

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 1884**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.**

*Wednesday, 9 July, 1884.*

Cooktown Wharf Line.—Question.—Sessional Orders.—Message from His Excellency the Governor.—Sessional Orders.—Public Officers Fees Bill.—United Municipalities Act Amendment Bill.—Joint Committees.—Formal Motion.—Address in Reply.

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

**COOKTOWN WHARF LINE.**

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) laid on the table of the House the plans, sections, and book of reference of a proposed Wharf Line at Cooktown.

**QUESTION.**

Mr. ARCHER asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. If the Admiralty have favourably considered the proposal of the late Government to complete the survey of the Queensland coast inside the Barrier Reef?
2. And if so, are the present Government prepared to carry out the arrangement made for that purpose by the late Government?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied: After a communication from the Government of Queensland to the Imperial Government with reference to resuming the survey of the east coast of Queensland, which was discontinued by the late Government in 1880, a proposition was made by the Lords of the Admiralty on the 31st December last to the Agent-General for Queensland (with whom they had placed themselves in direct communication) to purchase and maintain a vessel at the joint expense of the Imperial and Colonial Governments. The present Government, therefore, inquired whether one of the gunboats now building would be suitable for the purpose of survey.

ing, and a reply in the affirmative having been received, arrangements are now being made for fitting her out and providing a competent surveying staff. The correspondence on the subject will be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. ARCHER said the second part of his question had not been answered. Was the survey to be carried out on the basis proposed by the late Government?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not find that any arrangements were made by the late Government. The late Government addressed a letter to the Agent-General in May, 1883, about resuming the survey, and a distinct communication was made by the Lords of the Admiralty on the 31st December last, which was the basis of the present arrangement. The papers would be laid on the table of the House to-morrow.

#### SESSIONAL ORDERS.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), the following motion was agreed to:—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and at 10 o'clock a.m. on Friday, in each week; the sitting on the last-named day to terminate at 1 p.m.

The PREMIER moved—

That on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday in each week, Government business take precedence of all other business.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is not a formal motion.

The PREMIER said he knew it was not a formal motion. The system of formal motions was to be introduced by motion No. 5 on the notice-paper for that day. The suggestion made was that on Fridays, as well as on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Government business should take precedence. It had not been the practice of the House to sit very often on Friday morning, but a great deal of business would be introduced this session, of which notice had been given by the Government, and which might be considered in one sense private business, as, though it would be introduced by the Government, it was not likely to be controverted, and a great deal of progress might be made with such measures on Friday mornings. Judging from the experience of the last few years, the House scarcely ever met on a Friday morning for the discussion of private business, but, if at all, for Government business. If it appeared, later in the session, that private business was likely to be displaced, and had not sufficient time given to it by the proposed arrangement, the Government would be quite willing to give up the Friday morning; but he thought it might well be devoted to what they might call the non-contentious Government business.

#### MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following messages from His Excellency the Governor:—

No. 1.—Transmitting “A Bill to make better provision for the occupation and use of Crown lands.”

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton), the message was ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

No. 2.—Transmitting “A Bill to provide for the appointment of the Registrar of Titles, and for transferring to that officer the duties now performed by the Registrar-General under the

Real Property Act of 1861, the Real Property Act of 1877, and the Acts relating to the Registration of Deeds and for other purposes.”

No. 3.—Transmitting “A Bill to continue the operations of the Marsupials Destruction Act of 1881.”

No. 4.—Transmitting “A Bill to Amend the Law relating to persons holding office under the Crown who may sit and vote in the Legislative Assembly, and to fix the salaries payable to Ministers of the Crown.”

On the motion of the PREMIER, Messages 2, 3, and 4 were ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

No. 5.—Transmitting “A Bill to Amend the Law relating to Endowments to Divisional Boards.”

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

#### SESSIONAL ORDERS.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was giving the reasons why they asked for Friday for Government business. He believed it would be found a useful experiment to try. He might add that the time commonly given here to private business was much out of proportion to that given in any other Colonial Legislature. In New South Wales there was one day a week only, and in Victoria only part of a day; and he believed it was the same in South Australia. The suggestion was made with a view to facilitate the despatch of some measures which all parties in the House would agree to pass, and for which they might possibly not have sufficient time on the Tuesday or Wednesday, as they were devoted to the more contentious business of the House.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is to separate them?

The PREMIER said the hon. member asked who was to separate them. They could be separated very easily, and hon. members who had been any time in the House would know that it was no use to take any business on Friday that was opposed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think that the hon. the Premier, in the remarks he had made, had given any sufficient reason why they should alter the practice of the House that had existed ever since the formation of a Parliament in the colony. The hon. gentleman had told them that, when there had been no private business on the paper on Friday mornings, Government business was proceeded with; and the same result would take place, according to his own showing, without any alteration being made in the existing mode of procedure. He had also told them that Friday mornings were only to be devoted to what he called “non-contentious” Bills; but he (Mr. Morehead) had never known any measure brought in by that hon. gentleman that was non-contentious, and he did not believe he would ever see such a measure introduced by him. The hon. gentleman had given no good reason for the alteration, save and except, of course, that he had a majority by which he was able to force a breach of the existing rule. If he chose to do so of course he could do it, but, as he himself had admitted, there was no good to be done on Friday forenoon if the Opposition, even if a small one, was determined that it should not be done. Therefore no possible good could result from the proposed infringement—as he considered it—of the privileges of private members. They had their privileges, and should defend them, and unless the Government could give some much stronger reasons than had been given by the Premier in asking them to yield the point,

they should not do so. There was no privilege that should be so much cherished as the rights of private members; and he hoped that hon. members, not only on that side but on the other side of the House, would agree with him in thinking that this infringement should not be allowed. He moved, as an amendment, that the words "Wednesday and Friday" be omitted, and that "and Wednesday" be inserted after "Tuesday."

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. leader of the Opposition seemed to imagine that it was the intention of the Government to crush out private business on Friday mornings, but there was no such intention. Seeing the large number of members who were supporting the Government, who very likely would have an equal amount of private business to carry through as hon. members opposite, it would be very unwise to attempt anything of the kind. He could say that the Government would by no means insist upon every Friday being devoted to their business, to the exclusion of private business. It would certainly be a very great convenience to the Government when they had a number of Bills which, as his hon. friend had said, might be called "non-contentious," and which took a long time to pass through committee, to have Friday mornings at their command for the disposal of such measures. It was admitted that it was useless to introduce any measure likely to provoke discussion on Friday morning; and he thought the reasons given by the hon. the Premier should commend themselves to both sides of the House. He was sorry to hear the hon. the leader of the Opposition insinuate that the motion should be a party one that every member on his side should vote against.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I said nothing of the sort.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I understood the hon. gentleman to do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I said the motion struck at the privileges of members on both sides.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the arguments of the hon. the Premier in proposing the motion were very sensible, and that they should commend themselves to the good sense of the House, especially as he could disabuse the minds of hon. members of the idea that there was any intention on the part of the Government to occupy every Friday to the exclusion of private business.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not think the hon. the Treasurer had made the matter much clearer by the remarks he had just made. He did not think any satisfactory reason had been given why the usages of the House, which had been followed ever since its formation, should be changed. The hon. gentleman said that the Government would not do this or that, but they did not know what the Government might do. They only knew that, if Friday was taken away from private members, the Government could go on with their business without giving any reason why it should be done. There was really no necessity for the alteration. On a former occasion, when he was not a Minister, it was agreed that when Government business became pressing they should have the whole of Monday—which was a great deal better than getting only part of Friday—from half-past 10 until 1. Hon. members on that side having induced the House to sit on Mondays, when Government business became pressing, would be obliged to do so again, and they would do so with pleasure and thus give the Government ample time to get through their Bills. As to Friday morning sittings, during all the years he had been in the House he had never known an hour's work done during the time

they sat on those days. In fact, a more useless waste of three hours and a-half he had never experienced. He thought they might allow matters to remain as they were, on the understanding that if the Government became pressed for time they should have Mondays; and in the case of a non-contentious measure which was required to be got through on a Friday, a special arrangement might be made to that effect, without altering the rules that had guided the House ever since its formation.

Mr. NORTON said he was sorry none of the members opposite had thought it necessary to answer the remarks of his hon. friend the member for Blackall. Since he had been in the House there had not been one occasion on which the Government wished to form a House when they had not been able to do so. If there had been any private business to do it had been done, and the Government business had been taken afterwards; and if there had been no private business, a House had been formed for the transaction of Government business, as the Premier must know perfectly well. What the Opposition wanted was that the privileges of private members should be retained. He did not consider that any suggestion had been made to the effect that the Government would take advantage of their position if the House agreed to the motion; but the Premier must bear in mind that the spirit which now animated the Government might not animate them in the future. They might be—or they might consider they were—pressed for time, though private members might not think so; and private members might be as much interested in carrying out their business as the Government were in carrying out theirs. As had already been pointed out, the House had on former occasions met for the transaction of business on Mondays; and there was not the slightest reason to suspect that a House would not be made on Friday, if necessary. All that he asked was that private members should retain the right they had possessed since there had been a Parliament in the colony; and there was no reason to suspect that private members would take advantage of their position any more than there was to suspect that the Government would take advantage of the motion if it were passed. The gain to the Government would be so small that it was not worth while disputing; but private members were bound to maintain their rights and privileges, and not give them up without tangible reason for so doing.

The PREMIER said that no one on the other side adverted to a single argument he used in moving the motion. He pointed out, in the first place, that though nominally there were two private members' days, practically there was only one day in the week devoted to private members' business during at least nine-tenths of the session. That showed one day in the week to be sufficient; it had been sufficient during the last twenty-four years. He also pointed out that in no other country were two days given up to private members' business; but hon. members opposite did not advert to that fact. Of late years there was a greater tendency to throw the function of introducing Bills, that did more than embody a simple principle, into the hands of the Government. That tendency had increased enormously during the last ten years, not only in the colony but in other parts of the world; and the Government therefore thought they should require three days a week to get through their work in a reasonable time. And in doing that they were taking nothing from private members of which they had hitherto made use. They proposed that the sitting on Friday, instead of being a sitting only in name, should be one in reality,

for they believed that the time could be usefully occupied. The time had not arrived for sitting on Monday. Hon. members on his side had always considered Monday a most inconvenient day for meeting; and the Government desired to consult the convenience of their friends as much as that of anybody else. He might also say that in all Legislatures there must be a great many measures passed by the unanimous consent of hon. members. It was the function of the Government, with the materials at their disposal, to prepare such Bills, having the best means of procuring information bearing upon them. It was impossible to discuss in minute detail such measures as the Insanity Bill and the Bills of Exchange Bill, for instance. In England, nearly all such measures were passed between midnight and 3 o'clock in the morning, and matters that involved contention were confined to three or four Bills during a session; in fact, there were seldom so many in the House of Commons. The Government desired that the Friday morning sitting should be a real sitting in order to facilitate business and get through important arrears of business, the importance of which had been recognised in former years, but which had not yet assumed a practical shape.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not quite catch what the Premier said when he first spoke, and he was then a little inclined to give up Friday morning to the Government; but the purport of the speech just delivered seemed to be to curtail the privileges of private members. The hon. gentleman quoted the practice in other colonies, where, he said, private members never got two days; and he also said that the tendency of legislation had been to centralise it in the hands of the Government. That might be perfectly true, but was that any reason why the Government should be placed in the position now occupied by private members? Now, if they wished to use Friday morning they had to ask private members to forego their business and let the Government business take precedence, but the Premier wished to place private members in the position of having to ask the Government to let their business take precedence if they considered it necessary. He was not inclined to trust the Government in the matter; for though they might have very good intentions just now, their opinions might change a few days or a few weeks hence. The Premier stated that there were many Bills upon which hon. members could agree unanimously, but he doubted that very much. He had gone through the padding Bills, as he might call them, in the Governor's Speech, and he did not see any such Bill. The Bill for the Regulation of the Insane he did not think should be passed without an amount of discussion. Why should they pass a Bill to regulate the conduct of the insane without it being thoroughly discussed and carefully considered by the House? It was very important indeed. He did not see a single Bill on the whole of the list, with the exception of that with regard to the abduction of aboriginals, that ought to be passed in that way; and even as to that Bill a question might arise as to whether the method the Government proposed was a good one or not. And there were other Bills that were contentious, more or less. He therefore asked private members to consider that. It was not a party question. Members of the Opposition were simply objecting to the motion in the interests of private members. He should do the same if he sat on the other side of the House. They did not wish to be placed in the position the Government were in now; at the same time they were quite willing, when there was any necessity for it, to give up Friday for Government business.

Mr. KATES said it had been his intention to vote against the motion; but after the assurance given by the Colonial Treasurer, that private business would not be crushed out on Friday mornings, he would vote for it.

Mr. BLACK said he entirely endorsed the remarks which fell from the hon. member for Townsville. No one in that House could be more anxious than he (Mr. Black), having come a long distance, to see the business speedily carried through; and he should, undoubtedly, be very glad if the Government could see their way to take Monday for transacting their business. It was attempted now to curtail a privilege of the House which had existed ever since Parliament was established—namely, Friday being a private members' day. He had no hesitation in saying that the business which was frequently brought forward by private members was of very considerable interest to the constituencies represented by them. It was business which was watched with as much interest by those constituencies as in many cases the Government business was. It was all very well for the Premier to say that only Government business of a non-contentious character would be brought forward on Fridays; but there might be great differences of opinion on that subject. The Premier might not be able to control his party. His intentions might be good enough. He (Mr. Black) had not the least doubt that the hon. gentleman's intentions were good enough last session, when he promised that nothing but the Estimates should come before the House. They knew to what extent he failed in that promise: instead of merely passing the Estimates, the House drifted into most important business; and something like twelve or thirteen Bills were passed after the Premier's assurance with regard to passing the Estimates only. Although the hon. gentleman said he only intended to bring forward on Fridays, this session, Bills of a non-contentious character, he (Mr. Black) very much feared that if it suited him he would bring forward other measures—even the Land Bill, if the occasion should arise. He hoped hon. members on both sides would carefully consider the matter before they recorded their votes; because, if once they allowed such a privilege to be taken away, it would be very hard indeed to regain it.

Mr. KELLETT said he had listened very carefully to the arguments brought forward on the other side against the motion, but he had not heard a single good one. The only one he heard was, that because the practice had existed many years, therefore it should not be altered; and that was a very poor argument indeed. It reminded him of an old friend of his, who used to always say that as he did a thing twenty-five years ago, he ought to do it now. He thought that hon. members on the Government side were just as anxious to preserve their rights as hon. members opposite; but they were perfectly satisfied with the promise that had been made by the Premier. He did not think anything would be done to do away with any privileges of private members.

Mr. STEVENS said he quite agreed with what the Premier said about Friday's and private business. As far as he (Mr. Stevens) could recollect, Friday had never been used for private business. The objection he had to the motion was that it would compel hon. members—at least those actuated by a strong sense of duty to their constituents—to be present on Fridays. He spoke on behalf of himself and other hon. members who lived some distance away from Brisbane, not for those who lived in town or within easy reach of the railways. He thought that if an

hon. member left home on Tuesday and got back on Friday it was a very fair thing indeed; it was too much to ask him to leave home on Monday or Tuesday and not get back till the end of the week.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had not intended saying anything until he heard what fell from the hon. member for Logan. That hon. member was entirely wrong in what he said about Friday morning's business. He (Mr. Stevenson) remembered getting a big lot of money out of the Government one Friday morning when the Government was almost constituted as at present, and he remembered other hon. members who had done the same thing. He would point out that the Government had never been refused Friday for their business. At the same time he must admit that he never saw Government business passed then, that was not bad business. He must say that due consideration had never been given to Bills on a Friday morning in that House, and that those Bills which had been rushed through had been measures which hon. members in that House afterwards regretted had been passed. It had been pointed out that even Monday had been given up for Government business; therefore he thought that hon. members on the other side ought to consider well before they gave up their Friday mornings. If once lost, they would never get them back. It was all very well for hon. members to tell them that they ought to accept the promise given by the Government; but he was not prepared to accept that promise. Hon. members wanted to give the Bills brought before them due consideration, and to argue them at the proper time; and Friday morning, after they had sat all the week, was not a fit time to give proper consideration to Bills. As had been pointed out by his hon. friend the member for Mackay, it was promised that no Bills of any importance would be brought forward last session, and that only the Estimates would be proceeded with; but, notwithstanding that promise, a dozen Bills were introduced, and very few of them were passed in the form in which they were introduced. Therefore, he said they ought not to accept any promise from the Premier or his colleagues. They had a privilege, and they ought to maintain it; he for one would endeavour to do so.

Mr. FOOTE said he thought the remarks from hon. members on the other side of the House, warning them to be careful of their privileges, were all lost. Hon. members told them that they would not take the word of the Premier. They did not expect them to do so. During his experience in that House, he did not remember any private business being crowded out by any Government. He had always observed that the Government of the day, to whatever party they might belong, had always given attention to the business of private members, and, as a rule, so far as his memory served him, he did not remember any business being shunted for want of time. He did not think it would be in the present instance. If it were attempted, they had the power in their own hands: they could prevent other business being proceeded with.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Put your foot down.

Mr. FOOTE: Yes, they might put their foot down, or they could even sit on it, as far as that was concerned. He was quite prepared to take the Premier's word, or the word of the leader of the Opposition.

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

The House divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Sheridan, Foote, Macdonald-Paterson, Foxton, Beattie, Bale, Buckland, Kates, Kellert, White, Campbell, Jordan, Isambert, Mellor, Aland, Brookes, Fraser, Bailey, Macfarlane, Midgley, and Horwitz.

1884—B

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Morehead, Archer, Norton, Macrossan, Black, Stevenson, Lalor, Jessop, Scott, Nelson, Hamilton, and Stevens.

Question resolved in the affirmative, and motion put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the following motions were passed:—

3. That Standing Order No. 8, relative to business under discussion, and business not disposed of at time of any adjournment of the House for want of a quorum, be suspended, so far as it relates to Notices of Motion, with a view to giving effect, until otherwise ordered, to the following recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, adopted by the House on the 22nd December, 1870, viz.:—"That Remanet Motions, instead of being placed at the bottom of the Notice Paper for the following sitting day, shall, with the motions for that day, take precedence in the order of the dates for which they were first given; but that they shall not be permitted to displace motions originally given for the day to which such Remanet Motions go over."

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. That, in compliance with Standing Order 266, a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House; and for the purpose of selecting, and arranging for printing, returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by Members. That such Committee consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Brookes.

7. That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following Members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Chubb, Mr. Scott, and the Mover,—with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

#### PUBLIC OFFICERS FEES BILL.

The PREMIER moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to Amend the Law relating to the remuneration of Officers of the Public Service by means of Fees.

Question put and passed.

### UNITED MUNICIPALITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the United Municipalities Act of 1881.

Question put and passed.

### JOINT COMMITTEES.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that the following Sessional Orders had been passed :—

1. That the President, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. King be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee.

2. That the President, Mr. Heusser, and Dr. O'Doherty be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms.

3. That the President, Mr. W. Forrest, and Mr. A. C. Gregory be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings.

4. That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message, requesting that they will be pleased to nominate a like number of members from their body, with a view to give effect to the 8th Joint Standing Order.

The PREMIER said that as there was nothing to be gained by delay, he would follow the precedent of last year, and propose a reply to the message at once. He would therefore move—

1. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee, viz.—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Norton, and Mr. Brookes.

2. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment Rooms, viz.—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, and Mr. Black.

3. That the following members of the House be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings, viz.—The Hon. the Speaker, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Mellor.

4. That these appointments be communicated to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form, in reply to their message of this day's date.

Question put and passed.

### FORMAL MOTION.

On the motion of the HON. J. M. MACROSSAN, it was resolved—

That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of this House all papers in connection with, and evidence taken in, the claim of Messrs. Anear and Company against the Government on account of their contract for the construction of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway; and also a copy of the Executive Minute appointing Mr. Wade as arbiter in the case of their claim.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. White's motion, that the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted by the House,

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: In resuming the debate on the Address in Reply, I cannot help noticing what fell from the hon. member at the head of the Government in opening and also in closing his speech. He seemed aggrieved that the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition did not formulate some charges against the Government. I hope the period has passed in this House when members of the Opposition consider it their duty to make charges against the Government, unless they have something to charge them with; and I think that the hon. gentleman himself, instead of feeling aggrieved, ought to congratulate the House that we have at last arrived at a proper state of mind. Besides, Mr. Speaker, he ought to be satisfied with what he did during the short

recess from the time he took office until the beginning of last session. He and his Government did quite enough wrong in that short period; they were guilty of offences enough to last any decent Government for at least twelve months. I am sure we will not have any more repetitions of the Ready business. Now, in coming to the Address, I mean to discuss it in a fair and honest spirit as far as the Government and myself are concerned. I do not mean to look at it from a party point of view at all; but as far as I can I shall take an impartial view of it. The first important paragraph I find in the Speech is the one referring to the resolutions of the Convention having been sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. That followed as a matter of course. Then we are told by his Excellency :—

"I have lately received from him a despatch proposing that Her Majesty's jurisdiction should be exercised in the waters of New Guinea, and that the Australian Colonies should make a joint contribution of £15,000 towards the necessary expenses for the first year."

Now, the expression "that Her Majesty's jurisdiction should be exercised in the waters of New Guinea," and the expression used by the hon. the Premier himself in commenting upon this paragraph, are not identical, and I am inclined to think that the correct one is the one put into the mouth of His Excellency. The hon. gentleman said that the Imperial Government were about to exercise a protectorate over the shores of New Guinea. That is a very different thing from exercising merely a police jurisdiction—as I take this to be—over the waters of New Guinea. Now, sir, I maintain that that is not sufficient to satisfy this colony, which took the lead in the annexation of New Guinea. It is not sufficient for us to be told in words that the duties of the High Commissioner of the Pacific are to be extended to New Guinea. What we want, and what we want the Government to press the Imperial Government to do, is to formally take possession of New Guinea, so that no other country can come between us and New Guinea afterwards. Merely exercising a police jurisdiction over the waters of New Guinea, the hon. gentleman knows as well as I do, cannot and will not prevent any power of Europe taking possession of New Guinea if it chooses. So that this paragraph, as far as I am concerned, is very incomplete and very unsatisfactory, and if this be the conclusion of the work of the Convention it is a very slight conclusion indeed. But I hope not. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the urgency of the question and the continual importunities of the different Australian colonies will have the effect of making the Secretary of State for the colonies do what he ought to have done six months ago, and what, in the interests of the whole people of Australia—especially Queensland—should be done at once. There is another paragraph following that, relating to the relapsed French criminals. I think that a great deal too much bounce has been exercised upon this question. As far as France is concerned, we are simply suppliants, nothing more. We cannot demand from the French as a right that they should not send their criminals to New Caledonia. New Caledonia cannot be said, by any process of imagination, to be convenient or contiguous to our shores. It is a thousand miles away, or very nearly so, from Queensland. In going to the French Government we should have gone as suppliants, and not in the bounceable way in which the French Government were approached by some of the Agents-General representing the colonies. I believe if the matter had been fairly placed before the French Government, without showing any hostility or announcing any brag, or telling them what we would do if they refused what we wanted, they would probably

have conceded what we wanted before now. The hon. gentleman knows that he is mistaken in saying that it will be a violation of international rights for the French to send criminals to New Caledonia. There is no international right to be violated by such an act. It is simply an un-neighbourly act, and one which we should ask them in the humblest but firmest manner not to pursue. Let us take such measures, as no doubt we will do, to prevent their criminals from coming to us; but until we are perfectly satisfied that the French will not do what we want them to do, we should not threaten legislation of any kind upon the matter, because the very fact of threatening will prevent them from conceding what we want; and I believe myself that the Colonial Office has acted more discreetly in the matter than the Colonial Governments have done. I do not blame the Premier; I do not say he has bounced; but inasmuch as he was a party to the Convention which did bounce, he is to that extent liable to the censure which I pass upon the others. I for one will give the hon. gentleman all the assistance that I possibly can to prevent the criminals from New Caledonia or elsewhere coming here. He will not pass any law too stringent for me to assist him in passing, so long as it does not violate treaties or international rights. I may remind him that the Government of which I was a member, two or three years ago, passed a measure to which he took great exception, and which he designated as "Algerine." It was not "Algerine," and I am perfectly certain that the law the hon. gentleman introduces will be more "Algerine"; but he will have my hearty support and approval in introducing it, and I believe he will have the consent and approval of every member on this side of the House. Another paragraph tells us:—

"To the conclusions of the Convention relating to the establishment of a Federal Council, which will also be submitted to you for approval, I invite your most careful attention, believing that the action proposed will, if adopted, prove to be the inception of a system of united action which will ultimately lead to the establishment of a general Australasian confederation." I think that this is a consummation devoutly to be wished by everybody—a general Australian confederation. I am very much afraid that the Bill which was passed by the Convention, called the Federal Council Bill, will not receive the hearty consent of the Australian Colonies. The constitution of the Council which is to govern the Australian Federation, I think, will not be generally accepted. To my mind it is too limited—the number of members is too limited, and I think it is the people who should be represented, not the Governments; I do not believe in being governed by a convention of two Ministers from each colony—twelve men altogether, who are to meet to pass general laws for the government of Australasia, and probably to pass laws for its defence; I think that would not give general satisfaction. I believe that the basis should be widened, and it should be taken outside Governments and placed in the people—that the people should send representatives, and that those representatives should form a Federal Council. To my mind there is no example in the history of any federation in the world where the basis is so narrow as this is intended to be. But probably, as it says here, this may be the "inception of a system"; and as an inception it may, perhaps, be accepted, but simply as an inception to be amended immediately afterwards. I have always been a very strong advocate, both privately and publicly, of federation, and I believe that every man who understands the position of the country should be a strong advocate for federation; because, united, we should be able to hold our own against a good many comers, and should also be

able to exert greater influence with the mother-country in getting her to do what we want. Divided as we are, I daresay the Home Secretary does not pay so much attention to us as if we were united. I believe that we ought to be united for defensive purposes. No matter how we may hug to ourselves the thought that there is no danger at present, we all know that the present position of affairs, in Europe is such that it may put us into a very dangerous position within a few months. I think for purposes of defence alone we ought to be federated; and, if it was for no other purpose than that, federation would have my hearty support. I believe there are other matters that might be dealt with more beneficially by a federated Parliament than by local Parliaments as at present. I differ very much from the gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches upon the next paragraph in the Speech, which refers to the appointment of the late Postmaster-General as Agent-General in London, and to his retaining his position as a member of the Legislative Council, and, I suppose, of the Executive Council as well. I differ entirely from the reasons given by the hon. leader of the Government for having made the change. The reasons seem to me to be flimsy and insufficient: he is about to establish a new system of immigration, and he gives that as a reason that the gentleman in charge of that immigration should be one thoroughly in accord with the Government, and knowing their intentions. It is not necessary, I think, to make such a radical change in the Ministry, as has been done in this case, to effect that purpose. I think any gentleman whom they appoint as Agent-General—one having the ability and sagacity to be appointed Agent-General—would certainly be in accord with them, and would very easily understand their intentions—that is, if they understood them themselves. But they have, I think, gone outside what I may call constitutional practice in appointing a Minister at such a distance from the colony; and I think that if the hon. gentleman had considered the many speeches he has made upon points of constitutionalism before appointing Mr. Garrick as Agent-General with a portfolio, he would at least have obtained the sanction of this House. He could easily have done so with the large following he has, and it would have been a deference which ought to have been paid to every member in the House, and to the dignity of Parliament, to ask the House to consent to such a change. The change is a very important one—making a Ministerial department and placing it beyond the immediate control of himself and his colleagues in this House, unless by wire. I think it is a dangerous thing to do, and the hon. gentleman himself, in what he stated yesterday, led me to believe that he did not believe in it further than as a very temporary measure. He said, in answer to a query of my hon. friend at the head of the Opposition about the term "present time" being used, that he could imagine the time when a Government would be in office who would not consider it desirable to have the Agent-General a member of the Government. I think that expression may be taken to imply that Mr. Garrick will be the first and last Minister who will be Agent-General and Minister at the same time. Then he has appointed a Board of Advice—another innovation which I think should have had the consent of Parliament. But he has appointed a Board of Advice to advise a responsible Minister. That seems to me rather ridiculous—a Board of Advice to advise a responsible Minister, who is himself beyond the advice of his colleagues to whom he is responsible. It seems to me rather complicated, and I think the whole business of

immigration could be carried on very well without any such complications whatever. Now, as to the fitness of Mr. Garrick, as compared to Mr. Archer, to be Agent-General, I think there are very few who agreed with the hon. gentleman when he stated yesterday that Mr. Garrick would make a better Agent-General than Mr. Archer. I have as great a respect for Mr. Garrick as a member of this House, in which he occupied a seat for a long time, as most members who are in it; but we shall soon know the fitness Mr. Garrick has for work as compared with Mr. Archer. The office of Agent-General, to be practically Emigration Agent, requires a man not afraid of work—a man who will work with his whole heart and soul; and we all know that Mr. Garrick is not that man. I need not remind his late colleagues of what they know very well, about the pigeon-holes in the Lands Office when they went out of office about five years ago. That was so, simply because Mr. Garrick would not work. If he would work he would make a good Agent-General or a good man in any office; but he will not work, and I say he will not make a good Agent-General, but a very inferior one to Mr. Archer, who, I am sure, would have worked in accordance with the hon. gentlemen opposite. In connection with this subject comes the one of Immigration, and I regard the step which the Government are about to take in that direction as a very dangerous one. I am not going to discuss the question as to whether it is better to have a low-class, low-waged immigration from Europe, as compared with coolies or kanakas. I am not going to discuss that question, but I am going to say this: At the present time the working men of this colony are not antagonistic to State aid to immigration. They are in other Australian colonies. They are antagonistic, and have been to it in Victoria for many years. They are strongly antagonistic to State-aid immigration in New South Wales—so much so that they compelled the present Government to reduce the Immigration vote by a very large sum. Now, I make bold to say that, if the present Government intend to carry out this scheme of low-class, low-waged, indented immigrants from the Continent of Europe, the first thing the working men of the colony will do will be to cry out against immigration of all kinds. That will be the inevitable result; and it is no use saying these men will not compete, because they will compete face to face with men at present in the colony. They cannot help competing, and their competition will inevitably bring down the rate of wages. Men who work in their own country for a mere pittance, and are brought out here to work for low wages, will never be the men to stand up for high wages with the men already in this colony, but they will rather become their enemies and compel them to work for low wages; and the working men of the colony will then, I say, be thoroughly justified in compelling their representatives to vote directly against any vote for immigration. Then we have a paragraph about abuses in the Pacific Island labour trade, and I believe they are both many and great. I give the present Premier full credit for having done his best, so far, to stop those abuses and remedy them as much as possible, but I hope that in doing so he will not do anything to injure the sugar industry, which depends upon the trade in which those abuses exist.

Mr. BROOKES: Not at all.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is one thing to remedy and stop those abuses and another thing to be so stringent as to prevent an influx of capital to the North, the development of which depends upon this labour. Let the Premier be as stringent

as he likes in preventing those abuses. Let him punish every man he finds abusing his position in the trade—I would even go so far as to hang some of the men who have been abusing the trade—but let him at the same time beware that the sugar industry depends upon that trade. This paragraph, I notice, says:—

“My Government will continue to use the utmost vigilance in the supervision of the traffic and the enforcement of the law. I hope that the colony may thus escape the stain which must inevitably have attached to its reputation if the abuses now discovered had been permitted to continue. The recruiting of labourers from New Guinea, and from some islands in the Pacific, whose inhabitants were found to be physically so unfitted for plantation work that a lamentable mortality ensued on their arrival in Queensland, has been absolutely prohibited.”

I was not aware until I read this paragraph that any natives had been recruited from New Guinea.

The PREMIER: Nor have they. A ship started last week, or the week before, with the object of going to New Guinea.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: And you stopped it.

The PREMIER: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You did very right. But the paragraph says:—“The recruiting of labourers from New Guinea, and from some islands in the Pacific, etc.” It is badly put together.

Mr. ARCHER: It is a Governor's Speech.

The PREMIER: The sentence is perfectly correct.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is a Governor's Speech. I am very glad the hon. gentleman did stop any ship going to New Guinea, and I hope he will continue to do so; and I am sure he will have the approval of a very large majority of members on both sides of the House in carrying out that prohibition, because I believe the people of New Guinea should be kept as much as possible from filling the position which many of the other Pacific Islanders are placed in. They seem to be a superior kind of race to those who inhabit most of the islands of the Pacific, and I do not believe they should be induced to come here at all, even if they are willing. They have plenty of land in their own country to cultivate, and let capitalists go there to invest their capital when they get permission to do so, and not bring the natives here at all. In the next paragraph I find we are going to have another Minister. Having made one Minister already—having made two Ministers, in fact, because I see six Ministers on that bench where five only existed before—there is one in the Upper House, one gone to London, and now we want another Minister—we want nine Ministers to govern this thickly populated country of less than a quarter of a million souls. I am afraid it is not the Ministers who are wanted, but the billets. I have had some experience in departmental work, and I say there is not work enough for all the members on the opposite bench. There are only two members in the Ministry who really have to work. They are the Minister for Works and the Colonial Secretary. The Minister for Works and the Colonial Secretary have a good deal of work to do, but they can do it; they want no help to do it. I am certain that neither of them could do the work in half-a-day, taking one with the other.

The PREMIER: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then it must have increased very much in your department since I was a Minister. Of course, the hon. gentlemen is also Minister for Education—a position which, I think, he should not hold in conjunction with the Colonial Secretaryship. He should give that

to some of his underworked colleagues. There is the Attorney-General, for instance: does he do an hour's work in the week? Then the Treasurer: I am sure his work sits very lightly upon him—not because he is in the office, but simply because the work is not there to do. The Postmaster-General's work is only play; the hon. the leader of the Opposition knows that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The fact is that those three Ministers have not enough work for one man, and they want another to assist them.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In addition to the "fifth wheel."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I shall certainly not agree with this proposal. I shall oppose it, and I hope it will be opposed by a majority of the members of the House. The only thing I can see in it is this: that there is some member of the House whom the Premier wishes to conciliate, and he is going to introduce a Bill in order to be able to make him a Minister. Of course, the Government will have the benefit of that, but I do not look at it from that point of view. I say that it should not be done; that it is not necessary; and that even if we are very rich at the present time in resources, and have a large surplus, we should save at least that much for the country. I shall, therefore, do my best to prevent any measure of that kind becoming law. We are told in the next two paragraphs something about the mail service. Now, I do not think that any Government that may ever exist in this colony in the future will dare ignore the North in regard to mail services or any other services, no matter how Southern its proclivities may be, after the experience the country has had during the last five or six years. No Government will live long that will dare ignore the North. The efforts of the Northern members, together with the action of the late Government, has placed the North in such a position as to compel any Government to do justice to it, either in regard to mail services, railway works, or anything else, if those members are only true to the interests they represent. I do not think the Government deserve any credit at all for this. I take no credit for it, although I think the late Government deserve some, for having initiated that service which has done so much for the North as well as for the South—the British-India Service. I believe every member of the House will acknowledge that the late Government deserve credit for that. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said that instead of the mail service to the Gulf being a benefit to the trade it was monopoly, but the circumstances were such at the time that the Government had to take the best service that offered. It was not the fault of the late Government that there was only one firm at the Gulf about that time, or that only one tender was received. They did their best under the circumstances, so that the hon. gentleman was not quite fair in insinuating yesterday that we established a monopoly. We did nothing of the kind. Had we got more tenders, of course the matter would have been more considered; but we had only one, and had either to accept that or leave the Gulf without communication. I am very glad that something better has been done; but, at the same time, I hope the hon. gentleman will see that he does not establish a monopoly in another direction. It is just as bad to have a monopoly of one steam company as of one firm. I shall reserve any remarks I have to make on the Land Bill until I see it. That, I think, is the proper time to criticise it. But I believe it is not going to be what people expect.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Its own father would not know it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The next paragraph says:—

"The present constitution of the Volunteer Force leaves much to be desired."

I have not the slightest doubt as to that, and I hope that the Premier will do something earnestly to put the colony into a proper state of defence. As I said before, there is no knowing when it will be required, and when we are in a proper state of defence we shall not be so much alarmed when we see disquieting telegrams from Europe. We shall then have more confidence in ourselves and less fear of what may happen; and I shall give the Premier every assistance in putting the colony in a proper state of defence. Nay, more, I shall even go so far as to assist in passing a measure for compulsory service. The Bill to give additional members is one which should receive the hearty concurrence of the House, and I am only sorry that the hon. the Premier did not allow the late Government, at the end of their existence, to bring in a Bill similar to the one now about to be introduced, so that those districts that are now unrepresented might have had the benefit of increased representation. I hope the representation will be fair when we do get it. I should like to point out to the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government that this should be the first Bill passed this session, and that it should have effect immediately it becomes law, so as to allow the districts in different parts of the colony that are now under-represented, to be properly represented, especially when we have such important measures as the Land Bill and the Immigration question to deal with. Both of these measures require that the colony should be as fully represented as possible before they are discussed and passed by this House. Referring to the recent loan, the next paragraph says:—

"The manner in which the loan recently offered in London was taken up affords ample proof of the opinion held in Great Britain of our wealth and stability."

I wish I could bring myself to believe that. I am afraid it does not give "ample proof of the opinion held in Great Britain of our wealth and stability." No doubt if they knew more of us, or knew us as well or perhaps a little less than we know ourselves, they would be ready to lend us their money; but I believe the success of the last loan was due to causes quite outside the colony, and for which neither Queensland nor the Government could claim credit. I hope those causes will exist as long as we continue borrowing; but I must remind hon. members that it is a very dangerous thing for a country to carry on its affairs entirely upon borrowed money. We are living entirely, as it were, in the hands of people over whom we have no control whatever. Any day, the money-lenders of England may refuse to lend us money; and look at the consequences! We should be obliged to stop all our public works. The first year I was in office I had a return made to me privately of the number of men who were at work dependent entirely upon the Government for employment. At that time the population of the colony was something like 220,000, and I found that there were about 7,000 men in that position out of an able-bodied population of about 60,000. That is a dangerous condition for a colony to be in. The Government should endeavour to carry on our public works without continually going to English money-lenders to borrow. We should be in a much safer position; and although we have reason to be glad that our loan was floated so well, we should have more reason to be glad, I think, if we could get on without it. With regard to the proposed Schools of Mines, I

shall reserve my opinion until I see the measure. If it is a good measure I know it will pay for itself—not immediately, but in the course of a few years—by establishing a better class of managers on the different mining fields throughout the colony, and probably also a better class of workmen. We are told that the Government are fully impressed with the necessity of early and vigorous action in carrying out railways and other public works. I am very glad to hear it. There have been times in the history of the party opposite when they were not impressed with that necessity, and I am glad they have been converted to the policy of the late Government, which was a vigorous public works policy. They tell us also that they are going to build a railway from some port on the Gulf of Carpentaria—the port is not stated though the Premier gave an explanation yesterday—to Cloncurry, a distance of between 250 and 300 miles. There is a thing to be considered in connection with that matter, which is this—that the copper-mines of the Cloncurry have fallen almost entirely into the hands of a large European syndicate. I do not know whether the Premier is aware of the fact or not, but such is the case; so that making a railway from any port on the Gulf to Cloncurry will be simply enhancing threefold or fourfold the property these men bought a short time ago—property on which they never expended a single penny. Perhaps I am wrong in saying not a single penny, but they have not spent much on the development of the Cloncurry, having simply bought out the men who were there before, while as successors they will reap the benefit of railway communication. I would ask the Premier, in bringing in a Bill to make this railway, if he could devise some means by which those gentlemen could be made to aid the Government in the construction of the line. I am not antagonistic in the slightest degree to the introduction of any amount of European capital, but I do not think we should make a railway specially to enhance the property of any one company, call it a syndicate or by any other name. They have not only bought up the most valuable mines there, but they are buying all that is left as fast as possible. A gentleman who must be known to hon. members opposite is the agent of the syndicate, though I do not say the fact is known to the Premier. I hope that before the Government go in for a railway to Cloncurry they will consider carefully whether it would not be more beneficial to extend the railway from Hughenden, not 100 miles but 200 miles. They would then bring the goldfield of the Cloncurry, and nearly all the stations along the head of the Flinders and on the watershed of the Gulf, into communication with Townsville. I think by extending that line they would open up a very superior part of the country, and also bring the far western stations beyond Winton towards the border into communication with the eastern seaboard. Another thing to consider in taking a railway from the Gulf to Cloncurry is that the ground lies low, and that the cost of the line will be greater for that reason. And although I have read the report of the officer who made the estimate of the cost, Mr. Phillips, I do not think his estimate is quite correct. I believe that the cost has been under-estimated, and that it will not be less than three-quarters of a million or a million; and before we expend a million in increasing the value of the property of a company so highly as this line will do, we should consider the matter carefully and see whether with the same amount of money spent on an extension from Townsville towards the Adelaide border could not be made an extension more serviceable to the whole colony, and to the North especially. I say nothing about the difficulty of finding a port, for that is a matter that must be got at. If there is not a

port on the Gulf we must make one if we are going to make a railway there. The other matters contained in the Speech are more or less debatable, but anything that is to be said on them may be left unsaid till we see the Bills that are mentioned. I will just make one remark about the vagueness surrounding the Bill which is usually called the "Payment of Members Bill," but which is here called "A Bill to provide for the Recoupment of the Expenses of Members of the Legislative Assembly." I should like to know what the recoupment of expenses means. Does it mean that members are simply to get the money they expend in coming to this House and attending in this House to their parliamentary duties? If it does it won't do very much harm, because it will not give the Brisbane members much, and it will not give the Ipswich members much either. But expenses may mean almost anything. One member might spend £1,000 in coming to the House and attending to his duties, while another member would not spend 1,000 shillings; so that we must have something more definite and less vague before we can agree to provide for the recoupment of expenses. The other Bills promised are, I dare say, very good of their kind; but I shall reserve anything I have to say on them till I see them. There was a little question cropped up last night which was very nearly leading to bad blood between the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and the hon. member for Mackay; and I must say that until I heard the Premier speak on that subject last night I certainly never imagined that he recommended Mr. Ready for the Commission of the Peace.

The PREMIER: I take the responsibility as Colonial Secretary.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not necessarily—certainly not. If the hon. gentleman is not responsible for the original recommendation of Mr. Ready, I dare say that some member on that side is responsible; and he should be careful in taking any more recommendations from that gentleman, because, whoever he is, he could not have been ignorant of Mr. Ready's antecedents. He is well known, not only in Mackay, but also in Townsville. He is a very good man in his place, but his place is not the bench; his place is the public-house, and he should remain there. He makes a very good publican. The hon. gentleman should be extremely careful in these matters. I was not at all satisfied with the explanation he made about the intentions, or what would have been the intentions, of the Government "had the case arisen." I am strongly inclined to believe that Mr. Ready was got to resign: I do not believe that he resigned voluntarily. I have no objection to the removal of Mr. Goodall, on principle, as I think that the magistrates of the colony should be removed oftener than they have been.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He was removed to please Ready.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I have more faith in the Colonial Secretary than to believe that he would remove Mr. Goodall in order to please Ready. The explanation the hon. gentleman made last night with regard to Mr. Ready was that from the time he returned from the North only ten days elapsed to the time Mr. Ready resigned.

Mr. MOREHEAD: But he knew the facts before.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: He must have seen his colleagues about it. At all events I hope we have done with Mr. Ready; and that we shall have no more Mr. Readys. It is hardly possible, perhaps, to have done with Mr. Ready's case for the present, because it has gone

throughout the whole length and breadth of the land, and to a certain extent has brought discredit on Queensland. I have been very sorry to read the comments of southern papers on the case. Of course, had it not been for the *Figaro* libel case Mr. Ready's appointment would not have been so well known; but through that unfortunate action it has become known from one end of the country to the other. I hope we shall have no more Mr. Readys appointed to the Commission of the Peace. There is a little matter which I want to say something about—not by way of censure on the Government, but by way of expressing my opinion. I moved to-day formally for the production of certain papers in connection with Annear and Company's claim against the Government. I do not know whether the Government are aware of the action of their officers. I will give them credit for believing they are not; but I can tell them this much, that at the present time their officers in the Railway Department, both North and South, are sowing a numerous crop of arbitration cases. Of course, it is within the power of the Government to refuse any contractors an arbitration case. I know not what means might have been used to get an arbitration in Annear and Thorn's case. I believe they were fully entitled to arbitration, and also entitled to compensation. I am certain they were badly used by the Chief Engineer, and that there was a prejudice against them for certain things which ought to have been judged on their merits, without anticipating any claims that might arise after the expiration of the contract. I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary if he does not think that it would be fairer, and more in accordance with strict justice in dealings between man and man, that the 40th clause of the general conditions should be altered.

The PREMIER: I do think so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am glad to hear it. That is all I want to say on that subject, because I know that that clause is a hard one, and is felt by nearly all the contractors in Queensland. They all suffer from it more or less, and they will all make claims. Of course the Chief Engineer may, and no doubt will, oppose the alteration of the clause. Being judge and jury in his own case, that is only to be expected. If the Government do not see their way to settle those claims, some other Government will; and the longer the settlement of a case is delayed the worse it is for the country, because the country must pay interest on the money. I do not see how payment of interest can be got out of. If a man is injured through the Chief Engineer, and in an arbitration case he is awarded £5,000, as in the case of Annear and Company, he has been kept out of that money wrongfully for a certain period; he has lost the interest which he might have got from the bank, and therefore, for the credit of the country, the interest should be paid by the country, just as in dealings between man and man. I think the Government, in the same way, ought to act as fairly as private individuals do. I would like to warn the Minister for Works that, whatever relations may exist between himself and the Chief Engineer and other officers at the present time, they are acting as partisans of the Government. Probably he does not know that; but I know it, and I know it well. I had almost come to the conclusion—and I am not sure whether I shall not do so before the session is much older—to move for a committee of inquiry into the working of the department, both North and South, under the present Government and for years past. If I had known as much when I was in office as I have discovered since, I can assure the Government that I would have made some changes in both those offices.

Mr. BLACK said he had hesitated about rising, because he certainly thought that some member of the Government would have been able to reply to the criticisms of the hon. member for Townsville. He would not waste much time in noticing the preliminary matters contained in the Governor's Speech, but would at once commence by referring to what he thought was an omission in the Speech; that was, that, with the exception of the mining industry, there was no reference whatever to the great producing industries of the colony—the pastoral and agricultural. He thought, considering the severe and calamitous losses that had attended the pastoral industry during the past year, that, merely out of consideration for those who had invested and lost such large sums of money on that industry, some reference might with propriety have been made to it. With the knowledge of those severe losses, he thought the Government might perhaps have taken into their consideration how far their proposed land legislation might or might not have increased those losses by destroying the confidence which capitalists felt in the pastoral industry of the colony. Those losses, severe as they had been, would certainly not have been so severely felt but for the feeling of insecurity brought about by the proposed land legislation—a policy commencing, he might say, with repudiation. That was another point upon which the Government had given them no explanation—namely, whether that policy of repudiation in connection with the pastoral industry was to be maintained or not. He referred to the pre-emptive rights of the squatters. He was not a squatter himself, and therefore he could speak perfectly impartially on the matter, and he maintained that the proposed destruction of the pre-emptive rights of the squatters was an act of repudiation which had added to the losses of the squatters. He was quite prepared to hear from the hon. the Minister for Lands that it was no such thing, but when they took into consideration the fact that the Government tried to legalise that act of repudiation last session by a Bill, he thought it would be apparent that they themselves, or at all events a number of them, were satisfied that the course they proposed to adopt was an act of repudiation. He thought it was quite unnecessary for the Government to have sketched their land policy so many months before the session opened. They had posed before the country as being determined not only to destroy the pre-emptive rights of the squatters, but also with having the intention of introducing an entirely new principle into land legislation—a principle by which the State should in future be the landlord—a principle by which no freeholder was ever in the future to have an existence. Hon. members were given to understand now, although they had not seen the Land Bill, that those principles had been to a very considerable extent modified. He could quite well believe that when the Government first promulgated their idea they were not fixed in their opinions as to what the Land Bill should be. He thought they left it very much to the Minister for Lands, whom the hon. the Premier had told them he had had his eye on for a number of years, as a gentleman in whom he had entire confidence, as a future Minister for Lands. He (Mr. Black) could only say that he was very much surprised, and he had no doubt other hon. members were surprised, to find that those revolutionary principles—which were now to be so modified, as had been remarked already, that the Minister for Lands would hardly recognise his own principle when the Bill was passed—had met with the serious consideration of the Government. It might be safely said that the new

Postmaster-General would never have sanctioned, as a Minister, the suspension of the pre-emptive rights—a principle which he (Mr. Black) was led to believe that hon. gentleman had always strongly advocated. Was it possible that they should yet have, as one of the conditions under which they were to pass the Land Bill, a reinstatement of the pre-emptive right?

The PREMIER: Wait till to-morrow and you will see it all.

Mr. BLACK said he had reason to believe that they had that surprise in store.

The PREMIER: I do not think so.

Mr. BLACK said it was really not necessary to say much about the proposed land legislation, but he thought that the Government might have given an assurance to the squatters that their prosperity would not be destroyed in the same way in the future as the labour policy of the Government threatened to destroy the other industry of the colony in tropical agriculture. And that was a matter he could speak upon at considerable length; it was a subject he entirely understood—a subject, the importance of which he would not allow any member in that House to say he ever exaggerated; nor would he allow any hon. member in that House to say that he understood the practical bearing of the course proposed any better than he did himself. The hon. member for Carnarvon—he was not in his place then—stated on the previous day that at the last election the voice of the country was unmistakably opposed to coloured labour. He (Mr. Black) contended that the country did not express any such opinion.

Mr. BROOKES: Yes, it did.

Mr. BLACK: It did nothing of the sort. The country decided that coloured labour without regulations was objectionable.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. the Premier said "No." If he thought otherwise, why did he not attempt to limit the duration of coloured labour in his Bill last year? The Premier said that he always recognised the fact that kanaka labour was a necessity to the sugar industry.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I wish you would quote from my speeches.

Mr. BLACK: He would give him the day and the date, and the hon. gentleman would not then be able to say that his memory was a blank. Those were the words the hon. the Premier made use of.

Mr. GRIFFITH: What is the context

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman knew exactly what he said, and it was acting on that idea as expressed by him (Mr. Black) now, that last session the Premier brought forward a Bill for the regulation and not the abolition of coloured labour. It had been admitted by every one having any experience in tropical agriculture that if they were to compete successfully with other sugar-producing countries of the world they must do so on equal terms. The attempt had never been made to grow tropical produce without the assistance of a large amount of reliable and cheap labour.

Mr. BROOKES: Not coloured labour.

Mr. BLACK: But what did the Government propose to do? Although apparently they led the House and the country to believe that they were allowing kanakas still to be employed, yet by their regulations they were simply strangling the sugar industry out of existence.

Mr. BROOKES: A good job, too.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not continue these interruptions; it is quite contrary to parliamentary practice.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. and junior member for North Brisbane, he believed, spoke earnestly when he said he believed it would be a good job for the sugar industry to be strangled out of existence. That was just one of those sentiments he should have expected from a man of the hon. member's intellect. But there were many others in the colony, he was proud to say—and they were in the majority—who did not believe that a great industry, which had done nothing but good for the colony, and which had proved that this colony above all others had a profitable agricultural industry within itself, should be strangled out of existence. He asserted that the Government, by their temporising policy, were strangling that industry out of existence. Confidence in the industry was destroyed from the moment they took office. The Colonial Secretary knew well that the planters had always been willing, as far as possible, to assist in carrying out all proper regulations. What they complained of was the vexatious and harassing way in which those regulations were being enforced.

The PREMIER: Regulations were made to be enforced.

Mr. BLACK said he did not object to the regulations, but to the vexatious way in which they were being enforced. The regulations would be all very well if they were in the hands of intelligent men.

The PREMIER: Of men who would not enforce them. The regulations were not made to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

Mr. BLACK said that was what the Ministry were doing with their labour regulations. He had spoken of the vexatious and harassing way in which the regulations were being enforced, and he would give an instance of what he meant by it. Last session, when the Bill to amend the Polynesian Labourers Act was before the House, the Premier proposed, first, that Polynesians were not to be employed in the mills. Remonstrances were received from all the sugar-growing districts of the colony, which satisfied the House, he believed, that if that provision were enforced the ruin of the industry would undoubtedly be the result, and in deference to that opinion the provision was withdrawn. But what did they find? Directly after the House rose, a gentleman was put in charge of the department as Inspector of Polynesians, and the idea got abroad through him that in future no Polynesians were to be employed in mills. That was a manifest breach of faith.

The PREMIER: It is absurd.

Mr. BLACK said if it was absurd, it was a fact. The planters at Maryborough knew it—where, as they had seen in the papers, several planters had actually made arrangements to close their mills and sell their juice, because they were not otherwise able to employ the labour necessary to take off their crops. The same opinion, as the Premier must have heard, prevailed amongst the planters of Bundaberg, and the Burdekin. He himself knew of a case where a planter put in an application for Polynesians, and the application was returned to him, because he stated in it that the kanakas were to be employed for sugar cultivation and the manufacture of sugar in the mills. Could the hon. gentleman deny that that case had occurred?

The PREMIER: The case is unknown to me. This is the first I have heard of it.

Mr. BLACK said that was one of the vexatious and harassing ways in which the regulations were enforced that he complained of. If the hon. gentleman could always be in the office such things might not occur. Why, therefore, did not the hon. gentleman employ someone with a grain

of sense to administer an Act under which such gross injustice might be done? When that application, sent by one of the leading planters, was returned with the endorsement that kanakas were not in future to be employed in mills, he (Mr. Black) could hardly credit it. On his advice the application was sent back in its original form; but the damage was done. The impression gained ground; the same thing occurred in his own and other districts; and it was not until lately, when he took the opportunity, through the Planters' Association, of pointing out that there must be some stupid blunder—that some thick-headed bungler in the office was to blame—that they arrived at the knowledge that the House always intended that the manufacture of sugar was not to be excluded from the work Polynesians were to do. That was an instance of the harassing and vexatious way in which the Act was being administered. The planters did not want to employ them as splitters, fencers, engineers, and in other ways to which the House was opposed; but that endorsement on the application to which he had referred, coming from what was considered a hostile Government, naturally aroused a feeling of the most intense indignation amongst those who had spent, he might say, millions of money—it was estimated that five millions had been invested in that industry in Queensland—spent in accordance with the law, at the invitation of successive Governments, and on the distinct understanding that the industry should have the assistance of coloured labour to enable it to compete with other sugar-growing countries. Now the industry was being harassed out of existence by the regulations of the Colonial Secretary.

The PREMIER: How?

Mr. BLACK said he would show the hon. gentleman, if he would give him time. He would next refer to the case of the schooner "Heath." The firm owning that vessel sent her, as they were entitled to do by law, to the islands to recruit labourers, and the Government, as in all such cases, sent with her a Government Agent to see that the Polynesian regulations were properly carried out. The vessel returned, bringing a certain number of islanders. What did they then find? He would read the following brief statement of the case, and then ask hon. members if he was not right in saying that the Government were doing all they possibly could to harass the industry:—

"An inquiry, requested by the Premier, into all the circumstances connected with the conveyance of the islanders by the 'Heath' labour vessel, was opened and concluded on Wednesday last at the Immigration Depot (says the *Mackay Mercury* of 14th instant). The chairman of the board was Captain Goodall, P.M., and the witnesses were all examined on oath. The medical testimony of Drs. Clarkson and Cutfield was to the effect that the islanders could not be landed at Mackay on account of their physical weakness and an outbreak of scurvy among the majority. The Government Agent was next examined, who swore that the islanders came quite willingly of their own accord, and remained contented all through the voyage. He spoke in high terms of the captain's skill, caution, and courage, and of the manner in which the islanders had been looked after. He had, however, no doubt about the islanders knowing absolutely nothing of what they were coming to Mackay for, and on that account withheld his certificate allowing them to land. The captain swore that the Government Agent all along gave him to understand that he would grant his certificate. The mate and recruiter were next examined, and the evidence was forwarded to the Government by the 'Moreton' for the Executive to give its decision upon."

Whose fault was that? Surely the blame, if any, should attach to the Government Agent, who actually said that the men came willingly on board, and then, on arriving at Mackay, said he did not think they understood the nature of

their agreement. He would ask the Colonial Secretary if that agent was still in the Government Service?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to hear it, for that gentleman had stated—whether correctly or not he (Mr. Black) could not say—that he was going down to the islands as a special agent of the Premier.

The PREMIER: He had no authority for making that statement.

Mr. BLACK said he had always discredited it. He saw that gentleman figuring in the Supreme Court just before he received the appointment from the Premier, and he hardly thought the hon. gentleman would select such a very doubtful agent to do work of that sort. No doubt those boys were recruited from islands that had been found by experience to have men who were physically unsuited for Queensland, and on those grounds very likely it was a good and humane thing that they had to be sent back. He was not objecting to their being sent back on those grounds; but those men were recruited by the "Heath" under the auspices of a Government Agent; the ship was in the interest of merchants who were simply carrying out their business as allowed by law, and through the gross neglect of the Government Agent the owners of that vessel were, he was informed, put to the expense of between £2,500 and £3,000. They not only lost the ordinary passage money of £25 per head to which they were entitled, but they had to maintain those men for a considerable time. He believed when he left Mackay they had not returned, but were on the point of doing so, and the owners were put to the expense of returning them to the islands. He considered that that was a case of gross injustice, and that a Government who were anxious to perform their duty should certainly take care that they sent down responsible men as Government Agents—which was more than could be said of Mr. Duffield, who was sent down, in the case referred to, as labour agent. That gentleman had undoubtedly a questionable reputation before ever he left Brisbane. He had no doubt that the hon. Premier knew something about him, as he believed he was in the Supreme Court during the time that gentleman was put upon his trial for keeping an illicit still. What would be the frame of mind of those islanders when they got back? They would be landed on their islands without anything. He believed they did understand the nature of their agreement, or else they would never have come. They would be landed penniless, although if they had money it would be of no use to them. They would have nothing. Would they not feel a sense of the most gross injustice at the way in which they had been treated? Yet all that had been done under the revised regulations of the Government, who were going to reform everything, He considered he was perfectly justified in saying that it was not the Government regulations he objected to, but the absurd way in which those regulations were being carried out, and the vexatious and harassing way in which the planters were being treated. He would take another case. Hon. gentlemen would remember a very sensational article which appeared in the *Leader* last session, referring to the management of the Mackay Polynesian Hospital. It was a sensational article; but, at the same time, from what he knew since, a great deal that was contained in it was perfectly true. Did hon. gentlemen know who wrote that article—did the Premier know who wrote it?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: Did he not know that it was a Government officer who wrote it?

The PREMIER: I did not know.

Mr. BLACK: The Premier did not know then. He would ask the Premier if he was ever told—if he ever knew that Mr. de Latour, a Government officer, wrote that letter; a letter which, if it did anything, reflected great disgrace upon the Government who employed the writer. That was the gentleman who wrote the letter.

The PREMIER: I did not know it.

Mr. BLACK said he had told the hon. Premier, so that he might know, because the gentleman referred to stood well in the confidence of the Government.

The PREMIER: He is a very good Government Agent.

Mr. BLACK said he might be a very good Government Agent. He was the agent who succeeded in bringing every vessel to grief with which he had been connected up to the present time, in a most extraordinary manner. He it was who deserted ships when he got them down to the islands, to the loss of the owners; and the vessels had to come back. That was what he (Mr. Black) called strangling an industry. The planters up north would rather see the House come to a decision, and let them know the worst, than have the Government let the world believe that they were only trying to reform abuses, whereas, in fact, by a sidewind, they were trying to strangle an industry. He would give the hon. gentleman another instance in which he considered that the Government were acting in a vexatious spirit towards the planters, and that was, in sending up a demand to the planters for three years' hospital fees in advance.

The PREMIER: Who did that?

Mr. MOREHEAD: These interruptions are very unseemly on the part of the Premier.

The PREMIER: The Government have done nothing of the kind.

Mr. BLACK said he did not know what the Government did or what they were responsible for; he knew it was done, and it had caused great annoyance and vexation; and if the hon. Premier did not seem to know what his subordinates did, he (Mr. Black) would give him some information—the data upon which he made those statements. He had received a letter dated June 30, which he would read. It referred to a matter which the Premier had already denied, and he said was absurd, when he (Mr. Black) spoke about Polynesians not being allowed to be recruited for the manufacture of sugar.

"M. Hume Black, Esq., M.L.A., Brisbane.

"DEAR SIR,—I wish to bring under your notice, in your capacity of member for this district, several matters indicative of the hostile and obstructive attitude assumed by the present Government, towards the sugar industry generally, under the Amended Polynesians Act.

"1. In the beginning of May last I applied through my Brisbane agents, Messrs. W. Sloune and Company, for 129 Polynesians, to be recruited by the 'Eliza Mary.' In completing the Schedule O, which has to accompany the form of my application, I replied to the query contained in clause 7 ('Nature of work in which the Pacific Islanders at present on the estate are employed?') that they are employed in 'sugar cultivation and manufacture'; and to the query contained in clause 9—viz., ('Nature of work for which labourers for whom license is to be applied for are to be employed?')—I answered, 'sugar cultivation and manufacture,' as before.

"Upon the 29th May, these applications were returned to me through the Polynesian Inspector in Mackay, with the word 'manufacture' erased in each instance, and an official intimation that my application must be amended to 'cultivation' only.

"In the first place, I beg to state that in using the word 'manufacture,' as above, I was merely availing myself of a privilege specifically permitted by the Amended Act.

"This measure, as originally drafted, prohibiting the employment of Polynesians in the factories, meant the absolute ruin of the sugar industry in Northern Queensland. Happily, this did not meet with the approval of the House, and the Bill as passed permits their employment in the manufactories, excepting in certain occupations specified in subsection A of clause 2.

"The conduct of the Immigration Department, in connection with my application, amounts to a direct denial of the privileges sanctioned by the House of Assembly.

"Under the circumstances I felt justified in declining to erase the word 'manufacture,' and I returned Schedule 'O' with the following amplification added—viz., 'except the occupations mentioned in subsections A, B, C, D, of clause 2 of the Amended Act.'

"Apart from the question of principle involved, I may point out that the delay occasioned by the capricious rejection of my original application is to me a very serious matter, and further has led in this instance to a claim for demurrage by the owners of the vessel."

That ended that case. I may point out that the application came back eventually, after considerable delay, which caused a loss of money to the applicant, in demurrage, accepted in the way it had originally been sent down.

"Another matter: Some weeks ago the Polynesian inspector here announced that he had received an official intimation that the capitation fee required by the Act for the maintenance of the Polynesian Hospital would be levied for three years in advance.

"Upon representations being made to the Colonial Secretary by the Mackay Planters' Association as to the manifest injustice of such a claim, they were told that the Premier was willing to permit the capitation fee to be paid yearly in advance.

"In this particular instance, I am happy to say, the policy of the Government has not entailed upon us any actual loss; but that such a demand should ever have been made is palpable evidence of the consideration and justice which the important interests of the sugar industry receive.

"The position of our local affairs is sufficiently critical at this juncture, without having to contend in addition with the petty and continual persecutions of a hostile Government."

The opinion expressed in that letter would be endorsed by everyone connected with the sugar industry in the North of Queensland, and, he believed, in the South too. It was not only the planters who were being harassed, but the unfortunate kanaka himself was not receiving fair treatment. They all knew that kanakas who had resided for five years in the colony were entitled to exemption, and they could register themselves before the 1st September and would be allowed to remain. It was only the other day some eleven Polynesians applied for a registration certificate in Townsville, and what were they told? They were told they would have to go down to Brisbane for identification. They replied that they had not the means to go to Brisbane, and they were then told they had better go to work and earn some money. It was a serious thing for those men, and he did not believe they had any right to treat even a blackfellow with contempt. Those men had been in the country for five years, and it would be better to allow even half-a-dozen to get certificates of registration, even though they were not entitled to them, than that they should cause an injustice to a single man by denying him a right which that House had granted. The men he referred to were told to go to Brisbane to be identified. Was not that a vexatious way of working a very reasonable clause? But the irony in this case was this: that by the time the men could possibly have earned enough money to go to Brisbane for identification, the time for their registration would have passed away.

The PREMIER: Who told them that?

Mr. BLACK: A Government officer.

Mr. ARCHER said he rose to a point of order. The leader of the Government had been continually interrupting speakers on the Opposition side of the House. The Speaker had already called attention to the fact that night. Such interruptions were most unseemly, and were specially unseemly on the part of the Premier that evening. The Government had declined to answer a distinguished member of the Opposition, as the hon. member for Townsville was, in open debate; and when they passed over that hon. gentleman's speech in silence, they might at least keep silent when another hon. member was speaking. He never saw anything he felt more than the conduct of the Government side of the House that evening. Mr. Macrossan had sat in that House for many years, and he had made an able speech that evening and the members of the Government had not consented to answer him. They were continually interrupting the speakers on the Opposition side, and he said it was unseemly. The Opposition had always greater liberties than the Government in that respect, but it was the Government and the leader of the Government who were interrupting that night. They might at least refrain from interrupting an hon. member, if they had not the common courtesy to answer an hon. member's speech. His point of order was that those interruptions on the part of Ministers were unseemly.

The PREMIER: I rise to the point of order.

Mr. ARCHER: The point of order is already raised.

The PREMIER said he rose to speak to the point of order. The hon. gentleman's point of order, so far as he could understand it, was mixed up. The first part of it seemed to be that some Minister ought to have answered the hon. member for Townsville.

Mr. ARCHER: I did not say so. I said you were interrupting other hon. members.

The PREMIER said, so far as that went, the speech of the hon. member for Townsville was complimentary to the Government, and he failed to see what any member of the Government could have to say in reply, were it not to compliment and congratulate the hon. member on the moderation of his speech. With respect to the other point of order, that of interrupting an hon. member—so long as he had been a member of that House, and since he had been old enough to follow the debates in other Houses and in other parts of the world—he must say that interruptions such as he had made that night were by no means considered out of order; they were, on the contrary, rather conducive to the good conduct of debate. For his own part he courted such interruptions. For a member occupying the position he did, to rudely interrupt an hon. member would of course be very improper, but he thought such interjections as he had made rather courteous than discourteous, and if he thought there was any discourtesy in making them he would be the last to make them. It had been the practice of that and all other legislative assemblies to encourage such interjections when they were not made for the purpose of disconcerting a speaker.

Mr. BROOKES said he would also speak to the point of order. He was sure every member of the House who had the most cursory idea of debates all over the world would know that, when a member put a question point-blank to the Premier, as the member for Mackay had done several times that night, it was not out of order for the Premier to give then and there a blank denial or an affirmative to that question; and yet the hon. member for Blackall said that was out of order. He (Mr. Brookes) submitted that the hon. member did not know what a point of order was.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, with all due deference, he was perfectly certain that the hon. Premier in no way intended to interfere with the freedom of debate, but if he did not interject so often, or appear to be so annoyed by the remarks made from the Opposition side of the House, it would be better for the debate. With reference to the junior member for North Brisbane, they would let him go. He was perfectly certain the Premier did not intend to make the debate an angry one. They had got on so far in an amicable way, and though he did not think they would do so for any length of time, still, so long as they were a tolerably happy family, they had better remain so.

The SPEAKER: The point of order raised is as to the interruptions. I have already referred to the hon. member for North Brisbane this evening, and I must say his interruptions have been more frequent than usual. The hon. member for Mackay on one or two occasions put questions directly to the Premier, and the Premier gave direct replies, but the interruptions on his part have been more frequent than usual. I think it would be better if the interruptions should cease and the hon. member could afterwards, as a matter of privilege, obtain the right of reply and answer the hon. member in that way.

Mr. ARCHER: I beg to withdraw my point of order.

Mr. BLACK said that, if the House did not object to the interruptions, he did not in the least; and he quite agreed that when an hon. member in speaking implied or put a question to a Minister or to any hon. gentleman on the other side, that hon. member should be allowed to make any few remarks he might consider desirable at the time. And he considered that making the remarks at the time tended to elucidate the matter very much more clearly than if they were made later on. He thought he had said sufficient to show that the regulations were worked in the most harassing and vexatious manner. It would be remembered that when it was proposed to repeal the Coolie Act the late Premier brought in a measure providing that no regulations should have the force of law without the consent of that House, and it was considered far better to accept that, which virtually meant that no coolies could possibly be introduced without the consent of the House, than to repeal the Coolie Act. He saw no reason why the safeguard which the House very properly imposed on that occasion—which would prevent the Government from putting regulations in force without the consent of the House—should not have been exercised in connection with the Polynesian Bill. At the present time, the Ministry for the time being could, by a stroke of the pen, annihilate the whole sugar industry. They were gradually doing it. They could give such hampering instructions to the Government Agents that recruiting would be manifestly impossible. Already they found owners of vessels taking them out of the trade; and he, as the representative of the planters, could say that they themselves considered that Polynesian labour was doomed. Not only was the supply inadequate, but the regulations and restrictions were so harsh and severe—he would not say they were unjustly so, but the way they were being worked was so severe—that Polynesian labour in the course of two or three years would be a thing of the past. It was working itself out, and it behoved the Government, if they had the welfare of the colony at heart, to consider the just claims and conditions of all parts of it. They had a colony with a climate varying from temperate in the South to tropical in the North. It was

impossible that one system of labour legislation could be made applicable to the varied conditions of the climate of Queensland. They would have no satisfactory solution of the Labour question until that principle was recognised. They would never get that friendly feeling that should exist between North and South until legislation took that direction—admitting that the varied conditions of climate required varied labour regulations. Now, what did the Government propose to do? Kanakas were gradually being strangled out of the colony. Chinamen—in whose favour he was certainly not inclined to say a single word, because he knew they were not good colonists, although they had done a great deal of useful work in the North—were legislated out of the colony. The late elections would tend to prove that coolies were then not considered acceptable to the country, and he would like to ask hon. gentlemen opposite what was to be the labour of the future for the sugar industry?

Mr. BROOKES: Germans.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

Mr. BLACK: The sooner it was definitely settled the better it would be. It was proposed, he understood, to introduce cheap white labour to take the place of kanakas on the plantations, and he could only repeat, what he had said before, that any attempt to introduce cheap white labour to work alongside highly paid white labour would result in the most disastrous condition of affairs that the working men of the colony had ever experienced. It would never work. He did not care what engagement they might make with those men, they would mislead them; they would have to mislead them if they expected them to come out here and work for 12s. a week. He had no doubt there were thousands of people on the Continent who would be willing to work for 12s. a week before they left home, but when they were brought out to the colony they would soon find out that the work they were doing was not only physically unsuited to them, but also that, with the same ability to work as their fellow-countrymen, they were getting only one-half the wages; and the inevitable result would be that the goals of the colony would have to be doubled and trebled in size to hold the men who had been brought out under false pretences; and not only would they fill the goals, but also the hospitals up north. They were about to make an experiment which no other sugar-growing country in the world had ever been able to make, and why? For a mere theory; a mere sentiment. It was to be a white man's country, and it always would be; but it did not follow from that that white men should not be allowed to make use of that description of labour which could do work that he himself was unable and unfit to do. He was glad that they had at last the programme of the Premier for the North—cheap white labour.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Foreign.

Mr. BLACK: It did not necessarily follow that it was to be foreign. It was to be cheap white labour. They would see what the working men of the North and of the whole colony would say to that. It meant that their wages, instead of being maintained at the reasonable rate which now existed, would be brought down to the level of the others. It was no use bringing out small shipments of those men; the supply must be kept up. There were, he believed, 12,000 or 13,000 kanakas in the colony at the present time. They had to be gradually dispensed with, and replaced by cheap European labour, and, considering that they were under three years' engagement, it would take about 4,000 a year to keep

up the supply, allowing for no further extension of the industry. If that system proved to be successful—that was, if any extension of the industry took place—they could not do with less than 6,000 or 7,000 a year of those cheap labourers. He knew what would take place when they arrived. Let hon. members not suppose that the planters were not willing to see the experiment made. The working men of the colony would bring those labourers out for them. Instead of having to pay £25 for Polynesians, as they did now, the taxpayers of the colony would bring those men out for them. There was nothing new in this principle. The present Immigration Act allowed the planters or anyone else in the colony to indent labourers from Europe under engagements for two years, which were legal in the colony. Why did the planter not do so? Did any rational man suppose that the planter really liked to have black men rather than white?

Mr. BROOKES: I think so.

Mr. BLACK: He did nothing of the sort. It was not a matter of sentiment with the planter, but a matter of business. He had a certain amount of work to be done, and he must get it done in such a way as to make a reasonable profit on his investment—an investment that the colony had invited him to make; and was it likely that he would pay £25 passage money for a kanaka, when for £2 he could get indented labour from any part of Europe landed in the colony, the balance being paid by the taxpayers of the country. It stood to reason that if the planters were not convinced that cheap white labour would never do the work they would have tried it long ago. Surely the mere fact that he did not avail himself of the opportunity would lead rational men to suppose that he did not attempt it because he knew how unsuitable was the labour when it arrived. But assuming that his coloured labourers were taken away, or that the difficulties of renewing them were so great that he could not keep up the supply, he would try white labour. There was £5,000,000 invested in the industry, and it would not go to the wall without a struggle. Nor would it be the planter who would suffer first, but the working man. Let a planter have fifty indented labourers at 12s. a week, and let him also have twelve men at 25s. to 30s. a week, and what would be the inevitable result? Out of those fifty or sixty men there would be many good workmen who would displace those higher paid. On the one hand there would be men with monthly agreements whose services could be dispensed with almost immediately, and on the other hand there would be the labourers under two years' agreements at a low rate of wages; and the result would be that in a few months nearly all the white men on the existing plantations in the North would be displaced by cheap white labour. It would not be done suddenly, because there were ties existing between masters and men which in some instances would never be broken; but as soon as the standard rate of wages in the North was reduced there would be a gradual reduction in the rate to that of cheap labour, and the working man to whom the Premier and his party owed their accession to power would find that the present Government had inflicted the greatest curse on them that could be inflicted on the white men of the colony. And how was the proposed cheap labour to be regulated? Were the labourers to be kept at field-work, or would the planter be allowed to put them to any work he chose? The only way to prevent the state of things he had described would be to confine cheap white labour to certain pursuits, and he should not

wonder if that plan were tried. The effect of the labour policy of the Government had already made itself apparent in the North. No new mills were going up with the exception of those ordered before the present Government came into power. Already the planters were compelled to curtail their expenses to the lowest possible limit, and confidence was completely destroyed in what promised to be one of the grandest industries of Queensland. That state of affairs was undoubtedly brought about by the policy of the present Government. He was perfectly certain that it would not last, and that the working men would be the first to insist upon allowing, within the tropics at all events, the employment of coloured labour under proper regulations.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Hear, hear!

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government Benches: No, no!

Mr. BROOKES: No fear!

Mr. BLACK said he failed to see any difference between the coolie and the kanaka, except that the coolie was a British subject. The Polynesian traffic would never be satisfactorily arranged, for the reason that there was no recognised form of government at the other end; but in connection with coolie labour there was the Indian Government at the other end, which should be sufficient guarantee that there would be no kidnapping, and there was the Queensland Government to see that the men were properly treated when they arrived in the colony. Otherwise, there was no difference between the regulations applying to kanakas and those applying to coolies. Regulations were passed by the late Government and sent to India, where they received the assent of the Council, after which they were returned to this colony. Those regulations could be found in "Votes and Proceedings," and they contained every principle aimed at by the opponents of coloured labour. Those principles were laid down and fixed so that the coolie would not be allowed to enter into competition with any branch of trade which belonged properly to white men; and he was satisfied that before long there would be such an outcry in the Northern districts as would make either the present Government or some succeeding Government put those regulations into force. Many hon. members who were not particularly interested in the sugar industry were returned by constituencies who, from their ignorance of the difficult question of coloured labour, had raised the cry "Queensland for the white man," and many of those hon. gentlemen did not see their way to go back on what they conceived to be the wishes of their constituents. But though he did not see any immediate prospect of an amelioration of the present state of affairs, the time would come when the more intelligent portion of the constituencies would look at the question in a different light. He had never hedged in speaking on the subject of coloured labour. Never in the history of the sugar industry had the urgency of the case been so apparent as during the last six months. Another point which had perhaps escaped the attention of hon. members was the overwhelming political power cheap white labour would put into the hands of the planters. The Polynesian had no vote, and the coolie had no vote—that was distinctly understood; but the cheap European labourer, after he had been in the colony six months, and, if necessary, had become naturalised, would have a vote. That being the case, what chance would there be for a candidate opposed to the planters in a sugar district, where the planters employed about 4,000 men upon whose votes they could depend?

He regretted very much to find that the legislation of the Government was such as to cause a feeling of irritation to originate between the northern and southern portions of the colony. No consideration was being shown for the varied conditions and just requirements of the North. That feeling, if not checked, would lead to a result which he had always set his face against as far as he could—he had never said it was necessary—and that was separation. He was prepared to say that if more consideration was not shown to the requirements of the North than at present appeared likely, they would find a general cry for separation arising in the North. He pointed out this, though at the same time he deprecated it; but he considered that it was inevitable, unless judicious counsels prevailed on the Labour question. There was only one agricultural industry in the North. It had never been proved that anything could be successfully grown there except sugar; and that could only be carried on under conditions similar to those in other countries, because Queensland had to compete against all the sugar countries in the world. Owing to the tremendous competition of France and Germany in beet-root sugar, the price of sugar had fallen 25 per cent. Sugars which last year netted £20 per ton could only now be anticipated to net £15 per ton to the planter. Whatever might be the result in the North, he could tell those engaged in sugar growing in the South—whose interests were certainly identical with those in the North—that if the latter, with their modern, magnificent, and most improved machinery, found it difficult to make it pay, he did not know how the Southern growers would make it do so when the Brisbane market was flooded with the produce of the North. He regretted to have to refer to the Ministry as a Queen-street Ministry—as a Ministry which, it seemed to him, legislated almost exclusively for Southern interests. Their treatment of the North generally was what he regretted to have to refer to; but every procrastination which could be thrown in the way of Northern progress was done. It did not matter how trivial the thing was, it was always delay, always excuse, nothing could be done; whilst at the same time public works in the South went on interruptedly. He thought their action in connection with the Bowen and Haughton Gap railway was very unsatisfactory; that was a portion of what he called their policy of revenge and repudiation. The Minister for Works, who had charge of the Railway Department now, was in the House when the vote for that railway was passed; and hon. members opposite, Ministers especially, had every opportunity of objecting to the line, but as far as he remembered they never said a single word against it—there was not a remonstrance raised. But directly they came into power, merely, as far as he could gather, to carry out a feeling of hostility towards a gentleman on the opposite side of the House who was now absent, and who, it was supposed, would be likely to benefit by the railway, a change was made. That was the only reason he ever heard ascribed by the people at Bowen for what had been done. The people were told that as long as the present Minister for Works was in office that railway should not go on; at least he (Mr. Black) was informed that that was what the hon. gentleman said. He thought it was a most unjust thing. Nothing could do more to destroy the confidence of the public in the honest administration of the Government than for a Minister of the Crown to travel through the country making unguarded utterances of that sort. He might again refer to the harbour works at Mackay: he had done so every time the House had met. Year after year had elapsed, and successive Governments had

come into power. When the present Government came into power they were going, at all events, to give fair play to the different portions of the colony; yet nothing had been done. There was a bridge, on which the prosperity of the district greatly depended, but nothing had been done about it, though the first flood might carry the old bridge away; it was damaged to the extent of £3,000 by the last flood. A reasonable request to the Government to have the bridge put in repair was met with the usual contempt that applications from the North received when they came down to the present Government. If there was one thing that the late Government could lay claim to—and it was one of the chief reasons why he always gave them his consistent support—it was that they gave due consideration to the whole of the colony. It was not a question of politics as far as he could judge from their actions. No matter what portion of the colony required them, their just needs were entertained. It was in that way that they built up a reputation which enabled them to remain five years in office, and they had left a good record behind them. He regretted very much that the present Government had shown that a policy of repeal, revenge, and repudiation was likely to be carried out; he regretted it very much indeed. In the Speech the Minister for Lands—he supposed the paragraph was contributed by that hon. gentleman—said that—

“The existing laws relating to the disposal of the public estate cannot be regarded as satisfactory.”

Until they got the new Land Bill it was very hard to say what the hon. gentleman thought would be satisfactory. He would like to make one remark in connection with this. If the present land laws were so unsatisfactory, why did the Government the other day put up no less than eighty-seven runs for sale with leases from one up to twenty years to run? Had the purchasers been given to understand that a Land Bill was likely to come into force, by which one-half of the leases was likely to be taken away from them? If not, would they not have some claim for compensation? Where was the necessity for the unnecessary haste in selling those lands? And they were given to understand that the whole of the runs in the Cook district had been declared forfeited. That was rather a hasty thing to do; and he hoped that when Mr. Morisset's report was handed round they would be able to find something in it which would justify such a very extreme course as the Minister for Lands had adopted. He noticed—and no other member had referred to it—a very questionable land transaction reported from Clermont lately. He hoped that the new broom who was going to sweep away all the cobwebs from the Lands Office would not turn out to have those defects with which he was so ready to charge his predecessor. They were to be invited to consider a Bill to give additional members to certain electoral districts. Well, when they saw what those certain electoral districts were, there would be time enough to discuss the question, but he thought that a general redistribution of seats was the thing that was necessary. He was certain that the whole of the North was considerably under-represented, and that before the seats could be redistributed it would be necessary that a census should be taken. The principle of railway extension was one which he was quite sure would receive the favourable consideration of the House, but he certainly intended to adhere to the principle he had always enunciated—namely, that coast railways where there was settlement were far more advantageous to the country than inland railways where there was none, and the principle of carrying western railways 100 miles further west every year would certainly not

receive any support from him. The popula on they had been getting hitherto—and he did not suppose it was likely to materially alter—were much more likely to settle along the coast of Queensland for many years to come than to go inland. His own opinion was that those western railways had been carried out far enough, and should not be carried further until it could be shown clearly that the interest at least on the cost of construction would be met by the pastoral tenants of the Crown. The conservation of water was a question which deserved very considerable consideration. It was a question which could be considered purely non-political, and he thought that all hon. members of that House, when that measure was brought in—if it was going to be brought in in the shape of a Bill—would see that it was a measure as comprehensive in every detail as it was possible to make it, in order that the agriculturists of the colony might have a permanent supply, and more especially the pastoral districts out west, where the loss through want of water this past year would have been quite sufficient to pay for an enormous scheme for the conservation of that necessary. There were several other Bills mentioned in the Speech, but he did not believe the Government had the least intention of going on with them, and it was, therefore, hardly necessary to refer to them. He did not suppose they should ever hear anything about the Bills of Exchange Bill, or the Bill to amend the laws relating to the insane. Those Bills had been mentioned in every Governor's Speech since he had had the honour of a seat in that House. Then there was a Bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments. That meant, he supposed, that they were to have triennial Parliaments, but he did not think the Government had any intention of going on with that; at all events they had no intention of making it apply to the present Parliament. They were not likely to commit an act of political suicide such as would be involved in a proposal of that kind. A Bill to provide for the recoupment of the expenses of members of the Legislative Assembly, being literally interpreted, meant, he supposed, the payment of members. He always had been and always would be opposed to such a measure, as he had not seen anything which would lead him to alter his opinion. The Bill to extend the period during which a double endowment was payable to divisional boards he considered one of the very best Bills the Government could propose. He must say that he was somewhat in doubt as to the intentions of the Government on that subject. On one occasion they had a Minister saying that the Divisional Boards Act was one of the best Acts of the late Government, and then again they had another Minister saying that it was a perfect curse to the country. So that nothing, he should imagine, was more likely to split the union of strength which at present existed between the different members of the Government than that very Divisional Boards Act. He believed it was a good Act, and he believed that the surplus revenue of the colony could not be better spent than by returning it in the shape of endowments to the divisional boards, especially in those districts which had been doing their utmost to bring the working of the Act to a successful issue. He thought the Government should have given the House some intimation as to what course they intended to adopt with reference to pre-emptions. There was no reference to that subject in the Speech, and he believed they would not know anything about it until the new Land Bill was brought in. No reference had been made, either, to the Elections and Qualifications business. The Government should have undoubtedly brought in some measure which would give the

country some security for the proper trial of election petitions, so that justice might be done where justice should be done. He also thought that some reference should have been made by the Government as to the steps they intended to take in reference to appointments to the magistracy of the colony. If the Government really wished for reform in that direction, they should have swept the whole list away, and either they themselves, or through the judges, should have compiled a new list of magistrates. He was not going to say any more now, but he could bring some other cases to show that the one case to which he had referred last session was not the only one in which the Colonial Secretary had failed to carry out his promise of purging the magistracy of the colony.

Mr. BALE said the hon. member for Stanley, when moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, stated that some people had curves upon the brain in connection with railways, and he (Mr. Bale) thought some similar observation might be made in reference to the labour trade. The hon. member for Mackay was always instructive and edifying, and he liked to hear the hon. gentleman speak, but he must take exception to his posing as the working man's friend. He (Mr. Bale) objected to that for the reason that he represented a constituency containing a population ten times larger than that represented by the hon. member. The hon. gentleman called Queensland a white man's colony. There he agreed with him; he believed it should be a white man's colony. He thought the sugar industry should be encouraged in every possible manner, but not at the expense of the white man. He did not believe in kanakas, and he knew that the feeling of the constituency he had the honour to represent—which was one of the largest constituencies in the colony—was against black labour. Whether that class of labour was necessary or not was not the question under discussion. He thought they should wait patiently to see what the Land Bill to be introduced by the Government would be, and they would then probably find that white men could grow sugar, and grow it profitably, without black labour. He did not want to crush or discourage the sugar industry; his object was to encourage their own countrymen. Speaking about cheap labour, he would ask why some hon. members on the other side were so fearful in regard to the policy of the Government in that respect? It was because they knew that the men who would be introduced into the colony would be men of brains who would not be satisfied to work for 12s. a week. After two or three years in the colony, some of those men might get to be Minister for Works or Postmaster-General; they did not know what they might be. What, he thought, the other side wanted in connection with the sugar industry was low, cheap labour—something they could keep down—kanakas and coolies. He believed they were all working men, and that they ought to encourage their own race; he would not even go outside for Germans. Let them keep down as far as they could any attempt to introduce a coloured race, or he was satisfied they would drive their own children out of the colony.

Mr. BROOKES said the junior member for Enoggera had anticipated—and he was very glad he had done so—some remarks he intended to make. That was certainly an audacious statement which was made by the hon. member for Mackay twenty times during his speech, that the colony had not pronounced a distinct opinion on the question of coloured labour at the last election. Nothing could be plainer, from Cooktown to the south of the colony, than that the condemnation of

coloured labour was unanimous. About the time he went up north, in company with a friend—the present Attorney-General—he found wherever he went that the working men were distinctly against coloured labour. He wanted now first to make a few brief remarks about the kanaka business. They had done with coolies; he did not think they would ever hear anything more about coolies. But they had the kanaka trade. What a lot of misstatements had been made about it! He did not wish to speak unjustly about the hon. member for Mackay, but what he had told them about kanaka labour was a misstatement of matters most wonderful.

Mr. STEVENSON: Let us have the misstatements.

Mr. BROOKES: I shall have to call you to order.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No, you won't; Mr. Speaker may.

Mr. BROOKES: He should have to call the attention of Mr. Speaker to the hon. member for Balonne, too, if he did not look out. The hon. member for Mackay had argued that the kanaka trade hung upon the regulations not being enforced, as was the case with the regulations under the Act of 1868. There had been regulations ever since 1868, but never until the advent of the present Government was there any attempt made to put the regulations in force. They saw what a disturbance had arisen because the Government were trying to enforce the law. What was the logical deduction which all the world would draw from those circumstances? Why—and a very just deduction it would be—that the kanaka trade could not be regulated. They might as well try to regulate burglary or arson, or any other criminal offence. They might just as well say that because they could not make men honest they would regulate dishonesty. The whole history of the kanaka trade, from the very beginning in 1868, had just been what it had now been disclosed to the world to be. It had never been any better than it was now. Those transactions which had recently been brought to light in the Supreme Court had been going on for twenty years, and the people who took any interest in bringing those things to light were tabooed; they were said to have kanakas on the brain—to be humanitarians or philosophers. But the real facts had now come to light, and those who knew anything about the kanaka trade would bear him out in this: that they could not have a kanaka trade if they wished to maintain the character of the colony as a Christian colony. They could not have that and the kanaka trade together. Then the question must be looked at from a still larger point of view. The question of federation was cropping up. Not only would they have the Pacific Islanders question to deal with themselves, but they would have to join with the other colonies, so as to have not only an Australian confederation, but an international confederation, to protect the whole of the Pacific Islands. That was a view of the question which had probably not presented itself to many who thought they knew a good deal about it, and perhaps did in some respects. He was certain that the international protection of the Pacific Islanders would have to come; and, as the greater included the less, they, as Queenslanders, would have to give up the trade altogether. One startling statement of the hon. member for Mackay—and he wondered he had the boldness to make it—was, that if they destroyed the kanaka trade they would strangle the sugar industry. On that he (Mr. Brookes) interjected “and a good job,” for which he was very properly called to order by the Speaker. What he meant was, that if the sugar industry depended

upon the kanaka trade it would be a good job to do away with the sugar industry. That was a plain issue. But it was not at all necessary to connect the two things. The sugar industry could be carried on without kanakas and without coolies, and without Chinamen. How was it to be done? That question was put point-blank by the hon. member for Mackay, and he (Mr. Brookes) said, "By Germans." The very best persons they could bring out from Europe for their Northern coast and sugar lands were Germans. They were sober, industrious, self-denying; they had been trained in their own country to habits of personal independence; they possessed a strong individuality; they had lived comparatively free from the deteriorating influences of parsons, and noblemen, and country squires. When they came out here they would take any wages: but they would not work for ever for other people's land, and that was what made them, in his opinion, the best colonists they could have.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am glad the hon. member has said that the Germans are the best colonists we can have.

Mr. BROOKES said he was glad to have drawn such a warm expression of admiration for the Germans from the hon. member for Balonne. If it was for a moment insinuated that he was giving the preference to Germans over Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen, he should pass it by as the idle wind, which troubled neither him nor the facts of the question at issue. He was talking about those millions of acres in the North, some of which he had seen; and what might be made of them. He was also thinking about them as they are; and he knew that, cultivated as estates—for such was the proud name planters gave their possessions—they would never be of any value to the colony; and they could not go on as they were. Touching the question of estates, he would read a short passage from an article that recently appeared in the *Spectator* on the failure of the Oriental Bank. The difficulties of that bank were directly attributable to their having lent money to planters on estates. The words were the *Spectator's*, and he should make no remarks of his own applicable to the owners of Queensland estates. That paper said:—

"The owners of those estates are always wanting money. They are for the work to be done, the most impecunious class in the world, and for a very obvious reason. When a planter has made money he goes home to spend it, leaving his successor, be he partner, agent, or attorney, to meet all requirements for wages, new machinery, and cultivation, in the best way he can—and that is by borrowing."

The Oriental Bank lent money to those impecunious planters, and found it a very bad business.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Will you go on with the article, please?

Mr. BROOKES: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I thought you would not. I have read it.

Mr. BROOKES said he was glad the hon. member had read it, for it no doubt left him a wiser man than he was before. The only point he wanted to bring out was the instability of those large sugar estates, and he believed there were gentlemen in the House who would live to see every estate in the colony cut up and cultivated by Europeans; and that would be found to be the only way in which sugar could be grown as an industry. It was not an industry now; it was only an experiment. They were told that five millions had been invested in it. Supposing such was the case, he made bold to say that all the sugar that had ever been raised in Queensland had not paid for its raising—it had been a

losing affair ever since it was begun. Listening to the hon. member for Mackay, one would think the North was all sugar. The hon. member had nothing in his eye but those impecunious planters, from the result of whose borrowing and mortgaging arose the cry for cheap labour. Again he was obliged to call attention to the unfair way in which the hon. member spoke with reference to immigration. The hon. member spoke of a low class of white labour coming out to the colony. That must only have been said for party purposes, because there was no question that whoever indented those Germans, or whoever indented anybody, would be obliged to give such wages as would most certainly secure the work to be done when they came out. He did not believe the law would recognise indents made in Germany or elsewhere, asking the men to come out for 2s. 6d. a week, which the kanakas were working for. The margin between that sum and the amount the law would recognise might not be a large one, but it was certain that the Germans would not work long for other people unless fairly paid. Let the planters take that and make the most of it. Neither Englishmen, Scotchmen, nor Germans would work for any planters all their lives, as an English agricultural labourer would do in the old country. People did not come out from Europe or the United Kingdom to be agricultural labourers all their lives. What the hon. member wanted was a stereotyped class of agricultural labourers, but such a class was utterly opposed to our institutions. The glory of these colonies was that they offered, or should offer, an opening, as the last speaker said, for a man to come out with haybands round his legs and nothing in his pocket, and become Postmaster-General, just as the French soldier was always supposed to carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack. And yet those wretched planters, through their mouth-piece, the hon. member for Mackay, were always endeavouring to bolster up a system which would pull this colony down to the ground. The hon. member had spoken of the injustice of not allowing kanakas to be employed in mills. When he (Mr. Brookes) was in Bundaberg last year he found kanakas working in mills, and found the townspeople complaining. There were plenty of boys about Bundaberg who could do such work as he saw being done by kanakas inside the mills. It was the old story; the Labour question, no matter what way it was put by the hon. member for Mackay, always turned to the same thing—that the planters must swim if everybody else had to sink; that the sugar industry was the greatest industry in the world; and that, if the planters were let alone, they could make the whole north of Queensland one great slave State. He intended to prevent that picture from ever being realised, and he considered that the Government deserved infinite praise for the able manner in which they had tackled the Kanaka question. They would never regulate the kanaka labour at all, and the planters would have to make up their minds to abandon that labour. Wherever else they got their labour, they might as well make up their minds that they would not work their plantations by kanakas. He wished it to be understood that those who, like himself, opposed the system, did not oppose it because they disliked the planters. They had as much right to get a living as anybody else, but they must get it in conformity with the spirit of the institutions of the colony and the instincts of the people. Why should they be allowed a preference? If anybody were to attempt to erect a great fellmongering establishment in the middle of Queen-street, the law of nuisances would prevent it; and a higher law than the law of nuisances stamped the planters, in their attempt

to get that labour, with a brand that was indelible. Their attempts to get coloured labour must meet with the disapproval of everybody who wished well to Queensland. The hon. member for Mackay seemed to think he knew all about the working man, and about everything else; he was equal to all the prophets, including the minor ones. He did not tell them what he foresaid, and he (Mr. Brookes) was glad he did not. They would all shrink with fear if the hon. member could only describe as he saw the future, the terrible state of anarchy and confusion which the Government was creating North and South. North and South—ominous terms! They would never have had the significance they now possessed had it not been for slavery; and the present system of coloured labour was simply slavery, even when veiled with such a gloss as the hon. member for Mackay so well knew how to put over such things. The hon. member talked about wages. Could he point to any place in the world where sugar was cultivated, where wages were not insufferably low? He would ask members of the House to look at the commerce of the colony—the bales and cases of English merchandise daily landed on the wharves, the silk, woollen, and cotton goods—all the appliances of civilisation and comforts of modern life—and ask themselves if all those would come if the hon. member for Mackay had his way. Where would the money come from to buy all that? Where would the working man be? He would be simply effaced. It was perfectly true he would not stand and face the low wages in competition with coloured labor; he would go elsewhere. But he (Mr. Brookes), and those who thought with him, were determined that the working man was not going elsewhere, and that the hon. member for Mackay was not going to have his way. He had to ask pardon for having taken up so much time; he would not have spoken at all only it seemed to him that unless the hon. member for Mackay were replied to in some sort of fashion his sophistries might delude somebody, because the hon. member spoke with such oracularness that it seemed as if he knew the thing from top to bottom—had sounded its depth, ascertained its height, and compassed its breadth—and as if, after he had spoken, nothing more could be said.

Mr. MOREHEAD: And nothing has been said.

Mr. STEVENSON said it seemed as if all the members on the other side were gagged, and that even Ministers were gagged. Not even common courtesy had been shown to hon. members on his side of the House, who made speeches worth listening to, not like the drivelling idiotic speeches that came from the other side of the House. The last member who spoke said he would not have got up only he thought that something which fell from the hon. member for Mackay might have deluded somebody. Nothing that fell from that hon. member who spoke last was likely to delude anybody. He should treat his speech with the contempt with which it ought to be treated. That hon. member said that the hon. member for Mackay had made misstatements; but he never showed that a single one had been made, and he could not do it. Referring to the speech as delivered by his Excellency the Governor, he would commence with the second paragraph. He presumed that the Attorney-General had no hand in the composition of that Speech, or else he would have taken care that, being loyal subjects, and supposed to treat with respect the speech from the representative of Her Majesty—he would have taken care that they should not have entered a protest against the great King of Kings. The wording of the second paragraph

1884—c

was simply a protest against their Creator, by saying that the death of the Duke of Albany was untimely. He wondered what reason they had to protest against the death of the Duke of Albany in any way whatever. It was no subject for them to comment upon or protest against. It was in keeping with a good deal of the rest of the Speech. The hon. member for Mackay had taken up a special line with regard to the Speech, and he should take up a special line because he was particularly connected with one department, and that was in reference to the administration of the Lands Department. He should refer to some other matters before he came to that; there was one paragraph as followed:—

“My Government, in conjunction with the Governments of the other colonies, have urged Her Majesty's Government to make renewed protests against the proposed deportation of relapsed criminals to the French possessions in the Pacific. In anticipation, however, of any emergency that may arise, you will be invited to consider a measure having for its object to effectually prevent the landing upon our shores of criminals who may escape or be discharged from any penal settlements in the neighbourhood of Australia.”

That was very well debated and very well put by the hon. member for Townsville, and he (Mr. Stevenson) would simply say, with reference to a remark that fell from the leader of the Opposition yesterday, that he thought the leader of the Government had put himself into a very good position over that matter, considering the action he had taken since he became leader of the Government. Reference had been made to the action of the Government, in appointing a certain person a justice of the peace who had fifteen police court cases recorded against him. That gentleman had since resigned, and they knew perfectly well that it was through the action of the Premier that he did so. Another gentleman had since resigned, who was, as hon. members of the House perfectly well knew, a convict. He thought that if the hon. the Premier was going to put himself in a proper position he ought to undo another act which he had done since he came into power, and remove a stain from the fair name of the colony which ought never to have been put upon it. Another matter he should refer to was the appointment of the Agent-General—or, rather, the removal of the old one. They knew perfectly well that when the new Government came into office they appointed Mr. Hemmant—the gentleman who was the means of bringing certain charges against the late Government, especially against the leader of the late Government (Sir Thomas McIlwraith) in regard to the steel rails business—as Acting Agent-General. Considering that he was the gentleman who brought those charges, if the Premier had wanted to find out if there was anything wrong in the management of the Agent-General's department he ought to have appointed an independent man to go and find out what was wrong and what was right; but instead of that he appointed the very man who would be likely, if possible, to substantiate the charges which he had made against the late Government. What did they find? Instead of Mr. Hemmant being able to substantiate the charges he had induced the Premier to bring forward against the late Premier, he sent out the most favourable report he possibly could. Mr. Archer was given three months' leave of absence until Mr. Hemmant could see if he could find out anything which could be at all detrimental to the late Government; but, instead of finding out anything, he sent out a report very favourable indeed, complimenting the Agent-General and the department generally. Instead of the Premier admitting that he was wrong, as he ought to have done long before, as he knew that he had made false charges against the Premier, and admitted once in the House that

they were false charges, yet he never apologised for having made them—he tried to justify his conduct. When Mr. Hemmant sent out that report he ought to have apologised to Mr. Archer, and replaced him; but what did he do? He told them last session that his reason for giving Mr. Archer three months' leave of absence was that, although he believed him to be an upright, straightforward man, he was not in sympathy with the Government. They could quite understand that; but after the report of Mr. Hemmant he ought to have reinstated Mr. Archer instead of, as he called it, recalling him. The Premier had sent home to that office a man who was no more to be compared with Mr. Archer in ability, energy, or in any other way, than—well he could not say what, but he would simply say there was no comparison between them. One of them was an able man; a thoroughly straightforward, upright man; an independent man, and one who had been colourless in politics in the colony; a man who had put that office in such a state that it never was in before. He looked upon Mr. Garrick as a very good man in his place; he was a good-natured, lazy, indolent booby, thoroughly unfit for the office, but a man he could call his friend at any time. He might, as the hon. member for Townsville said, if he liked, do some good; but they knew he was a lazy man, and what they called in Scotland a "booby." He did not think he had any ability at all, and it was fortunate for the office at home, and for the Government of the colony, that they had an Under Secretary who would prevent Mr. Garrick doing any harm. Were it not that the Secretary to the Agent-General in London was such an able and independent man, and so thoroughly fitted to manage the office, it might be a very sad thing for the colony that Mr. Garrick had been appointed to replace Mr. Archer. The next paragraph referred to the subject of immigration, and a good deal had been said upon that subject that night. Things had been put that night in such a way, that the hon. Premier and those behind him would not be able to shuffle out of it any longer. They were clearly now to understand that they were to introduce into the colony, not their own countrymen, but foreign servile Europeans. Well, if the present Government remained in power for long, and adopted the tactics they had adopted since they entered office, there would not be very much use even for that class of immigrants. The Premier and the Minister for Lands would not only hunt labour out of the colony, but they would hunt capital out of the colony also, which encouraged labour, and without which they would require no labour, and they could have no labour. It had been pretty clearly shown that the Premier had done all he could to injure the sugar industry. That was proved by the hon. member for Mackay that evening. And the present Minister for Lands was doing all he could to injure the pastoral industry, and had done more in that direction than any man who had held the office before. That, he (Mr. Stevenson) could easily prove, and he was quite satisfied of it in his own mind. He would, however, be able to show that better when he came to the paragraph referring specially to the Land Bill, but he merely pointed out now that there would be no necessity for any immigration at all soon, if the tactics adopted by the present Ministry were indulged in much longer. The next paragraph referred to the Pacific Island labour trade, and the Premier seemed to have changed his mind lately on that subject. He remembered during last session a State paper was laid on the table of that House, in which it appeared that the Premier did not agree with the Governor in that respect. The Premier said then that he did not believe in the abuses

reported to have occurred in that trade. He remembered that, in the despatch which the Governor sent home to Lord Derby, he said he was sorry he could not agree with the Colonial Secretary of the colony in that matter, as he believed abuses had occurred. Now they found the Premier admitted that abuses had occurred. It was admitted in the Speech, though he noticed the Speech read, not "My Government regret so and so," but "I regret so and so," as if the Governor and the Premier were not yet in accord upon that subject. The Premier, however, in his speech last night, turned round and said abuses had occurred. Perhaps the Governor had convinced him while they were so much together up north lately. He (Mr. Stevenson) admitted that abuses had occurred, but the right means had not been taken to prevent them. Instead of sending men as Government Agents such as had been described by the hon. member for Mackay that night—men who were a disgrace to the colony before they were sent there and had stood their trial here—they should have sent the very best men they could find. That would have been better than to regret what had taken place, and say steps had been taken, etc. What steps had been taken? The Government had appointed men quite unfit for the work. He did not know whether Mr. de Latour was alive or dead at that moment, but he thought he was entirely unfit for the position he held. He had known him perfectly well, and he said that no dependence could be placed upon him. It was a strange thing that, if those abuses were real instead of imaginary, some of the offenders were not brought to justice. Some of them were brought up, but why was not justice carried out to its proper end? How did the Attorney-General appear when those men were brought to justice? He made a miserable failure of the whole thing and the men were discharged, and had it not been for the miserable mull and mess the Attorney-General made over that case—notwithstanding the assistance he got and for which the taxpayers had to pay heavily—those men would have been brought to justice for what they did. But it was not to be so, and the Attorney-General, with all the help he got, made a most miserable failure of the whole thing. And after all that, was it not disgraceful to find that the Premier would not throw the blame on his own colleague, but went back on the judge and said it was because he had summed up wrongly that the jury brought in the verdict they did? The hon. Premier was worse than the Minister for Works last year, when he said the judges would do this and that and the other thing; and it was really disgraceful for the Premier to make the remarks upon that judge which he made in the House last night. He (Mr. Stevenson) had no diffidence in referring to those matters. The Premier had twitted the leader of the Opposition yesterday for making no charges against the Government. He would see if he could not get someone on the other side to get up and reply to the charges made against them. The next paragraph in the Speech was that referring to the appointment of a new Minister, and he thought it should be taken in connection with one further on referring to patenting inventions, as it was simply patenting an invention for the use of the "fifth wheel." The next paragraph he should refer to was that relating to the—

"Regular fortnightly coastal mail service to the port on the Gulf of Carpentaria."

The hon. the Premier yesterday took great credit to himself in connection with that. He (Mr. Stevenson) gave him due credit for it; but, at the same time, he had been for a long time

connected with the Gulf country and could say that no notice whatever was taken of any postal service to that part of the colony until the present leader of the Opposition was made Postmaster-General, and to him that service was due. That hon. gentleman did very well in the first place by establishing a monthly service, when he saw it was desirable, and now it was further desirable to have a fortnightly service; but he (Mr. Stevenson) thought it was rather too much of a good thing for the Premier or any of his colleagues to take credit for that service. He now came to the paragraph dealing with the Land Bill, and he really did not know what to say about it. They knew very little about what it was going to be. They had heard all sorts of stories about it; they found one Minister going north, another west, and another further south, fishing about to find out what public opinion was with regard to the question. They had not only had that, but a kind of draft Bill had been sent down to the Governments of all the other colonies—to New South Wales. The hon. the Premier looked at him as if he was saying something not true.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEVENSON: He could prove that a draft Bill had been sent to several of the Governments down south to get their opinions as to what would be likely to suit. The fact was that Ministers had gone in all directions to find out what would be likely to suit the people of the colony; and now he believed the Minister for Lands knew no more about the Bill than the water-bottle on the table before them. That morning's *Courier* gave another version of what the Bill was to be—that, in fact, the principle of it was to be done away with altogether.

Mr. MOREHEAD: In deference to his colleagues.

Mr. STEVENSON: In deference to his colleagues. He should like to ask the Minister for Lands, what was the use of passing any Land Bill at all in the face of his action in the administration of the Lands Department since he had been in office? Had he not ignored the Land Act at present in force, which was framed by a much abler man than the hon. gentleman was or would ever be? What had he done? He had ignored not only the freehold right under the Act, but he had actually ignored the leasehold right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How do you know?

Mr. STEVENSON: He knew a great deal better than the hon. gentleman did or ever would know. The Minister for Lands, when he entered office, not only repudiated contracts which had been approved by the late Government, and which were according to law, but he repudiated the pre-emptive right altogether. He had ignored all applications for pre-emptives since, except—being consistent with what the Minister for Works said to his constituents on the Darling Downs—they had been good to their friends. In some instances the right had been recognised, but as a rule it had been repudiated ever since the hon. gentleman had been in office. He (Mr. Stevenson) should like hon. members to know what the effect of that had been on the colony. It had been this: that hundreds of thousands of pounds that would have been invested in pastoral properties in Queensland had gone to the other colonies. Queensland was now looked upon in the same way that Victoria was during the time of the Berry Ministry. He remembered recently asking a gentleman who came here from Victoria, and had purchased stations out west at very high prices, what was the opinion of Queensland in Victoria now, and he

said:—"It is this: You are in the same position now that Victoria was in during the time of the Berry Ministry. During that time the only idea Victorians had was to get their capital out of Victorian freeholds and invest it in Queensland leaseholds. Now the idea is to get capital back out of Queensland and invest it in Victorian freeholds." He (Mr. Stevenson) could prove by documentary evidence that money that would have been invested in pastoral properties in Queensland had been diverted away from it altogether through the action of the Minister for Lands. If the hon. gentleman thought he was doing good to the working men or any other class in the colony, he was very much mistaken. He had done a great deal of harm to the pastoral industry and to the very men who had made his fortune. He had robbed them as far as he could, or tried to do so, but he (Mr. Stevenson) did not think the law courts would ever sanction the action he had taken. The hon. gentleman had done his best to rob the very men to whom he sold his pre-emptive right. Why, he made it one of the very greatest inducements for them to purchase his property, that they would have the pre-emptive right to take hold of as some security. The drought had taught them that stock might die, and the action of the Minister for Lands had shown there was no security at all under any Land Bill that might be passed. There could be no indefeasible lease. The Minister for Lands had taught them that, because if a freehold right was no good how could a leasehold right be any good? There was, therefore, no security for those men who had invested money in the colony, or the financial institutions that had lent them money to invest in it, since the Minister for Lands had repudiated the pre-emptive right. He knew one instance where a gentleman came to the colony prepared to invest £50,000 in station properties, but after descriptions of several stations had been sent to him, he said that since he had read several of the speeches made in the House last session, he had made up his mind not to invest a single penny in Queensland on account of the uncertainty of the land laws. The hon. gentleman had done more harm to the colony than the drought. He made people in other colonies lose confidence in Queensland, so much so that it would take a long time to regain that confidence. Gentlemen in the North knew that they must expect droughts now and then, but droughts combined with a policy of repudiation was more than they could put up with. He had already pointed out that the hon. gentleman made his money by the very men he was now robbing. He sold his land, which he had no business ever to hold as far as legitimate working was concerned; and now he came into office and repudiated the whole transaction, not only personally, but also as a Minister of the Crown. He would now refer to the leasehold right. A report by Mr. Morisset on the lands in the Cook district was laid on the table yesterday, and that report should have been printed and handed round to hon. members. It had been in the hands of the Minister for Lands for five or six weeks, and he intended to allude to the action of that hon. gentleman in regard to the report. He knew well the hardships experienced by the pioneers of the colony—he considered himself one of their number—and he knew what it was to take up and stock country during a drought. Several gentlemen in the Cook district to his knowledge bought stock, took them out to that country, never applied for the lands until the stock was there, kept the country fully stocked for the last two or three years, and now on a report, the nature of which hon. members

did not know, the Minister for Lands in the most indiscriminate manner sent a circular giving notice to those gentlemen that their runs were forfeited. Not only that, but those gentlemen who had taken their lives in their hands, endured all the hardships connected with opening up the resources of the colony, and spent thousands of pounds in improvements, were actually told that they had acquired the country by misrepresentation. What kind of a man was the Minister for Lands, to hunt capital out of the colony like that? No one but a born fool could act in that way. He knew the hon. gentleman regretted his position; but into what position did he put the people he accused of misrepresentation? He would give an instance. There was a gentleman in Melbourne, who never was a squatter in Queensland himself, but who had given between £30,000 and £40,000 to three of his sons to enable them to settle in the colony. He was now over seventy years of age, and wished to have his sons settled somewhere before he died. The third son decided to settle in the Cook district. He bought 1,500 female cattle from the Mitchell district, had them travelled to the Cook district, where he stocked his country; the Commissioner agreed to the whole thing; the gentleman got his license, and after he had been in possession for two years and had spent between £4,000 and £5,000 on cattle, and between £4,000 and £5,000 on the country, he got notice that his run was forfeited, and that the land had been acquired by misrepresentation. Those were facts which could not be denied, and the Minister for Lands knew it. What, therefore, was the good of passing a further Land Bill? As had been pointed out by the hon. member for Mackay, there were only a few leases to run, and they would not fall in for nineteen or twenty years; and what was the use of passing a Bill to deal with leases that would not fall in till the year 1900. They must be hard pushed for something to do if they meant to pass a Bill to deal with something that would not take place till the year 1900. Of the Bill itself they knew nothing, with the exception of what had appeared in the newspapers; but the Minister for Works had made it a *sine quâ non* that if so-and-so were going to be given in the way of railways the Land Bill would have to be passed. But he hoped hon. members opposite would not be gulled so easily; he hoped they would consider the Land Bill on its merits quite irrespective of any railways that might be held out as a bribe to induce them to pass that Bill. He would like to say a little more with regard to the administration of the land. He noticed that, although the Minister for Lands wished to deprive the pastoral lessees of their pre-emptive right, he did not do the same thing with regard to Crown land. He (Mr. Stevenson) had heard of a case in which the hon. gentleman not only did not wish to carry out his policy of the right to pre-empt without having the advantage of a freehold, but actually made concessions which were injurious to the taxpayers of the colony, and that to one of his supporters. Such a case was never heard of in that House before, and he hoped never would be again. It had been clearly pointed out in the public prints already, and the hon. gentleman had got his organ or the organ of the Premier to try to let him down as easily as possible; but that same organ admitted that he was wrong and had been "had." But then the *Telegraph's* account was entirely in contradiction to Mr. Higson's report, and between the two of them the Minister for Lands had got into a pretty muddle.

Mr. MOREHEAD: But Higson has got the land.

Mr. STEVENSON: It had been clearly pointed out that in Clermont the taxpayers of the colony suffered considerably. The Minister for Lands, instead of having the land put up in the ordinary way, telegraphed to the agent or auctioneer at Clermont that Higson's improvements were to be permitted. Higson accordingly put on his land what improvements he liked, and simply debarred other people from bidding. The allotment consequently brought something like five or six times less than it ought to have brought, and which another allotment, not nearly so valuable, did bring. He thought there ought to be some explanation from the Minister for Lands about that; and he hoped the hon. gentleman would get up, if only to show them what some of the Ministers, besides the Premier, had to say.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is nothing to answer.

Mr. STEVENSON: Perhaps they would get something to answer by-and-by. There was another subject he would like to refer to. There was a matter in connection with Mr. P. F. Macdonald's case which had taken place during the recess. It was a most extraordinary thing that during that time a large sum of money should have been paid over to that gentleman, in the face of what had previously taken place in that House. If there was any hurry about it—if there was any necessity for the immediate payment of the money, why did not the Premier put it in the Estimates last session, and have it discussed and passed as it ought to have been before it was paid? Now, he would give hon. members some little information about the case, because, perhaps, it might do them good. As most of them knew, the case arose through some blocks of country having been taken away from Mr. Macdonald which he claimed belonged to him. It was pretty well admitted that he ought to have had them. However, the Government of the day decided that they did not belong to him, and they were given to his next neighbour, Mr. Richards, of Spring-sure. Mr. Macdonald took the case to the Supreme Court. The jury knew nothing whatever of the circumstances. There was not a single squatter amongst them except one, and it was almost admitted that he knew nothing about the case. At all events, Mr. Macdonald was given a verdict, but at the time it was supposed to be so absurd and so monstrous that the Government of the day would not recognise it. The matter was afterwards brought before the House. Then the Premier offered to settle the matter by giving Mr. Macdonald a sum which he (Mr. Stevenson) considered far above what he ought to have got. The matter was referred to a select committee, which consisted of Mr. T. B. Stephens, who was at that time a member of the Liberal Government; Mr. Fitzgerald, a very moderate man; Mr. Miles, the present Minister for Works; Mr. Buzacott; Mr. Stewart, who had been a member of a Liberal Government since then; and Mr. C. J. Graham, who was the member for Clermont, and was the chairman of the committee. The case was thoroughly discussed and considered by the committee; and, after a great deal of trouble in getting Mr. Stephens to agree to the decision, they awarded Mr. Macdonald £6,000. But Mr. Macdonald would not accept it. The matter was again brought before the House by the present Premier, or by his then chief; but it was not passed. Now, without any parliamentary authority, the Premier had paid to Mr. Macdonald within the last few weeks a sum of £21,000, besides £2,000 which had been paid to him beforehand by way of legal expenses; and he (Mr. Stevenson) had no doubt the hon. gentleman pocketed a good

deal of that himself. Thus, after a select committee composed of Liberal members, including the present Minister for Works, had agreed that £6,000 should be given, it was ridiculous at this time of day, especially with the Minister for Lands as a member of the Government, he knowing the value of the country—that such a sum of money should have been paid. Even since it was paid, the Minister of Lands and another had bought that land and also the freehold of 13,000 or 14,000 acres at very little over what Mr. Macdonald paid for two blocks of country. That showed that there was more in this matter than appeared on the surface. He pointed out this more for the information of hon. gentlemen, that not only had the whole of the leasehold of that run been sold, but between thirteen and fourteen thousand acres of freehold, besides the whole of the stock, consisting of something like 16,000 sheep, 3,500 cattle, and 100 horses, had been handed over to the hon. gentleman's brother and his partners, whoever they might be, for a sum very little in excess of the amount which had been paid to Mr P. F. Macdonald within the last few weeks. He said that that ought not to have taken place without the consent of Parliament, and that the amount should have been placed on the Estimates of last session and been fully discussed. Now, he hoped that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House had got something to answer. That was all he would say about the Land Bill until he saw it, but he did think it was a ridiculous waste of time to bring in and pass a Land Bill in that House, when the Acts already in existence were being repudiated in the way they were being by the present Government. The next paragraph was one which was not at all in accordance with facts, as had been pointed out to the House already. He referred to the statement made with regard to the long drought. He was very sorry to say that that paragraph was calculated to mislead, and he was very sorry, for the sake of the sufferers, to say that away out west the drought had not broken up at all. He felt bound to say that, because it was most decidedly misleading for the Premier to put a paragraph like that into the Governor's Speech. He thought that everything should be done in a straightforward manner, and that the people of the colony should not be misled by such mis-statements. The next paragraph was a very vague one, and he wanted to know why the Minister for Works should refer to one particular line of railway, and omit all mention of any others. They were told that provision was to be made for the construction of a line of railway between Cloncurry and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Well, personally, he was very pleased to hear that, but it was a very vague and indefinite way of speaking of things. Perhaps the hon. gentleman would favour the House with some information as to where that line was going—where, in fact, the port was to be. The hon. gentleman should be more specific in regard to such an important matter, and give the House more definite information. Well, the hon. gentleman was going to give the House an extensive railway policy, and he was also going to bring forward a loan of £6,000,000. He (Mr. Stevenson) would like to know from the hon. gentleman where he hatched that idea. Was it at the Killarney banquet, where the hon. member for Stanley told him that the children of the future would pray for him, and ever be invoking blessings upon such a good old man? How did the hon. gentleman arrive at that £6,000,000 idea? He (Mr. Stevenson) could tell the House. He had first got news of the floating of the £3,000,000 loan, for which £9,000,000 was subscribed, and he thought he might as well go in

for the difference and scoop the pool. He thought that, as £9,000,000 had been subscribed, he might as well go in for the lot; but it never occurred to him that if he had asked for £9,000,000 he would not have got a single penny. Why did not the hon. gentleman act straightforwardly? He could do so, and did do so, as a rule, and he (Mr. Stevenson) hoped he would keep his colleagues straight as well. He had only one more subject to refer to, and he would not have mentioned it had it not been for a little piece of by-play which he noticed when the hon. member for Mackay (Mr. Black) was speaking. That hon. member referred to the Divisional Boards Act, and the increased endowment to be given to them, and he (Mr. Stevenson) did not know what it was that the Minister for Works interjected, but it was something to this effect, "You have not got it, or you will never see it." Directly he had said that the Premier moved from his seat at the table, went back to his own seat, and put the curb on the hon. gentleman. He (Mr. Stevenson) believed that the Minister for Works was not sincere in that matter. He knew that he did not believe in the Divisional Boards Act, and he had not the slightest idea of doubling the endowment. The Premier saw that the Minister for Works was likely to put his foot in it, and he went and told him not to say a word more; and the Minister for Works, like a good boy, obeyed that order. If the hon. gentleman did not believe in the Divisional Boards he should have put his foot down before the Speech was read, and told the Premier that he would not consent to such a proposal. He (Mr. Stevenson) hoped that, after all the speeches which had been made from the Opposition side of the House, they would get some explanation from Ministers on the other side. They had done all they could to get members on the other side to speak, and he thought it would be well—not only for the information of members, but for the information of the people of the colony—that they should have some explanation, even if it only came from that mild and tender nature, the Treasurer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: In reference to the matter alluded to by the hon. member for Mackay, or rather vaguely hinted at by him, and afterwards entered upon more distinctly by the last member who spoke, I think it due to myself and the House that I should give what information I can upon the subject. Shortly after I came into office, the junior member for Rockhampton, Mr. Higson, came to me and asked for certain lands near Clermont to be offered at auction. To this I agreed, but afterwards, on inquiring at the railway offices, I ascertained that the land would very likely be required for railway purposes, and, consequently, it was not offered at auction. About two months elapsed before the land was examined by the railway authorities to find out whether it was wanted or not. At the end of that period the railway authorities concluded that the land on the opposite side of the line would suit them best. In the meantime, Mr. Higson, or his agent or partner, or it might be himself—I do not know who it was—carried on some business either as a storekeeper or hotelkeeper down the line while the railway was in course of construction, and erected a kitchen upon one of the allotments. Mr. Higson asked me whether I would protect those improvements. I inquired whether it was the usual practice of the office to protect improvements of that kind, and was told that it was; consequently I instructed the Under Secretary to protect the improvements. I was, however, astonished to find afterwards that these improvements were going on all the time, and that there was not only a kitchen but there was also a public-house on the allotment. I freely

admit that I was entirely wrong in my action, inasmuch as I should have had the improvements on the place inspected at the time when Mr. Higson asked me to protect them. If I had had the experience then I have now, I would have inspected them. He certainly got the better of me.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He votes on your side.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member may be influenced in that way. I have no doubt he is. To my knowledge he has used his power in many instances to effect purposes of that kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Name them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I happen to know of instances. I suppose you judge me by yourself in matters of this kind. I have no doubt that by my action in this matter the Treasury has suffered to the extent of £50, or perhaps £100 odd; I do not think it is likely that it has suffered more than that. There is no difference between the allotment in question and others which have been sold, with the exception that a road runs on two sides of it. The adjoining allotment was sold for £70. On the day of the sale I received a telegram asking me to protect the buildings on another allotment, and I immediately wired an urgent reply to the auctioneer to protect those improvements also, but the telegram did not reach its destination until the sale was completed. Of course, as before stated, that I made a great mistake in the matter I freely admit, but it is a mistake I should not make again in any case. Then there is this important question alluded to by the last speaker, in the matter of the Cook runs. I have a very different version to give to what the hon. gentleman has given the House, and he must have known perfectly well that the version he gave was absolutely false.

Mr. STEVENSON: I rise to a point of order. I object to any such language being used in this House. I can point out to the hon. gentleman that I can prove what I have stated, and have proved it to him in his office.

Mr. SPEAKER: The word "false" is unparliamentary, and the hon. member should withdraw it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think an apology to the House is due from the Minister for Lands for the language he has made use of.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the expression is unparliamentary I can do nothing else but withdraw it. I do not say the hon. gentleman uttered this thing knowing it to be a falsehood, but he has made a statement which he has got from someone outside, and I say it is not true.

Mr. STEVENSON: I say I can prove by documentary evidence that it is true. You, Mr. Speaker, have ruled that the statement made by the hon. gentleman is unparliamentary and should be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the statement of the hon. member for Normanby.

The PREMIER: He did so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He repeated the offence.

The PREMIER: He distinctly accepted the statement of the hon. member for Normanby.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did accept it, and I say the statement is not true; not that the hon. member—

Mr. STEVENSON: I say it is true. I ask that the Minister for Lands should withdraw that statement.

The PREMIER: Surely, if a statement is made by a private member in reference to a

Minister, the Minister is at liberty to contradict that statement. There never was a rule in the House that if a member makes a statement which is not correct another member should not correct it. What the Minister for Lands has done is to say that a statement is not correct. He has a perfect right to do that if it is true. He distinctly withdrew the statement as applied to the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister for Lands may state that the statement of the hon. member for Normanby is not correct; but he said more than that. He said the statement of the hon. member was not true.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I say a thing is not true it does not necessarily follow that the hon. member who has given that version to the House is telling an untruth. I simply say it is not true, and I am prepared to show that it is not true. In the first place the hon. member has assumed that my action in reference to the Cook lessees of runs was taken upon the report furnished by Mr. Morisset. That is incorrect. I have not acted on Mr. Morisset's report. I believe it is as absolutely worthless as anything done by any Government official in the country; it is of no value whatever as a guide to me or anyone else. I have gone on different evidence, the evidence of the men themselves. These men are required by law to make a return under the Brands Act. They made those returns with declarations on the same forms as they used in taking up their country in the first instance. If their declarations under the Brands Act, and under the Scab Act, showed that they had not acquired an amount of stock upon those runs, to hold them in accordance with the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, they lied one way or the other. I have concluded that they have lied in taking possession of their runs, and have called upon them to show cause why their runs should not be forfeited. I asserted, and I repeat it, that they have obtained those runs by misrepresentation—in many cases they have obtained them by lying and perjury. I have convicted them out of their own mouths, and not by extraneous evidence at all; and I think I have very properly called upon those men to show cause why their runs should not be forfeited.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You have not called upon them to show cause.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In some cases I have; in others, I have told them I should forfeit their runs. Since that time they have been dealt with more leniently, and I will tell the House why. The late Government are responsible for the condition of things in that and other districts on account of their utter indifference to the manner in which the law was carried out. They utterly and completely demoralised, not only those who selected under the Act of 1876, but the pastoral lessees. They never required them to comply with the law; and there is no gentleman in the House who has benefited more by that remissness than the leader of the Opposition. Every week you see advertisements in the papers from his firm offering unstocked runs for sale, which he knows have been obtained and retained by perjury.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I rise to a point of order. Whatever license of speech may be granted to an irate Minister, a line must be drawn somewhere, and when an hon. member tells the House that I, or anyone or any firm with which I am connected, advertise in the papers runs for sale that I know to have been obtained by perjury and fraud, I tell him he lies.

The PREMIER: Order!

Mr. MOREHEAD : I say, I tell him he lies. My career in this colony, I think, will not indicate to anybody in this House or out of it that I would be a party to any such crime as has been charged against me to-night by the Minister for Lands. I have been grossly maligned, hon. members have been insulted, and the dignity of the House has been outraged. I stand here as the leader of the Opposition, representing a party in the House and a large section of the people outside, all of whom have been insulted by the hon. gentleman. If he can sustain the truth of the allegation he has made I will admit every word he has said. If he cannot, let him go down as a perjured individual, as I maintain he is. As a point of order, I assert that the hon. member has no right to apply such language to me. Not only myself, but every member on this side of the House has been grossly insulted by the Minister for Lands, and I call upon you, sir, as the custodian of the rights and privileges of hon. members, to call that hon. member to order.

The SPEAKER : The Minister for Lands is clearly out of order in the language he has applied to the hon. member for Balonne—in saying that he has acquired anything by perjury. I will call the attention of hon. members particularly to the following passage from the latest edition of "May"—the edition of 1883:—

"In order to guard against all appearance of personality in debate it is a rule in both Houses that no member shall refer to another by name. The use of temperate and decorous language is never more desirable than when a member is canvassing the opinions and conduct of his opponents in debate. The warmth of his own feelings is likely to betray him into hasty and unguarded expressions, which the excitement of his adversaries will exaggerate; and he cannot be too careful in restraining himself within those boundaries which Parliament has wisely established."

I think the Minister for Lands, in his explanation to the House, should restrain himself within those boundaries, and not make imputations of the kind to which my attention has been drawn. An imputation of perjury is clearly out of order, and should be withdrawn.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON : I wish to say—

The SPEAKER : I have given my ruling on the point of order, and unless hon. members wish to dissent from it, it is not customary for members to canvass the ruling of the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Since I have been ruled out of order for the expression I used, I am of course bound to withdraw it. I wish to state, however, that runs advertised for sale as unstocked runs are absolutely held illegally. The law does not permit them to be held as unstocked runs, and we know that those runs are offered for sale not only by the hon. gentleman opposite, as a commission agent, but by many others in the town. When they do that, I mean to say they are doing a thing which they know must be illegal. No man is justified in holding unstocked runs; they have been improperly acquired and held, and when such runs are advertised for sale I think I am justified in using pretty strong language in characterising such a method of doing business.

Mr. NORTON : I rise to a point of order. You ruled that the hon. member should withdraw the expression he made use of, and, instead of doing so, he is trying to justify it. The accusation he made against the leader of the Opposition was, that he sold runs knowing them to have been acquired by perjury.

Mr. MOREHEAD : That I was a suborner of perjury.

Mr. NORTON : That is the charge, and although you, sir, have ruled it out of order, the hon. member has not withdrawn it.

The SPEAKER : The hon. member having been ruled out of order, will have to withdraw the expression unconditionally.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I heard him apologise twice, and now he is asked to apologise a third time. I hope he will do nothing of the sort.

The SPEAKER : I did not hear the hon. member say he withdrew the expression.

The PREMIER : He did so distinctly.

Mr. MOREHEAD : He did not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : I certainly withdrew the expression, as it has been interpreted by the hon. member and by the Chair, and I now again withdraw it as it is understood by them. But that is not the meaning I put upon it.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I rise to a point of order. I understood from you, sir, that the words were to be withdrawn unconditionally, and I ask that your ruling be sustained.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : Very well then, I withdraw the words unconditionally. But I should like to draw the attention of the House to the language of the last speaker, who charged me with being a robber—that I had robbed the man I sold my station to. I took no notice of that; I did not think it necessary. I never pay much attention to anything the hon. member for Normanby says, and I should be the last man to appeal to the Speaker about anything he might say, for he is not of much consequence, either in the House or out of it. There was one remark made, which elicited from the leader of the Opposition a great expression of applause, and that was, that the action of the present Government had had the effect of driving a lot of capital out of the country, and of diverting from the colony a great deal of money which was intended to be brought here and invested in station and other property. All I can say to that is that if we have driven away money that was intended to be applied, or that was applied before this Government came into office, to the acquisition of large freehold estates at half the value of the land, then we have done a remarkably good thing for the country. As long as I have a seat in this House or participate in the government of this country, my best efforts will be directed to blocking the attempts of men who come here for such purposes as the hon. members opposite affect to admire and extol—those people whose seek to monopolise the public estate to the injury of every working man in the country. A great deal has been said about the intentions of the Government with regard to immigration, which is very intimately connected with this question of the land. We propose to bring here, in place of coolies and kanakas, a cheaper class of labour from the Continent of Europe as well as from England, Ireland, and Scotland. This does not satisfy the hon. gentlemen opposite. The hon. member for Mackay has a particular horror of the whole thing, because he knows that when these men are brought here, though they may be satisfied to work for a fair wage for a year or two, they will be sufficiently thrifty to lay by a little money and start for themselves if the land laws are of a kind that will permit it, and not such as have prevailed heretofore, when it would require a small fortune to acquire the land; as, if it were of any value, those speculators and capitalists who held the land in the immediate neighbourhood would take great care that it would not be thrown open at such a price as to allow a poor man to come in. The object of this Government will be to direct capital to its legitimate occupation; not to come in as the monopoliser of land, and enslave labour,

but to make the land available to those who will use it, and to make capital available to labour. That is the very reverse of the policy pursued by the previous Government. The hon. member for Mackay also wanted to know why it was that the Bowen and Houghton Gap Railway was not to be carried out, and twitted the Minister for Works with having declared it would never go through while he remained in office. I am sure, as far as my opinion goes, that while the country is held as it is now in that direction, that railway will never have my assent nor that of anybody who thoroughly understands the way in which the land is held through which it would pass. The land that is occupied now on the delta of the Burdekin has quite sufficient outlet, and the railway from Bowen to the Northern line passes chiefly through land acquired by the late Government under the present Act at 5s. an acre—some of the finest land there. The only possible justification for this railway that there can be, even for the leader of the Opposition, is to make that land worth double and treble what it is now in the market, and its present value is £2 or £3 an acre. What reason can there be for completing a railway to give a double outlet to the Northern land? None, except to enhance the value of the land acquired in this way, and acquired by dummying too. Some of these lands, to the extent of 5,000 or 6,000 acres, stand in the name of a newspaper proprietor in Rockhampton. They are managed by the stockmen of the North Australian Company, and grazed over by the stock of the North Australian Company. These are the men extolled to the skies by the leader of the Opposition, and those who follow him—Jupiter and his satellites, if I may call them so. If that is the fashion of things this House and the country desire to see extended and perpetuated, there is no doubt whatever that it is time for every honest man to clear out of it; but I believe we have still a chance to redeem the country from such an awful curse. A great deal of mischief has been done, but I hope we will effectually check it now; curb the aspirations and unjust desires and inordinate greed of selfish capitalists; bring the land within the scope of those men who are able to use it and not allow it to be monopolised by those who want to get possession of it, that they may grow rich by the labours of other people.

Mr. NORTON said: I must take notice of one statement of the hon. member who has just sat down. The hon. the Minister for Lands has stated that those lands on the Burdekin were acquired by the late Government. As I was a member of the late Government, I give an absolute denial to that statement. I am not aware that any land whatever was acquired by the late Government. There may have been members of the late Government who at some time or other took up land, but why the whole Government should be charged with having taken up land I cannot understand. I, for one, take the earliest opportunity of denying the charge, and I have no doubt others will do the same. There is one other matter I shall refer to, which has been remarked upon by the hon. member, and which I am sorry to say led to a great deal of disturbance just now—that is, his decision with regard to those lands, the leases of which he has declared his intention of forfeiting. I know nothing of the matter, beyond his own statement; but he will get into very great trouble if he attempts to take the law into his own hands in that way. According to his own showing, he has no right whatever to forfeit the land. He says the lands have been fraudulently acquired, and that the lessees have made false declarations in connection with returns sent in.

Now if they have sent in false declarations, they can be prosecuted for that; they can be punished for fraud; but if they have their land occupied with the requisite number of stock, then I defy any Government to put them out. They may take the matter into a court of law; but there is no court in the country which could interfere with their claim. Now the responsibility in these matters does not rest with these men; the responsibility of false declarations rests with them, and if they have made false declarations they deserve to be punished; but let the punishment be for false declarations and not for something else which they cannot be punished for. The responsibility in connection with these lands lies entirely with the Government. Before he accepts the application, the Government officer has to be satisfied that the conditions are complied with. That is the position of the case, and if he is satisfied that the conditions are complied with, it does not matter whether they are or not; the Government have waived whatever claim they might have had to cancel the lease. The lessees are bound, after the lease is issued, to keep the number of stock required by the Act on the run; but if the Government accept the risk, without any of the conditions or any of the provisions of the Act being complied with, they cannot touch the holder—they waive their claim against him. The Premier knows that perfectly well. There is not a lawyer in the House who does not know that any responsibility in the matter lies with the Government; but before the Government can interfere with the lessees they must prove that the conditions of the Land Act have not been complied with since the last rent was received by them. That is the position they are in, and if the Minister for Lands is going now to forfeit, or attempt to forfeit leases, the consequence will be that every one of those lessees can bring an action in the Supreme Court against him. He will have just the same rights to be acquired by the law that Mr. Macdonald acquired by the law some years ago. We have had quite enough of these law cases. When it comes to paying one man twenty odd thousands of pounds, through a mistake made by a former Land Minister, we do not want a repetition of it in forty or fifty cases in the Gulf country. I am not defending these men—I am not saying whether they are right or wrong—but I wish to show the Minister for Lands the absolute falseness of the position he takes up. He simply places the colony in the position of these cases being taken into a court of law, and the taxpayers will have to pay the cost. Any sensible man who reads the Land Act must know that perfectly well. I do not intend referring to all the matters contained in the Speech; there is no need to refer to some of them, and others have already been fully discussed. It is a matter for regret that the Premier did not say more when he spoke of the appointment of Mr. Garrick to the Agent-Generalship, and of his retaining his position as a Minister. It is rather unfortunate that, when the opportunity was offered in that way, the House was not advised more fully as to the position that Mr. Garrick will occupy, now he has gone home. What is he Minister of? Is he to be the Minister of the Agent-Generalship? He was a very bad general when he was in the Lands Office, and he was blamed by members on both sides for his neglect of the duties of his office. The Minister for Works, who was dismissed from the Government because he would not go into the Lands Office after Mr. Garrick left, has himself told the House that he did not resign, but was dismissed; he was simply gazetted out, which he considered equivalent to dismissal, and the reason was that he refused to be a scavenger

for the Government, and clear out the filth that was left in the Lands Office. I shall not refer to *Hansard*, but the words he used were very much like that. We know perfectly well that Mr. Garrick, however estimable he may be as a private gentleman, never had the credit of being a very hard worker as a Minister. It is no use trying to conceal the fact. I do not wish to say one word against him as an individual. I liked to have a chat with him as well as anyone, and he was a gentleman whom every member of this House esteems, but can it be expected that one who had the credit of being so idle a man as Mr. Garrick should fulfil the duties of Agent-General as well as Mr. Archer? I do not think it is reasonable to expect anything of the kind, and we find the Government do not entertain the opinion that it is either, for they find it necessary to appoint a Board of Advice to look after him. I do not know whether I should speak of him as Agent-General or as Minister for something or other. It is rather unfortunate that when these things were mentioned there was nothing said about what the cost to the country would be. It must entail some cost to the country; we cannot expect three gentlemen to act as a Board of Advice for nothing. Surely there was no such hurry to have this Board appointed before Mr. Garrick got home, that the Government need have settled the matter without referring to the House at all or asking the consent of the House, which might have been very easily obtained under the present circumstances, when they had only to ask for it to get it. It would have been mere courtesy to the House to go through the form. For my part, I should like to know what expense is likely to be entailed, and I think we ought to have been informed. I shall refer now to the case of McMurdo and Davies, those unfortunate men who were taken away from here a short time ago in one of the Imperial vessels of war. I do not mean to say that those men ought not to have been punished, but I say they were cruelly treated. The officers who were responsible for their gross treatment—I cannot use any milder term—ought to have shown some tenderness for them, when the great object of prosecuting them at all is to ensure moderate treatment for the islanders, whose privileges have in some cases been abused. Is not the meaning of those prosecutions the protection of the islanders, and to ensure for them something like decent treatment? And here are these men taken away, chained to the deck like dogs, not treated like men. There was one poor unfortunate man, a cripple and in bad health, who was chained to the deck of the ship like a dog for the public to look at; as if there was any necessity for this when the ship was lying in the middle of the river and there was no possibility of their escaping. If an armed force had come on board to rescue them, they might have been chained then. Did they expect that they would have jumped overboard and escaped before a boat could have overtaken them? The case is one of absolute brutality, and it is simply a disgrace to the officers of the Imperial Government that it was allowed at all. Apart from that, I think the treatment they received was rather hard. They were kept dangling about here for months, and had a number of witnesses here whom they might have had examined; they had their legal advisers here to defend them, and when they came here I believe they had some funds. They were taken away from their friends, to where they can get no counsel whatever; where no witnesses can be called in their defence, and if any witnesses are called at all they will be witnesses for the prosecution and tending to criminate those men; and under these circumstances I ask what sort of defence have those men a chance of making?

They are simply handed over to destruction; and before they were convicted they were chained like brutes to the deck of the vessel. English justice, sir, demands something more than that. It demands that men should be treated as innocent until they have been convicted, and I say that on the occasion to which I refer occurred the gravest violation of justice which has yet been made public in this colony. I do not think it necessary to say anything about the Land Bill to-night. A good deal more than was necessary has been said upon it already, and I think it better to refrain from discussing it until the proper time comes for discussing it; when it is laid before us and we know something about it. As connected with it, however, I cannot help referring to a very remarkable statement made by the Minister for Works, who looks so very wise to-night. We have been told that the Land Bill is to deal justly by everybody, and yet, in one of the speeches recently made by the Minister for Works, we were told that under its operations the land would bring in quadruple its present rent. I say it is absolutely impossible for the land to be made to produce quadruple the present rent without injustice being done somewhere. I am inclined to think the hon. gentleman spoke rather wildly, and we all know that dinner parties, especially in the middle of the day, when the sun is very hot, have a tendency to that sort of thing. Mention of the Land Bill leads up to another subject. A proposal was made not long ago—a most extraordinary proposal, and one which was extolled in the *Telegraph* as a truly grand design. The design and proposal was to take away the lands between the Museum and the Bridge and let them out for commercial purposes; to take away the lands round to the Garden Point, and treat them in the same way; to build a wall between the Gardens and the river, of course; no stores were to be built there immediately, but a tramway was to be constructed along the shore, and the ships could discharge their cargoes alongside of the tramway. Of course there would have to be wharves there then, and possibly in a very short time after, storehouses would have to be built, and in a little after that they would really have to cut another slice off the Gardens. I would point out that the *Telegraph* referred to the matter, not merely as a scheme which might take place, but in a tone of authority; and spoke of the whole thing as a truly grand design. What was the result? The mayor and aldermen did not seem to like it, and at a meeting held after it was mooted, they raised their voices in objection to it and the mayor was instructed to wait upon the Premier and raise an objection to the land being taken from them. He did so, and objected to the Gardens being interfered with and to land being taken which the corporation claimed. The result was that the Premier then found out what he ought to have discovered before, that the corporation had a just claim to the land, and so far from having the slightest intention to interfere with the Gardens in any way, he said he would himself be the very first to object to any interference with the rights of the people. Does it not look a little ridiculous to have the Government organ speaking with authority of this scheme as a particularly grand design, and next week for the Premier to say he knows nothing about it. Apart from that, the people of South Brisbane had to be considered in such a matter. They have a line running down to the wharves, and I have no doubt the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Fraser, had something to say about the matter. I am quite sure some little conversation of that sort increased considerably the forgetfulness of

the Premier, with regard to this "truly grand design," referred to a few days before by the *Telegraph*. We are told in another part of the speech that —

"The Revenue Returns for the last twelve months indicate a continuous and increasing prosperity. The manner in which the Loan recently offered in London was taken up affords ample proof of the opinion held in Great Britain of our wealth and stability."

I deny in the first place that the revenue returns do indicate an increasing prosperity. Absolutely the contrary is the fact, and I say the price the loan sold at in London indicates anything but good faith in our prospects. In connection with this I may refer to a speech made by the Colonial Treasurer a short time ago. In the speeches which that hon. gentleman made in going round his district he put the Government in the best position he could before the country, and the Colonial Treasurer also, though perhaps not unnaturally. He referred to this loan as very much better than that abominable loan which got the name of "the McIlwraith loan," and this is how he showed it: The first portion of the McIlwraith loan of £3,000,000 was sold in 1879, and brought, I think, about £92. The latter portion was sold in 1882, and that brought £100 0s. 0½d., and the way the hon. member proved that his own loan went off much better was this:—He struck an average of the prices at which the two lots sold, and by doing so made out that the average price of the whole loan was rather less than that which the last loan sold at. That was a disingenuous way of doing it, and it conveyed a somewhat false impression. Let us ask in what position the country was when the first portion of the McIlwraith loan was sold in 1879. The Liberal Government had just gone out of office, and they did not leave the Treasury in a very flourishing condition, but so much the reverse that it was considered the first portion of the loan had gone off remarkably well at a little over £90. That accounts for the deplorable sale of the first portion of the loan. But, sir, the McIlwraith Ministry remained in power for some years, and the finances of the colony somewhat improved in that time. From being a deplorable deficit they were gradually worked up into a surplus; then the surplus increased more and more, and not only that, but the country was in a most prosperous state from one end to the other. If this loan then brought over £100 0s. 0½d. per cent., it is quite possible that if the other portions of it had been kept back—if it had been possible to have reserved the whole of the three-million loan until 1882—it might have sold at par; and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that if the whole of that loan had been kept back it would have sold better than the loan that was placed by the Government the other day. But in order to make this matter more clear, I would point out that it is the normal state of things for a Liberal Government to go out of office leaving an empty Treasury; or more than an empty Treasury—a large deficit; while, on the other hand, it is the normal condition of a Government formed from this side of the House to create and leave a surplus on going out of office. In May, 1870, the Palmer Government came into power, and there was a deficit in that year of £23,000. There had been a deficit for each of the four years previous to that; and the very first year they were in power there was a surplus of between £3,000 and £4,000. In the following year the surplus increased to £137,000. In 1873, there was also a surplus of £158,000. In 1874, there was again a change of Ministry, and it had a most extraordinary effect upon the Treasury. This was the result. The Macalister Ministry came into power in January, 1874; at the

end of that year, the surplus of £158,000 in the previous year was reduced to £39,000. In the next half-year there was a deficit of £31,000, and in the following year a deficit of £51,000. It was then that the hon. gentleman who now occupies the position of Treasurer came into office, and I will do him the justice to say that he managed to effect a certain amount of reform. He took office in May, 1876, and in the following year there was a surplus of £67,000. The next year there was a surplus of £15,000, and the next there was a terrible falling off. The hon. gentleman seemed to fall away from his good ways altogether. In 1878-9, the deficit was £216,000. That was under the careful management of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Dickson). In January of the following year, the McIlwraith Government came into power. For the year 1879-80 there was still a deficit shown of £61,000, but the real deficit was £190,000, because in order to make the deficit appear small a sum of £129,000 was transferred from the Railway Reserve Fund. If that sum had not been added there would have been, as the result of the hon. gentleman's financial arrangements, a deficit of £190,000. From that time forward we have the extraordinary coincidence that again with a change of Government the finances began to improve. In 1880-1 there was a surplus of £266,000, but this was partly made up of £252,000 transferred from the Railway Reserve Fund. In the following year there was again a surplus of £218,000; in 1882-3 it was £66,000; and for the six months ending December last year, there was, as the result of the management of the late Government, a surplus of £218,000. I think there is something very remarkable about this. Whenever a Liberal Government comes into power the surplus rapidly vanishes, and continues to vanish, and when they leave office there is a heavy deficit; and as soon as the members on this side form a Government the deficit disappears, and there is a surplus year after year until the other party come in again. Is not that remarkable? And I am prepared to show that the same thing that has taken place before is now commencing again the very moment hon. members opposite come into power.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are no land sales.

Mr. NORTON: Land has nothing to do with it, as I shall show the hon. member by-and-by. The revenue for the last twelve months, we are told, "indicates a continuous and increasing prosperity." But the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has just published the Treasury returns, and when he made that statement he should have remembered that those returns were not only for the past twelve months, but also included the returns for the last quarter. Now, if there is "continuous and increasing prosperity," it is only natural to expect the last quarter's returns to be in something like proportion to the three previous quarters. But there is a tremendous falling-off, and the falling-off is in items which show whether the country is prospering or not. I think the revenue derived from taxation gives us as clear an indication as most other things as to the prosperity of the colony. For the whole year the revenue derived from that source showed in round numbers an increase of £98,000, while for the last quarter the increase was only £20,000, or, instead of being one-fourth, it is scarcely one-fifth. Territorial revenue I shall not refer to. There is a decrease, and that we expected. The policy of the Government was to make a reduction there, and it should not be included in my argument. Under the head of Railways the increase for the year was £106,000; and if

it had gone on at the same rate, during the last quarter, the increase would have been £26,000 instead of £14,000. There is an increase in Post and Telegraph, Harbours, and Escort Fees for the year, of £22,000, but for the last quarter, of under £4,000. Other receipts show an increase of £12,000 for the quarter, which is half that of the whole year. In the total revenue proper, the increase for the year was £182,000, but the increase for the last quarter was only £25,000. Does not that indicate more than anything else the prosperity of the country? Is that not a truer indication than any other matter which can be brought forward, because here we have no fictitious statement, but an indication which marks better than anything else the actual state of the country? Instead of going on with the continuous increase stated in the Speech, there is an enormous depreciation, which is only the normal condition of things when those gentlemen get command of the Treasury. That is too plain to be lost sight of, and the statement in the Speech is too palpably incorrect to be passed over in silence. There is an item at the bottom of the statement, "Refund for rejected pre-emptives, £76,878." Does the hon. gentleman know that, if the pastoral lessees refuse to take back the money, they can force the Government to give them the pre-emptives? It is childish to suppose that we believe the Government have only to say—"We won't take the money; you can have the money back." The legal members on the Government side must know that they can be forced to give up the pre-emptives, and even the Treasurer, if he looks into the matter, must see that they must grant the pre-emptives, the money for which has been received by Government. They are bound, not in honour, but in law, to give them up, and they cannot escape. The refusal to do so will only involve the country in enormous law costs, as in the case of the Gulf runs. Any man of ordinary common sense can see that what I have stated is correct, and I know that it is in accordance with the opinions given by gentlemen of the legal profession.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I should like to hear the Attorney-General's opinion on the subject.

Mr. NORTON: Let us now go to the other side of the accounts and see what is going on in the way of expenditure. For the whole year there is an increase of general expenditure, of £193,000. From the Loan Fund there is an increase of £461,000, from the Trust Funds an increase of £30,000, and from the Surplus Revenue Fund an increase of £40,000, making a total increase of £726,000. I am not going to say that the present Government are entirely to blame for that, but I say they know what expenditure is going on, and yet they have the assurance to tell the country in the Governor's Speech—in the face of an increased expenditure and a decided falling-off of receipts—that the country is in a state of continuously increasing prosperity. I say it is nothing of the kind, but just the reverse, and the Government know it. I must now refer to that loan. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson) congratulated himself very much on the splendid price our loan realised—I believe it was £96 10s.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £99 10s.

Mr. NORTON: Yes, that is the price. Now, let us compare that with the price received by South Australia. The population of that colony is rather more than that of Queensland; her finances were in a deplorable condition; she has now a deficit of nearly £400,000; and at the time the loan was actually floated there was a deficit of about £300,000; not only that, but there was a prospect of no immediate settlement

of questions of taxation or finance, but every prospect of a change of Government. Neither one side of the House nor the other had any settled fiscal policy. The late Government brought forward a system of taxation, on which they were defeated. They withdrew that system and proposed another. The members in opposition had some vague ideas with respect to taxation; but it was never known what they proposed to carry out and it is hardly known now. In fact, the state of South Australia was about as bad as any of the colonies ever has been—it was rather worse than Queensland was when the McIlwraith Government came into power. Its state was not only bad in that respect, but having last year introduced 4,000 immigrants, the condition of the colony was such that employment could not be found for them, and the Government had to provide relief to keep them from starving. But notwithstanding their position, and the fact that the indebtedness of that colony was pretty nearly as much as our own, the Government of South Australia put their loan into the market and received for it £100 6s., while Queensland, with an enormous surplus, received only £99 10s.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Having been compelled to come after South Australia by an unwise promise made by the late Government.

Mr. NORTON: I am glad the hon. gentleman has been betrayed into that statement, because it is absolutely incorrect. If the hon. gentleman had not been taking a nap, South Australia would not have gone into the market before Queensland. The hon. member appeared to be most anxious when the House last sat, that the loan should be floated at the very first moment. If he was so very anxious, why was not the loan offered to the public on the very day after he was freed from the condition as to time made by the late Government? But he was not ready. He was having a quiet nap; or else in his private office, attending to private land sales and portraying their allocations in such splendid colours as to make anyone believe the sites were equal to the Garden of Eden. He was doing one of these two things and had not time to attend to the public interests; consequently the loan was not ready as soon as it might have been. South Australia, however, took advantage of the hon. member's apathy; they were wide-awake, and they carried off a lot of the surplus money in the London market. To a certain extent I admit that our loan was a good one; but I say it was only a good one, with the understanding that it was badly managed, and that if it had been well managed it would have been quite as good as South Australia, and ought to have been better. Now, I have a few words to say with regard to the railway policy. We have not heard much about it, because there is an extraordinary reticence on the part of Ministers. When the hon. member for Townsville made a very able speech this evening, not a Minister got up to answer him. I think they ought to have had the courtesy to remember that that hon. gentleman has occupied a very prominent place in this House. There is no man who has shown more ability than he has, and, therefore, he ought to have received some reply. The Premier told us that the hon. gentleman's speech was too complimentary for the Government to answer, but that was a poor way of getting out of it. If it was too complimentary, surely it would have been a slight mark of courtesy, under the circumstances, if some Minister had got up, and just said that there was nothing to answer in the hon. member's speech, and that it was very gratifying to know that it was so complimentary. But there was

nothing of the kind; and I say it was an absolute want of courtesy to let an hon. member like him speak after the first Minister, and allow the speech to pass unanswered. The fact of the matter is that hon. members were afraid to speak after the speech of the hon. member for Townsville; that is about the size of it. The Treasurer looked at the Minister for Works and said, "You get up;" and the Minister for Works looked at the Treasurer and said, "You get up." I do not say they used those words, but they looked them. One was frightened and the other was afraid, and the result was that they sat there until my hon. friend and the member for Mackay got up simply because not a soul on the Government side was prepared to do so. I ask, is it decent? Hon. members must know it is not. Now I come to the railways. We have heard that we are to have early and vigorous action with regard to them. I don't know where the early and vigorous action is to come from; for we are aware that the Minister for Works has said that a good deal depends on whether the Land Bill is passed. We have the hon. member's own authority for saying that that Bill is to be passed before a railway is brought in. We are also told that the effect of the Bill shall be to quadruple the income which the land now produces. I am unable to see how that can be done under any possible condition whatever. Whatever the Land Bill may be, it is utterly impossible that the rents from the land will be quadrupled during the next four or five years; it is simply absurd. I think the hon. gentleman who said that must have wished he had not spoken like that, because the thing is so terribly absurd, particularly coming from a gentleman who has been connected with the land all his life. I remember him when I first went into the bush in 1852; he was not a youngster then, and he had been connected with the land a good while at that time. Can anyone believe that the hon. member has forgotten so much in connection with the land as to believe it would be possible, under any circumstances whatever, to quadruple the rents received from the land within three or four years; he knows quite well it is not possible. But I must refer to a statement made with regard to the income received from our railways. The hon. member who made the statement said that the net revenue received from our railways would more than pay the whole of the interest on the cost of their construction. I say that that is as grossly incorrect as any statement could possibly be. Instead of returning 4½ per cent. on their cost, I will undertake to say that our railways do not return 2½ per cent. Does the hon. member think that anyone who knows anything at all about it will accept his statement as an absolute return from the railway expenditure, except as a statement from departmental returns? And hon. members all know that they are nothing but departmental returns. They know perfectly well that the Commissioner for Railways is responsible for the money he expends; he has nothing to do with the raising of loans; he is responsible merely for the money entrusted to him; and he does not concern himself about the cost of money. We know that some of our money was raised at a little over £80; for some of the money expended on our railways we have got, for every £100 debenture, somewhere about £80. Now, are we to drop that £20 altogether and not take it into consideration? I maintain that there is not one loan for railways which has been yet placed for which we have received par, except that one in 1882. But when the money is first raised, we have in the first place this absolute loss, and in addition to that we have the interest from the time the money is borrowed until the railways are constructed

and begin to give returns; and we have many other things which are not included in the railway account at all. Is the cost of the carriages and waggons included in the returns as part of the cost of the railways? We have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds that are not taken into account, and yet the two gentlemen who ought to know more about the subject than anyone else absolutely say that the railways are giving a net return of 4½ per cent. upon the cost of construction. Under the circumstances, I think the hon. gentleman must see that I am justified in saying that the railways now completed are not paying 2½ per cent. on the cost of construction. I did intend to say something about the arbitration case of Mr. Wade's. We ought to have had some reference to that in the Speech. It is a matter of unusual moment, because it is departing not only from the ordinary manner in which the business of the Railway Department is conducted, but it is going altogether beyond the law. I do not intend to say much about it now, because the member for Townsville has called for the papers, and when they are laid on the table I will be quite prepared to go fully into the matter. It is a matter that requires a great deal of explanation. I know that evidence was not taken for the Government as it ought to have been taken. It was never even asked for, and I know also that it was most important evidence. The time will come when we will have to reckon these matters up, and I will only say now that if under ordinary circumstances this matter looks suspicious, how much more so does it look when taken in conjunction with the Minister for Works' promise to be good to his friends? I hope the hon. gentleman has not paid that money yet, because there will be a jolly row over it. I say, the hon. gentleman cannot pay it without the sanction of the House. That money must be voted, and if it is paid before it is voted I warn the hon. gentleman that he will catch it. I intended to say something about that unfortunate land transaction at Clermont, but, as the Minister for Lands has confessed that he made a mull of it, I do not intend to say anything more except this: that the hon. member's first promise to protect Mr. Higson's claim ought never to have been given. But he made another mistake. When advised that the improvements had been increased after the promise had been given, he recognised then Mr. Higson's claim for further improvements. I say that Mr. Higson had no more claim to that land than a blackfellow, and no man who takes up land in that way is entitled to any further consideration than to be allowed to remove his improvements. I am glad the hon. member has spoken so plainly about this affair, but there is no doubt a grave mistake was made, and I think that he was in duty bound to withdraw the promise; or, if he felt bound to keep it, I think he should only have kept it to the extent of allowing compensation for improvements already on the land when the promise was made. There is nothing more I wish to refer to to-night. There were one or two other subjects I had wished to refer to, but they have been spoken to very fully by others, and, under the circumstances, I shall say nothing further about them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said; The hon. member for Port Curtis has broken out in a fresh place to-night. This is the first occasion he has come out on finance, and if he cannot make a better fist of it than he has done I should advise him to leave it alone. Before I proceed any further I wish to state, clearly and distinctly, that there was no discourtesy intended to be conveyed to the hon. member for Townsville. His speech was so

considerate that there was really nothing to answer; and there was no desire on the part of the Government to take up the time of the House in replying to what the hon. member said. There is one other thing to be regretted, and that is the attack made by the other side upon an absent gentleman, who, I am satisfied, has the respect of a large portion of the community—I refer to the Hon. Mr. Garrick. He has been described as a lazy, indolent booby, and I am sure those who attack him would not dare to do so had he been present to defend himself.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Nonsense.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would advise the hon. gentleman to keep himself quiet.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am not at all likely to take your advice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The members of the Opposition have called this side to order for interruptions, and I hope that they will set a good example themselves. I now come to my predecessor, who was about the worst Minister for Works who was ever in office. He has taken me to task for some speech I made at Adavale, and he has credited me with the statement that our railways paid the interest on the borrowed money. What I really did say was, that, taking into consideration the advantages the country derived from railway communication, they were doing more than paying interest on borrowed money. I freely admit that there are several branch lines partly constructed that are rather a drag than otherwise; but they cannot be expected to pay until they are carried a certain distance to secure the traffic. The hon. member for Port Curtis is one of those dreamy individuals who, I am afraid, hardly knows what he speaks about. He has come to the conclusion that the Government is going to erect wharves round the Botanic Gardens. Never was such a statement made by the Government, and whoever made the statement made it without authority. Then the hon. member referred to the lines of railway that are to be constructed, and said that I made it a condition—that I threatened—that unless the Land Bill was passed there would be no public works. I am prepared to repeat that now, and I will repeat it as often as I get up in this House. But he has entirely misquoted me on the subject. I did not say the revenue from the land would pay the interest on money borrowed, but that the Land Bill would encourage settlement, and the increase of population would assist to pay the interest on loans. The statements made on this matter are only part and parcel of the charges brought against the Government. We are accused of repudiation and everything that is illegal. I am perfectly satisfied, however, that if the hon. Minister for Lands remains in office for four years, the charge which has been made against an hon. member opposite will never be made against him.

Mr. ARCHER: Will the hon. gentleman be kind enough to address himself to the Chair instead of addressing hon. members on this side of the House personally? He has no right to address my hon. friend on this side. I insist upon the rules of the House being observed.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the duty of every hon. member to address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Speaker, you have given some extraordinary rulings to-night.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Chair, Chair!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If you think you are going to gag me you are mistaken.

Mr. ARCHER: Will the hon. Minister for Works kindly address the Chair instead of my hon. friend?

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I often wonder why it is that, when a little slip takes place on our side of the House, someone on the other side gets up to call attention to it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Every hon. member ought to address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am exceedingly sorry, and apologise to the hon. and venerable member for Blackall. I can assure the hon. member that these interruptions are made for a purpose—to cause a little confusion, and interrupt me in my speech.

Mr. ARCHER: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman broke a rule of the House. I called attention to it, and had no motive whatever in doing so except to make him obey the rules of the House. It is a breach of the rules to impute motives to me, and I ask the ruling of the Speaker on this question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has no right to impute motives.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Would you allow me, Mr. Speaker, to ask the hon. member for Blackall, through you, what he means? I really do not understand him. I have had the honour of a seat in this House for nearly twenty years, and during the whole of that time I have never met with such silly interruptions as have been made to-night by the hon. member for Blackall. I do not know whether the hon. member is losing his senses. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members opposite have a very bad case, and they do not know what to do to make the best of a bad job. I was charged to-day by the hon. member for Mackay with not proceeding with the construction of a bridge over the river at Mackay. Well, in answer to that I may state that, owing to the Divisional Boards Act coming into operation, there was not a single officer in the Works Department competent to design that particular bridge, as well as several others. True, a bridge was designed by the Harbours and Rivers Department, but it was to have wooden piles, and I came to the conclusion that it would be an unsuitable bridge to be erected there, as its piles would very soon be destroyed by the cobra. I did not think there was any pressing necessity for building the bridge, because the people can cross the river without any difficulty. Therefore I thought it better that I should take time, and endeavour to secure the services of a first-class engineer for the purpose of designing not only this bridge, but others also. A sum of £30,000 was voted some time ago for a bridge at Mackay, one at Townsville, and another across the Annan River, but the amount is not sufficient. I am quite sure that by the time there is sufficient money available to build these bridges, the designs and plans will all be completed and tenders invited for the work. I think it is better, even if it is delayed a month or two, that the work should be done substantially and not in such a manner that it will be carried away by the first flood. I can promise the hon. member for Mackay that when the bridge to which he referred is built, it will be a bridge for all time. My hon. friend the Premier has communicated with the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria, requesting them to recommend a good engineer for the purpose of designing all these bridges. I believe the Government will have to undertake to build all bridges of any importance in the colony. I am satisfied that the divisional boards have not the means to do it, and I intend to recommend the Government to put a sum on the Estimates for the purpose of assisting divisional boards to carry out large works which they are unable to undertake themselves. Therefore there will be constant employment for an engineer of that description. Some hon. member

charged me with not having carried out a railway which had been authorised by the previous Government from Bowen to Haughton Gap.

Mr. NORTON: Authorised by the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All I can say is that if the House authorised it they did not know what they were about. In connection with that matter a deputation came down from Bowen urging the Government to push on this railway. My reply to them was, that I thought it something extraordinary that a railway should be built for the purpose of connecting with the Northern line, when they already had communication on the sea-board. I thought there was something wrong about it, and I could not see what would justify such a work, unless the land was of such a quality that you could have close settlement which would make traffic for the line. I believe there is such a place somewhere as Haughton Gap, but nobody seemed to know where it was. As I understood it, the line was to connect with the Northern line so as to get a share of the Western traffic. Surely we are not mad enough to build a line to compete with one already in existence! Instead of being fit for close settlement the land there is the most miserable and wretched I ever travelled over—swampy, flooded country, only fit for grazing cattle, and it can never be turned to any other purpose. It is true there is some good land about half-way, at a place called Inkerman, but I found that the whole of the land had been alienated at 5s. an acre. There is no doubt in my mind that the object of the previous Government was to build a line to Inkerman, and from there to a place called Ayr, to enhance the value of that land which they got from the country. I believe they dummed a good deal of it, for I am told the conditions were never complied with. There is something suspicious to my mind about the name of Ayr. I decided to look into the matter closely, and, after making every inquiry and getting the fullest information, I found that the line was never intended to go to Haughton Gap at all, but was simply to be made to enhance the value of this land. If they had succeeded in carrying that railway there at the cost of the country, those “dunmiers,” as I call them, would have pocketed something like half-a-million of money out of the speculation. As far as lies in my power I will do my level best to put a stop to it, and I did not hesitate to tell them so. I am prepared, however, to recommend the Government to build them a line to a coalfield which I believe to be the best in Queensland, which will be a profitable undertaking, and of which the State will reap the benefit. We have heard a great deal about the Government repudiating the right of pre-emption and driving capital out of the country. I can quite understand the hon. member for Normanby complaining about this, because his income has fallen off—there are not so many pelicans to be plucked. It is a big firm, that of Morehead and Company, and they are only looking after their own interests. Whenever they get wind that a pelican is on his way here they look after him, put him up as an honorary member of the Queensland Club, and shepherd him carefully until they have done with him. I can quite understand the hon. member for Normanby complaining about capital being driven out of the country. I am almost inclined to agree with the Minister for Lands that we are better without those people. I have met some of those victims; I remember well that some time ago a certain person drove up in a cab—he was not, however, one of the firm of Morehead and Company—and, pointing to a man, he said, “That is Mr. So-and-so, the purchaser of So-and-so.” I am not going to

mention names. I happened to say, “God help him!” when he said, “Don’t say a word about it; the bargain is not quite closed.” Those are the sort of people the hon. member for Normanby is grieving over, and I can quite understand it. A good many men have invested their money in that Western country, by whom Morehead and Company have benefited. I am not imputing motives; they were simply doing their business. They are sharp business men, and they take precious good care that they never lose their “pelican” until they have plucked him. I have said, and repeat, that unless the Government can pass a land measure to induce people to come and settle in the country, and so help to pay interest on our borrowed money, I am afraid the large public works policy contemplated by the Government will have to stand over for a time. If such a measure is passed, I am satisfied that we may increase the population by at least 100,000 within the next eighteen months or two years.

Mr. ARCHER: 100,000 in eighteen months!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can quite understand the hon. member for Blackall nodding his head. He does not want population—to his mind it is a disturbing element; but we will try our level best to bring people and endeavour to settle the lands, so that they will be able to make an honest living and not be paupers. I know I have been abused and charged with trying to strangle this Divisional Boards Bill. Well, I know a divisional board pretty well in funds, where a resolution was moved by one of the members that a deputation should wait on another member, to ask if he was willing to sell a certain property for the use of the board as an office or place to hold their meetings. As a matter of course, the deputation waited on the member, and the end of it was that they bought a whole lot of ricketty buildings for £1,700. I only wish I had the power to stop it. They had the use of the Town Hall at a rent of 5s. a month, and, not satisfied with that, they squander away the money among themselves in the purchase of property they have no use for. Local government is very desirable, but I am afraid that this Bill will require very great amendments before it is useful to the country. The hon. member made some allusion to the Premier intimating to me that I should not say any more, but I assure him he was mistaken. I am perfectly satisfied to continue the endowment.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about doubling it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have pledged myself to do all I can to continue the double endowment, because it would be utterly impossible to carry on the improvements unless the boards had two to one. I am prepared even to go further, provided they do not pester me to do their work. I will tell you that I would sooner see the endowment three to one than have it reduced. I do not think I have anything further to say, Mr. Speaker. I must apologise to you if I have said anything unparliamentary—if I have, it is entirely caused by the hon. member for Blackall. There is really something wrong with him to-night, which I cannot understand, unless it is softening of the brain.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor be taken into consideration at the next meeting of the House.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I am empowered by His Excellency to say that His Excellency will receive the Address in Reply from this House at

half-past 3 to-morrow. I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn till to-morrow afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Mr. STEVENSON said it was an old saying that if you gave a lie a start you would probably never be able to catch up to it. The Minister for Lands had accused him of saying something that was not true. He was talking at the time of the forfeitures in the Cook district. He (Mr. Stevenson) had said that the hon. gentleman sent out a circular to the licensees of the runs in that district, intimating to them that their lands were forfeited, and accusing them of having acquired the lands by misrepresentations. He instanced one case to prove his statement, and said that the hon. gentleman had acted wrongly, because he could prove that the runs had been taken up according to the spirit of the Act, if not according to the letter; that a certain number of cattle had been bought and placed on these runs, and that a certain amount of money had been expended in improvements. The hon. gentleman had had the hardihood to turn round and say that that was untrue. He (Mr. Stevenson) was prepared to show that his statement was correct; he was prepared to produce evidence that the gentleman he had alluded to—a gentleman named Watson, from Victoria—had bought 1,500 head of cattle; that those cattle were taken up to the country; that the country was taken up according to the Act; and that the improvements had been made as he stated. He could prove by to-morrow that what he said was correct. The hon. gentleman further said that he did not send out a circular saying that the runs were forfeited, that he had not accused the licensees of misrepresentation, and that he had only sent out a circular asking the licensees to show cause why their runs should not be forfeited. By the time the House met to-morrow he could produce the hon. member's own circular to prove that he never asked the licensees to show cause, but that he actually forfeited the runs and accused the licensees of acquiring them by misrepresentation. He should like to know what the hon. gentleman had to say to that; and he warned the hon. gentleman that in future, notwithstanding any excitement of the moment, he had better be careful how he accused hon. members of the House of making statements that were untrue. He should not dwell upon the statement which had fallen from the hon. the Minister for Works. That hon. gentleman told the country that the members of the firm of Morehead and Company were sharp business men. That he quite believed, and would like further to say that he would like to teach the Minister for Lands a lesson in connection with his department—that Morehead and Company could advertise runs to be sold without stock, without those runs having been acquired by perjury or fraud. He could point out to the Minister for Lands, that even the Minister for Works sold a run the other day without stock, and he did not, he hoped, acquire that run by perjury or fraud.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I rise to a point of order. I never sold a run without stock.

Mr. STEVENSON said, if he was wrong he accepted the statement of the Minister for Works; at the same time, Morehead and Company often sold runs and leases of runs without stock. They made arrangements that the stock were to be removed; but they were there at the time of the sale and they stayed there until the purchasers put other stock on. It showed how thoroughly intractable the Minister for Lands was, and that he knew nothing at all about his department. As he had said, the Minister for Lands was stuck on a piece of land, with a few

head of cattle, holding a large area of country. As was pointed out the other day by a writer in the *Courier*, he held a large area of country, with a few aborigines, and accused other people of doing this, that, and the other, while he really knew nothing about his own department. He was surprised at the ignorance of the hon. gentleman; as if country could not be sold without stock as well as with stock. He hoped he had said enough to show that what he had said was perfectly correct, and he was prepared to produce documents to-morrow to show that the Minister for Lands was not correct in his statements.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are two forms of circulars issued, one for the lessees or leaseholders of the Cook, and another, that is now being issued to the leaseholders or lessees in the Burke and Gregory; and those were the forms in which they were called upon to show cause. In the others, they were charged with misrepresentation; at the same time it was open to them to explain how it was that their stock returns under the Brands Act did not accord with the amount of country that they held as being stocked. Those who will be able to make that explanation will not be interfered with; and those who will not, will have their runs forfeited. As to the remark the hon. gentleman made just now—a very insulting remark—that I hold a run now with a small number of stock, that it is not stocked in accord with the requirements of the Act: I may say that I hold about 600 square miles in the Leichhardt district, not all of it first-class land, with about 12,000 head of cattle. Hon. members will know whether that is well stocked or not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I certainly should not have risen had it not been for the remarks of the Minister for Works, which I think he will admit were very injudicious. I do not think this has anything to do with Morehead and Company, and I do not think the discussion should have been raised by the Minister for Works. I have only to express my regret that he should have made the attack. It is one which I am sure he will be ashamed of, and, if persevered in, will only lead to attacks upon any member of this House who is in business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." I can tell the hon. member a great deal more, and give him names. I have purchased runs from Morehead and Company myself. I have no desire to rake up these matters, and never make any attack upon anyone unless I have been attacked. When a man attacks me I will retaliate, I do not care who he is; but I will confine myself to facts, and can give many more cases. The hon. gentleman knows I have purchased runs from him; but I always did it in a sort of way that I was perfectly safe. I did not buy the licenses; I bought the leases, and they were bound to protect the leases until I could put my stock upon them. I always like to do things sure and certain. I do not want to rake up these things; but the hon. gentleman has to thank the hon. member for Normanby for the attack.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I rise to a point of order: has not the hon. gentleman already spoken to this motion?

Mr. ARCHER: I have only to say that if the Ministers continue to make personal attacks of this kind the House will never adjourn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not commence it. If the hon. gentleman caused me to speak the truth he has only himself to blame.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he thought it ought to be laid down as a hard and steadfast rule in the House that no reference

whatever be made to private matters in any speech. He hoped they should hear no more of it.

The PREMIER: I wish to call the attention of hon. members to the importance of forming a quorum before half-past 3, so that we may attend at Government House at that hour.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 12 o'clock.