government have been taunted, and I think I may say, insulted, with having allowed amendments to be made in Bills introduced by them. That taunt comes with an especially bad grace from members of the late Government, who, when they introduced Bills, introduced them in such a manner that they had to be almost redrawn for them by the Opposition. I have never boasted in the House of services I have rendered, as a member of the House; but as a member of the House I have always endeavoured to assist in the proper drafting of Bills, no matter by whom introduced. I would like to know what is the object of referring a Bill to committee except to make it better. I have never seen any important Bill introduced into this House or any other House that did not receive amendment in its progress through committee. I do not think any Government is possessed of all wisdom—that their propositions are so perfect that they cannot be amended. I should be ashamed to assert that I could draw any Bill that was not capable of amendment. I have revised them a dozen times and made alterations in them. On very few occasions have any Bills of such importance as the Polynesian Labourers Bill passed through committee and received so little amendment. What alterations there were were all my own, except three words introduced by the hon. member for Oxley. But it is a matter not worth debating in the House. If these speeches are to be made night after night by hon. members opposite, under the circumstances it is just as well to refer to the matter once and for all. The public may think because statements of this kind are made, and we do not take the trouble to correct them, that there is something in them. I hope the hon. gentleman will withdraw the motion for adjournment, because, as I said, there is no question about the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I hope the hon. gentleman will not withdraw the motion for adjournment. I think he would have done it had it not been for the remarks which fell from the Premier. It is a pity that the leader of the House should lose his temper. It is a mistake on the part of a gentleman holding that very elevated position to go in for recrimination. There is no one more willing to admit than I am the great usefulness of the hon. the Premier in opposition; I think that is his province; I think that is the position he was intended by Providence to fill. I am perfectly certain there was no hon. member in this House who was a more capable critic, or more capable amender of measures that were brought before the House by the late Government than he was, but at the same time, he does not care to have the same sort of justice served out to himself. The hon. gentleman brought in a Bill which was a skeleton, and members on this side had to make it into an entity. That is what happened, and the hon. member need not be annoyed about it. I would be one of the first to admit that he is the first lawyer at the Bar of this colony. It does not follow from that that he is a heaven-born statesman; it does not follow that he is infallible or that he may not make mistakes; and it is absurd for him to get up and say that we smaller fry have no right to interfere with what he in his great wisdom does. Why, even a mosquito can make an elephant jump if he only bites him in the proper place. The hon. gentleman should not show that he has such a thin hide, because I can assure him that there are some mosquitoes on this side of the House. I do not think that the hon. gentleman is quite right in what he said about the late Government—that their intention was to introduce coolies into this colony. I say that there was no intention on the part of the late Government to bring coolies into this colony.

Mr. ISAMBERT: Yah!

Mr. MOREHEAD: I object to these foreign interruptions, like the yelp of a native dog. I maintain that it was not the intention of the late Government to introduce coolies into this colony, except with the consent of Parliament; they had no intention either more or less than that. What the Opposition object to now is to introduce the favourites of the Premier—that is, the Chinese; we certainly object to their being introduced in any shape or form whatever. The hon. gentleman knows that perfectly well. As far as regards the discussion of measures, I consider that they have been fairly and legitimately discussed in this House; and I maintain that there is a good deal in what has been said as to the crude way in which those measures have been brought down to this House. We have only to look at the measure just passed through committee—the Polynesian Labourers Bill—to see how many amendments were brought in. That was a burning question, and a question which the hon. member said he knew all about; yet I maintain that the main principles of the Bill have been materially altered by the action of the Opposition, and altered, too, for the better. There was no intention on our part to prevent legislation on that subject. Our intention was to try and make the legislation as perfect as possible. I think, therefore, that the remarks made by the Premier were uncalled for, and just as uncalled for as they were unwise.

Mr. HAMILTON said that the Opposition considered that the Bill in its present shape was not sufficiently stringent. It had been said that as soon as the Government had taken measures to provide labour they would take more stringent measures, evidently referring to that Bill respecting the Chinese. By that it was apparent that they intended to rely upon the introduction of Chinese labour until they had made arrangements for the introduction of another kind of labour. The Opposition wished to exclude Chinese labour alone, and not to have them under any condition whatever. They certainly did not approve of the methods taken by the Government with regard to the Labour question. They had actually sent instructions to lessen the supply of labour from England, while at the same time they placed but a slight restriction on the introduction of Chinese. and no restriction whatever on the introduction of kanakas. The Premier had said that the Opposition wished to introduce coolies. The Coolie question was not on the *tapis* at present, and it was simply evading the issue to debate it. As to his statement that insulting remarks had been made with regard to alteration in his Bills, the Premier could not deny the truth of the statement. He retaliated by saying that when the late Government was in office a great many alterations were made in their Bills. That might be; but then they did not pretend to possess all the wisdom and knowledge, and to take up the high and honourable position assumed by the hon. gentleman. He (Mr. Hamilton) agreed with the leader of the Opposition as to the usefulness of the Premier when in opposition, and he should like to see him in that position at present. But there was a difference between destroying a Bill and constructing one. The Premier was very good at criticism, but the present session showed that he was not so good at framing measures.

Mr. MACROSSAN: I had no intention of trespassing on the time of the House again this evening, but on the motion to adjourn the debate I take the opportunity of saying a few words. The hon. Treasurer has tried to make

a quotation about suspecting the Greeks when they bring gifts, and the hon. gentlemen at the head of the Government also said just now that he looks upon anything that is done on this side of the House in amending the proposals on the Labour question with suspicion, because we are determined to force coolies on the country. Now, I do not think the hon. gentleman can believe what he says. That he says it, and says it very often outside this House, I have not the slightest doubt. He knows as well as any member of this House that the Coolie question can never be renewed again unless by an Act of Parliament, and it is no use his trying to make a bugbear of the coolies, and to get a few more Chinese into the colony under cover of that bugbear. The position I have taken up is one that I have always occupied in this House. The hon. gentleman, last year, in this House said that he had done more than any man in the country to keep Chinese out of the colony. I ejaculated at the time that it was nonsense for him to say so; and I assert now that I have done more to keep Chinese out than any other man in the colony. I had no intention, and need not have said a word in praise of myself—because I detest anything of the kind—had it not been for what fell from the hon. gentleman now, and the prompting he gave his Attorney-General to get up and make the attack he did after I sat down. I shall just tell the House what I did try to do on the Chinese question, and what the hon. gentleman himself did not do and what he should have done. There would never have been a Chinese question in Queensland had it not been for the discovery of the Palmer River Gold Field. The few Chinese in the colony before that were a mere fraction of the population, and interfered in no way with the general pursuits of the population, and scarcely at all in the gold mines. There were a few on the Peak Downs, but they had left before the Palmer River Gold Field broke out. As soon as that field broke out, I was elected a member of this House—at the general election in 1873—and in 1872 or 1873 the then Government subsidised a line of steamers to run from Hongkong to Sydney. They gave £20,000 a-year to the E. and A. Company for that purpose. That was in 1872. Cooktown was opened immediately after the Palmer River rush, and I saw the great danger that existed in the proximity of Cooktown to Hongkong, and the first thing I did as a member of Parliament was to come down to the House and urge the matter upon the then Premier, Mr. Macalister, and on his Attorney-General, Mr. McDevitt, and ask them to take measures to prevent an influx of Chinese. I saw that the amount of the passage money was very small, and I saw that they went to Victoria in thousands when they knew that there was a great quantity of gold easily obtained there; and I knew that if they found the same opportunities for getting gold existed on the Palmer, the same result would follow, and they would go there in thousands. Mr. Macalister refused to do it, and had I the experience then which I had two years afterwards, or had I the same confidence in myself, I would have forced him to do it. The hon. member now at the head of the Government then became Mr. Macalister's Attorney-General, in September, 1874, I think.

The PREMIER: In August.

Mr. MACROSSAN: In August, 1874; earlier than I thought. Mr. King, the late Speaker, became Minister for Works and Mines later in the year, I think, and he was, like myself, a strong anti-Chinese man. In deference to him, I believe, the Government placed a Bill upon the table of the House in 1875. The Bill, if passed, would have been only a sham, but sham as it was, it was allowed to remain on the table of the House during the whole of the session, and no step whatever was taken to pass it. That is a fact. When the House met in 1876, I was so disgusted with the conduct of the Government—of which I was a supporter—on the Chinese question and on the Public Works question, that I moved a vote of want-of-confidence in them. That vote was almost carried, and although not carried it was the means of putting the then Government out of office. A reconstruction then took place under Mr. Thorne as Premier. A Bill was then introduced by the Government in 1876 dealing with the question, and after being passed by both Houses was disallowed—was vetoed by Governor Cairns. I say that if the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had been as sincere an anti-Chinese man as I was at that time, he would have done something in 1875 as he ought to have done, and not have allowed the matter to remain until 1877, when the evil was very largely intensified by the presence of Chinese in large numbers. The hon. gentleman, and the Government of which he was a member at that time, to use a common and a homely simile, shut the stable door after the steed had been stolen. They took no measures to prevent the influx of Chinamen at that time, and the consequence was the Palmer Gold Field was flooded with them, and the state of that field ever since was due to the laxity in 1874 and 1875 of the Government of which the hon. the Premier and the hon. the Colonial Treasurer were members. Yet the hon. gentleman urged his Attorney-General to get up and talk to me as if I had not taken up the question before. It is no new thing for me. I am well-known all over the colony as being opposed to Chinese. I do not need to take up the question now to regain a lost reputation for myself. Every man who knows me knows that I am opposed to Chinese, and have been opposed to them all my lifetime, and will be opposed to them, and if the Bill goes into committee I will do my best to make it prohibitive. If it is not made prohibitive it will not be my fault. So great do I think the evil of allowing Chinese to come to the country that I would not allow one to come to the country. I think if any individual in this House were to read the paper mentioned by the hon. member for Port Curtis, and to read the report of the general committee sent across the Pacific by the American Congress, he would be convinced that one Chinaman in the colony is one too many. I hope that in the future neither the Attorney-General or the Premier will insinuate that I have taken up a position upon the Chinese question in order to force the Government into a corner or to introduce coolies. I do not think that I shall ever in any way attempt to introduce coolies, and I am quite certain that had the late Government remained in office they would have introduced a measure dealing with the introduction of Chinese which would have been much more stringent than the measure now before us. I know they had not an opportunity of doing so; nevertheless, although the late Government had not the opportunity of doing so, this side of the House will carry out their intentions in their integrity—not for the purpose of forcing the Government into a corner, but to protect the working men of the colony—and will make the Bill what it should be now and what it is not—a prohibitory measure—as it should have been made even before it was laid on the table of the House to be discussed.

Mr. PALMER said he thought every member in the House had, as a candidate for election, to speak out as plainly upon the Chinese question before his constituents as upon the Coolie question

or the land-grant system. He was no lover of Chinese himself, and he freely gave his promise to help to restrict them in any legitimate way that came before the House. He regarded the introduction of Chinese into the colony in large flowing numbers as very detrimental to its best interests, and he thought that clause 3 in the Bill before them might almost be said to be prohibitory. He at all events regarded it as prohibitory. To say that there should be only one passenger to every fifty tons of cargo, and with a £20 poll-tax, was, in his opinion, prohibitory enough. He scarcely agreed with the remarks which fell from the hon. member for Gympie, who proposed to put a special tax upon those already in the colony. He thought that once here they should enjoy the same privileges that others had. Speaking upon the whole question, he could not help referring to the historical fact mentioned by the hon. member for Mackay. Everyone knew the amount of treasure and men the British Government expended in compelling the Chinese to open four of their principal ports to the introduction of English capital and English trade. Reflecting upon that fact, it would urge him, so far as he was concerned in a moderate measure like the Bill before them, in prohibiting the introduction of Chinese. He begged, with the permission of the House, to withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

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

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said he hoped to be able to-morrow to proceed with Government business after the private business had been disposed of. If so, he wished to carry the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Bill through two stages, if possible; and afterwards, if there was time left, he would proceed with the Chinese Bill.

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