

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Tuesday, 2 September, 1884.*

Questions.—Formal Motions.—Succession Act Declaratory Bill—third reading.—Highfields Branch Railway.—Bills of Exchange Bill—committee.—Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Bill—committee.—Health Bill—second reading.—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. FOOTE asked the Minister for Works—

1. Are the Blue Metal Quarries at Bundamba Sidings reserved for the purpose of supplying the Government only with ballast and stone?

2. Is the Corporation of Brisbane allowed to obtain metal or stone ballast from said quarry?

3. Have the said Corporation a right to dispose of the ballast or stone so taken from the said quarry to contractors or others?—if so, to whom?

4. Is the crushing machine used at the said quarry for breaking metal the property of the Government?

5. If so, do the Government intend to let the quarries with the crushing machine by tender?—if so, when?

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

1. Yes.

2. Yes, under certain restrictions.

3. No such right has been granted to the Corporation by the Railway Department.

4. Yes.

5. Not at present.

Mr. FRASER asked the Minister for Works—

1. Is the Government in possession of any report, by Government Geologist Jack, on the Cloncurry?

2. If so, have they any objection to lay the same on the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The Government are not in possession of any report on the Cloncurry by Mr. Jack.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Works—

What progress is being made with the survey of Railway Extension to open up the country west of Maryborough in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

Over forty miles of the Mungah to Gayndah trial survey are completed, and the survey party has recently been strengthened to complete the balance, which is estimated at about forty-five miles more. An alternative survey from Isis to Gayndah, about sixty-five miles, will be proceeded with in a week or two, or as soon as the permanent survey from Howard to Bundaberg is completed.

Mr. GOVETT asked the Minister for Works—

When is it the intention of the Government to call for tenders for the construction of the section of the Central line of Railway from Jericho to Barcaldine?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The Chief Engineer has been instructed to prepare working plans and sections, and tenders will be invited as soon as the funds are voted and the plans, etc., sufficiently forward.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Colonial Secretary—

If the Government intend, during the present session, to introduce a Bill for the erection of abattoirs, and for the better supervision and control of slaughter-yards and noxious trades in the vicinity of Brisbane or other large centres of population?

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

I do not expect that the Government will be able to introduce a measure dealing with the subject during the present session.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. SMYTH—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, the evidence taken at an inquiry held by the Chief Engineer (Mr. H. C. Stanley) in the District Engineer's office, Maryborough, on the 11th day of March, 1882, in reference to the competency of Mr. John Drysdale to act as inspector for the new wharves, Maryborough.

By Mr. FOXTON—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, copies of all Correspondence and Papers relative to the application by Mr. A. B. Jones for a license or lease of the run or block known as Gundare in the Warrego district.

By the Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House, the Reports of the various Railway Surveys made from Herberton to the coast or from the coast to Herberton.

By Mr. CHUBB—

That the House will at its next sitting resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the laws relating to jurors, and to amend the Jury Act of 1867.

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend to the House the necessary appropriation for defraying the expenses likely to be caused by such Bill.

SUCCESSION ACT DECLARATORY BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. CHUBB, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

HIGHFIELDS BRANCH RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to move the motion standing in my name, I may inform hon. members that the proposed extension is 17 miles 68 chains from Cabarlah to Crow's Nest, the total length of the line being about 29½ miles from the Junction, and about 35½ miles from Toowoomba. I may mention to hon. members that on the present line only three trains run per week. The length of the first section is 11 miles 52 chains 47 links, and practically it reaches nowhere. I believe one of the principal objects for which it was constructed was conveying timber, which it was expected would be the most reliable traffic upon it. But the line does not reach the saw-mills by a considerable distance, and will not do so until it gets to Crow's Nest. There is, I think, a balance of £40,000 available for the second section. At present the line is a distinct loss, as there is not sufficient traffic for even three trains per week; and I think hon. members will agree with me that if it is to secure the timber trade it should be extended. The mill-owners have informed me that they cannot engage carriers to carry timber to where the line is completed; so that there is no timber traffic at all on the line at present, and will not be until it is carried out to the extent I have indicated. I have already stated that there is a balance of £40,000 available for the work; but of course it will be necessary to make a further provision before tenders can be called for. I may also mention to hon. members that the cost of construction will be between £3,000 and £4,000 per mile. This line will be a much better one than the portion already constructed. There will be no gradient more than 1 in 50, and no curve sharper than five chains radius. I therefore move—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Highfields branch of the Southern and Western Railway, from Cabarlah to Crow's Nest township, as laid on the table of the House, 21st August, 1884.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the Minister for Works, in moving the adoption of plans and sections in this House, should have said something more than he has done; in fact, he has told us absolutely nothing. If, instead of moving the adoption of plans and sections, he was now asking for the money, I am sure the money would not be voted. The only reason he has given for the proposed extension is that the line at present does not pay; that it was intended for timber traffic, and until it reaches a certain point no timber will be carried on the line. That was not the reason for the construction of the line, but because it runs through one of the best agricultural districts on the Downs. And the extension can be justified in exactly the same way—on far higher grounds than stated by the hon. gentleman. The reason given by the then Minister for Works was that the line would run through one of the best agricultural districts, and, what is more, that it was part of an alternative line to Ipswich. The line can be defended on much better grounds than those taken up by the

Minister for Works. I should like to know something about the particular route the line will take, of which we have heard nothing at all. We know that at the last general election there was a contention as to the best route, between the candidates for the district, and I remember quite well the prominent part taken by the Minister for Works. There is no alternative line shown on the plans, however, and I am utterly in the dark as to what line is proposed by the Government. The Minister has said absolutely nothing about it, although the question was keenly contested and the personal honour of some Ministers implicated. No information has been given as to which of the lines the Minister has adopted. I have to object to the matter being brought forward at all to-day. I do not see the Colonial Secretary in his place; but there was a distinct understanding on Thursday night that the notice-paper would be arranged in a certain way; and this matter was not mentioned then. I did not object when I saw the Minister getting up, but I certainly hope this is not going to be a precedent. If the Premier makes an arrangement with the Opposition that certain business shall be carried on, he ought to stand by that arrangement. The Orders of the Day are arranged as were agreed upon on Thursday night—the Health Bill, the Defence Bill, and the Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill—any of those three. And here we come into a matter of contention, in which the Minister has not deigned to give us a single word of information.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—In defence of this particular line of railway, on which the hon. member for Aubigny is perhaps better qualified to speak than myself, I may say this is one of those lines which is, to a certain extent, the extension of a line which has been already commenced, and which goes now as far as Cabarlah. The Minister for Works, in speaking of this matter, has stated that up to the present time there has been little or no traffic upon this line; and by the railway returns I find that is really the case. But I remember that when this line to Cabarlah was advocated it was stated by the then Minister for Works that it was what might be considered to be an agricultural and timber line. I think that those were pretty nearly the words. Of course by that we understand that this line would be a convenience to agriculturists, and also be the means of convenience and profit to the country and the timber merchants. Now, the Minister for Works has already stated why, as yet, at all events, this line has not been of much service to the mill-owners. The mills are at a considerable distance from where the present terminus is, and it is well known that the more things like timber are handled the more expensive they become—that the profit of timber, as well as coal and other things of that kind, will not stand numerous handlings. And it has been found that the timber can be taken in from the yards at the present time to Toowoomba, almost at a less cost than that for which it can be conveyed to the terminus, and then to Toowoomba by the line. As far as the agricultural state of the district is concerned, there has been really no agricultural produce to send in, but I make very little doubt that, even on that portion of the line which has been already constructed, in favourable seasons a considerable quantity will be sent in, and there will be far more traffic on the line. However, when this line is continued to Crow's Nest, I make no doubt whatever that it will be fairly payable. If I mistake not, the neighbourhood of Crow's Nest is surrounded by good agricultural land, which will be taken up

and used for that purpose. A fair amount of settlement will therefore take place round about. Another thing, as the leader of the Opposition has mentioned, it will form part of an alternate line to Ipswich. This line, I believe, will go in that direction, and considerable traffic will then result. I hope no opposition will be shown to the motion.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—It is not very long since that the House was asked to approve of the extension of the Southern line from Stanthorpe to the border. The Minister for Works when he made that motion gave the House about as much information as he has done in regard to this line to-day. The only information he has given us to-day in addition to that which he gave in regard to the Stanthorpe extension is the estimated cost; but surely the House ought to know something more than that! Does the hon. member himself know anything about it? Can he give the information to the House, or can he not? Surely the Minister cannot, as he did in proposing the Stanthorpe extension, say that the country has been so long accustomed to the question, and know so much about it, that it is unnecessary to give any information to the House! He cannot tell us that. There are members in the House who know very little about the extension to Crow's Nest. I dare say most hon. gentlemen who were members of the late Parliament have some idea of what was said when it was proposed to vote the money for the line; but a great many are here who know nothing of what took place then. And even members of the old Parliament know nothing more than the reasons given for the proposed line when the money was voted. We have not heard one word to-day about gradients, curves, or any of those most important subjects.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are stating what is not correct. I did mention those facts.

Mr. NORTON: I apologise to the hon. member. The hon. member spoke in such a low tone of voice that I certainly did not hear him say anything about the gradients, nor did other hon. members on this side. We know that other surveys for this line have been made, and the hon. member did not tell us the reasons that led to the selection of this particular one. I know that two plans were prepared, but which of the two has been selected, and why, nobody can tell. This is much on a par with what took place on the other occasion; we have certainly a little more information, but it is very little. There is a great difference between the way plans are put before the House now, and the way they were put before us by the late Minister for Works, Mr. Macrossan. They seem now to be put before us merely as a matter of form, and unaccompanied by any information. I do not know what to say about these plans, because I do not know which plans they are. I know that when I was in the Works Office the plans of two surveys were put before me, with a strong recommendation from the engineer in charge that one of them should be adopted. Whether this is the one I cannot say; and I cannot say more on the subject, because we have not the necessary information before us.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that I can add anything to what has been said by the hon. member (Mr. Aland) with reference to the traffic on this line. I have always been led to believe that the line proposed to be adopted was recommended very strongly by the engineer who surveyed it to the Works Department of the late Government; and I was always under the impression that they accepted that recommendation, and that it was their intention, had they remained in power, to carry that recommendation into effect.

Mr. NORTON: We want the Minister to tell us which survey it is that we have before us.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL: As the line is at present it is comparatively useless. When the timber-getters get their timber on the drays, they prefer to bring it all the way into Toowoomba by road, to unloading it and putting it on the trucks for a short portion of the journey. If the line is extended, no doubt the whole of that traffic will go by rail. Indeed, if extended to Crow's Nest, only a short time will elapse before there is a considerable trade in log timber between that place and the mills near Toowoomba, which will form a large increase to the traffic on the line. The work is a very desirable one, and there are many people in the locality and beyond it, who are looking forward to being able to send their produce by the line in time to come. If the line is extended as proposed, I have no doubt that it will become a reproductive work.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not get up with the intention of opposing this line. I see by the last report of the Commissioner for Railways that this line is going to be a very great loss to the colony. At the present time, as far as we can see, it is a loss of about £1,000 a year. The gross receipts taken upon the line during the first four months after it was opened were only £190, while the expenses were £429, and no arguments have been urged, showing that it is ever likely to pay. When we consider the loss on working expenses, the wear and tear of rolling-stock, and the interest on the £30,000 expended on its construction, we ought to have some guarantee that the country will have some return for its outlay. This is not the only branch line on the Southern and Western Railway that does not pay. There is the Fassifern line, and there are one or two others, which I consider a loss to the colony. There is, no doubt, force in the argument that lines of this kind should be constructed where there is a large population settled; but in this case, whatever the population may be, there cannot be much agriculture carried on, judging from the very small item of receipts under that particular head of traffic on the line. I want the House to remember that there are scores of places in the colony—places largely populated—where lines are required—lines which will certainly begin to pay as soon as they are constructed; and, as we seem prepared to pass a line like this almost without a single word, I trust that when some of the other lines I have referred to come before the House they will be treated in a fair and impartial manner.

Mr. BEATTIE said: Mr. Speaker,—I remember that when this subject was brought before the House in, I think, the session before last, there was a great deal of discussion as to the route which the line should take. According to information given by the members for the district, the line, when it reached a certain point, was going to give a very large return. The Minister for Works informed us at the same time that two or three surveys had been made, and the members for the district expressed themselves strongly in favour of one survey in preference to the others. Which of them is it that we are asked to decide upon to-day? I do not know whether it is the one that met the approval of the members for the district, who, of course, have more local knowledge than other hon. members who do not live in the vicinity. I do not look upon a line of eight and a-half miles as one likely to give a very large return, until it is extended further. Even some of the railways into the interior do not pay working expenses, and will not until they are extended a little further. Personally, I should like to have had

more information about this proposed extension to Crow's Nest, so as to have been able to see what chance there is of its resulting in a largely increased traffic. Such information would have satisfied members like the hon. member for Rockhampton, who thinks the construction of eight and a-half miles of railway is a waste of money, if we are to stop there. We certainly must go further into the district. I understood the Minister to say that the ruling gradient of the line was 1 in 50. It strikes me that when the question was discussed one of the proposed routes was declared to be impracticable, as the ruling gradient would be a great deal stiffer than 1 in 50. I cannot understand why they should be so particularly fond of keeping up that gradient. It strikes me that in the surveys that have been made the surveyors must, as the hon. member for Stanley once said, have had "curves on the brain." I think it is time some alteration was made in the manner in which railways are constructed. In the lines near Brisbane it seems to me that the engineer must have been afflicted with "curves on the brain." The Sandgate line, for instance, does not, I think, reflect credit on anyone in the profession. I certainly have very little confidence in an engineer who cannot give Ministers more information than he appears to have given in this instance. I can understand that the Minister for Works cannot know everything in connection with the construction of every line in the colony; but he has professional advisers, and they ought to give all the information that hon. members are entitled to have when they are asked to assent to the adoption of plans and specifications.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I can hardly allow a statement made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley to pass unchallenged, because it reflects a good deal on the credit of the colony. He said that there was scarcely a line going into the interior which paid working expenses. Now, I do not know a single line which does not pay more than working expenses. The line which pays the least is the Dalby and Mitchell line; that pays at least nearly 2 per cent. over working expenses.

Mr. BEATTIE: For a long time?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: For a long time it has done so. It did so while I was in office. I believe it pays equally well, if not better, at the present time; therefore it does not do to make random statements of that kind. We should remember that statements made here are read not only by people in this, but in the other colonies, and sometimes in England; and we should not disparage our own railway system. I quite agree with what the hon. member has said about curves. Anyone who travels over the Maryborough and Gympie Railway must come to the conclusion that the surveyors who made the survey, and the engineer who adopted it, could not have seen straight, because I believe that the line could have been shortened by some miles, and have taken advantage of the traffic. The same thing may be said of the Sandgate line. The Minister for Works should, I think, have given us a great deal more information. I remember the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government once describing a railway plan laid on the table as a line on a blank sheet of paper; and that is what we have here. In addition to the plans laid on the table, the Minister should be prepared with all the information which hon. members may require. It is quite accessible to him. He cannot get it himself unless he asks for it; but if he had demanded a history of the surveys of this line made at different times he would have avoided this discussion. We are not objecting to the construction of the line—at least I do not object to it, nor, do I think, does anyone on this

side of the House; but we complain of the absence of information. No one, by looking at that plan, can tell what route has been adopted. I cannot tell by looking at the plan, although I have been over the line myself. It was a matter of great contention when I was in office, and, I believe, after I left office; and therefore it is very desirable that we should have the information asked for. As the hon. member for Port Curtis said, this absence of information has happened before, and especially in connection with a line which has been passed—that to the border. I was not in the House at the time, but I recollect reading *Hansard*, and I was astonished at the ignorance displayed by hon. gentlemen with regard to that line. I think any Minister should be ashamed to come forward and ask for a proposed line while knowing so little about it. A chief engineer is expected to supply information of that kind; and if he cannot do so he ought to be sent about his business. But it is the fault of the hon. gentleman, not of the engineer; because if the hon. gentleman were to ask for the information he would get it. He ought to have been able to tell hon. members which of the routes has been adopted—whether that demanded by the different sawmill proprietors, or—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You ought to know very well.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I should like to know how I can know; that is the very thing I am asking, and what other members are asking. If I knew I would not ask. It has been said that the line was made to carry timber; but the carriage of timber only comes in incidentally; it was intended for agriculturists. The carriage of timber would help the line; but it was intended for agriculturists, and ultimately as an alternative line from Toowoomba to Ipswich. I do not think we can expect branch lines of any description to pay, except to a watering place, such as Sandgate. Hon. members may depend upon it that every branch line we make will take away from the profits on the main line; and the only way in which they pay is indirectly by opening the country for settlement, and by afterwards causing an increase in the population. I do not think that hon. members should, like the hon. member for Rockhampton, object to this branch line because it does not pay; it is the same with all branch lines, with the exception, as I have said, of the line to Sandgate, which goes to a watering place. There is not a line in Queensland which has paid from the beginning, with the exception of that from Townsville to Charters Towers, and that was because it went to a goldfield where the people had plenty of money and could afford to travel. I hope the Minister for Works will give us the information asked for. If he has not got it I hope he will get it, because it is a matter on which any Minister ought to be prepared to give all the information he has.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—This is not the first time the Highfields line has come before this House. Whether it is one of those political railways we heard so much about from the leader of the Opposition when he was stumping the country, I do not know; but I know that the late Government got a sum of money to build a railway from Toowoomba, or some other point on the Southern and Western line, to Crow's Nest; and the fact that there is a balance of £40,000 from that proves that very clearly. As to the route taken, the hon. member for Townsville must know very well that the line is already carried beyond the point originally fixed. How could I go back and take the other survey? This line runs along the Main Range, within

about fifty chains of the sawmills, and terminates at the head of Cressbrook Creek. I can give the whole description if hon. members are anxious to have it:—Width of land required, 1 chain. Area of land required, as per book of reference: from private owners, 159 acres 1 rood 38 perches; Crown lands, 4 acres 3 roods 29 perches; roads, 6 acres 12 perches; altogether, 170 acres 1 rood 38 perches. Level crossings provided for at 10 roads; roads closed, 13; roads diverted, 6. I can give any amount of information of that kind; but I am sure it is not interesting to the House, and I should like to know what good it will do them. I can only tell hon. members opposite that there could be no other line taken, because it has already gone beyond the point where the second survey branched off. We could not go back and take another survey. If this were the first time the railway had been before the House, I could quite understand hon. members wanting all that information. I did not wish to be understood as saying that the line was constructed solely for the sake of the timber trade; it is not exactly that, but weight was attached to the fact that there would be a considerable amount of traffic from timber. Hon. members must know perfectly well that a branch line eleven miles in length cannot possibly be expected to pay until it is extended to a point where it is likely to get a fair amount of traffic. There is not a single branch line that is paying more than working expenses: and naturally so, because these lines do not accommodate sufficient people to make them remunerative. I have no doubt when they are extended farther they will, at all events, pay working expenses, and give some better returns for the money; but a line eleven miles in length, particularly in a sparsely populated district, cannot be expected to have a very great amount of traffic. I repeat that I do not know what more information hon. members want. If the matter were before the House for the first time, of course every information should be given; but the House has already consented to this line and voted the money, and I only want authority to extend it to Crow's Nest. It would not interest the House very much if I were to give all the levels. I can only state that the steepest gradient is 1 in 50, and the sharpest curve five chains radius.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What is to be the cost of the line?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the hon. member has a right to ask that question. I have the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate, but I do not think I should publish it to the colony.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why not?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be between £3,000 and £4,000 per mile. I do not see why contractors should have the information supplied to them through answers to questions put by the hon. member. I have no desire to give the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate. I can only say, in a casual way, that it is between £3,000 and £4,000.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I may explain that it has always been the practice in this House for the Minister for Works, when asking for the approval of a proposed line, to intimate to the House its probable cost. It is not to give the Engineer's estimate: that is a different thing entirely, and is made up of a number of items. We want the lump sum the railway is estimated to cost. It has always been given; and the Engineer's estimate without the items is of very little use to any contractor.

Question put and passed.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE BILL—
COMMITTEE.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's message, of date the 26th August.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the only alteration in the Bill since it left that House would be found in clause 97. The Legislative Council had struck out the words in section 97, "other than a cheque." That amendment was carried in this House. Under the circumstances he moved that this House do not insist upon the amendment.

Mr. BEATTIE asked if the words printed in black letter did not constitute an addition to the Bill.

The PREMIER: We struck those words out, and the Legislative Council disagreed with our amendment.

Mr. BEATTIE: And they have inserted them again?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would ask the Attorney-General to give them some reason for asking the Committee to agree to the alteration in the Bill. He had given them none, but possibly when he had consulted the Premier he would be in a position to give them the required information. They certainly could not accept what he had said as any reason for agreeing to the alteration.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he made the objection to a cheque being drawn for less than 20s., and that view seemed to be considered so reasonable by the House that they agreed to the amendment affirming that a cheque should not be drawn for less than 20s. He believed it was undesirable that cheques for small amounts should be circulated, not only so far as bankers were concerned, but chiefly because it interfered with the revenue, and was a violation of the Stamp Act. He was still of opinion that it would not only lead to a loss of revenue in that way, but it would also interfere with the issue of postal notes and money orders. He would himself much prefer to see the amendment insisted upon, but he considered the Bill a very useful measure in connection with bills of exchange and promissory notes; and it was undesirable that it should be lost by their insisting upon the amendment preventing the issue of cheques for less than 20s. That was the reason his hon. colleague moved that they should not insist upon their amendment, and he gave his sanction to it for the same reason. It was on his motion that the amendment was originally introduced, and though he still thought it undesirable to issue cheques for less than 20s., as thereby they would lose a certain amount of revenue—such cheques not coming under the Stamp Act—he should be sorry to see the Bill lost, and he withdrew his objection on that score.

Question put and passed.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist upon the amendment in clause 97; the report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE
MARKS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill.

The PREMIER said the first amendment was in clause 10 in the last paragraph. It was a verbal amendment, the words "recommend that a patent be granted" having been substituted for the words "seal a patent." The amendment was correct, as the Bill provided for patents being granted by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Registrar. The English Act from which this Bill was taken provided for its being done by the Registrar himself. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he might as well take that opportunity—though, of course, he had no intention of raising a discussion on the Bill again—to express his dissent from the whole Bill. He was very sorry it had come before the House in his absence, because he had expressed himself very clearly before upon the subject. From his knowledge of the Colonial Secretary's Office, he could only say that he never saw that any good was likely to come from reducing the amount for patents. He had never seen in what way the Patent Act assisted inventors in this country. Patents had been granted to monopolists at home for the purpose of blocking the use of useful inventions that might have been made here. There might be more justification for the granting of patents at home, because there were a large number of inventors there, but ninety-nine out of every hundred of the patents taken out here were simply registrations of what had been patented at home, and ninety out of those ninety-nine were not taken out by the parties who were the inventors. The whole system was a farce, and the principle on which the amount payable for the registration of a patent was reduced was absurd, because the £20 which had hitherto been charged was never sufficient to enable the Government to pay experts from whom they could learn whether they were safe in saying to the inventor, "Your rights are for the future thoroughly protected." The consequence was that a patent was always granted as a matter of course, and if the Speaker or any hon. member had, under the old system, come to the Colonial Secretary's Office and asked to be allowed to patent his coat or his hat, there would have been no difficulty in doing so. As he had before said, the only effect of the patent laws of this colony had been to grant privileges to monopolists. He simply rose now for the purpose of entering his protest against this Bill at all. The present Act was bad, but it was not nearly so bad as this Bill, and he must therefore express his disapproval of the whole principle of it.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER said the next amendment made by the Council simply omitted part of clause 42, which did not properly belong to it, and converted it into a separate clause. The two matters were entirely separate, and he did not know how they had got together unless it was by a printer's error. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the new clause 43, inserted by the Legislative Council, be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER, in moving that the Chairman leave the chair and report to the House that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments, said he took that opportunity of saying that he was sorry to hear the hon. the leader of the Opposition express his disapproval of the Bill. He thought it was a measure which would encourage and assist inventors to make their inventions known in the colony. That was the generally received idea and he believed it was

correct. The hon. gentleman was wrong in supposing that anything could be patented. Patents were occasionally refused, although much greater care was required to be exercised in granting them than had been the practice. To his knowledge patents had been refused within the last few months. He thought that inventions were often of such advantage to the public that the principle of granting protection to new inventions should be recognised, as had been done in older countries.

Question put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported to the House that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.

HEALTH BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill deals with a subject of very great importance, and is one which I think all members of the House are equally interested in passing into law. We have at present no satisfactory provisions for maintaining the public health. The Act of 1872 is the only measure on our Statute-book dealing with the subject, and it simply provides for the appointment of a central board of health, with power to make regulations, and for the appointment of local boards of health by a system of nomination by municipal councils. The Act is only operative when it is proclaimed, and a proclamation only remains in force for six months, so that it has to be renewed continually from time to time. Its operation was found to be so unsatisfactory that the late Administration declined to proclaim it any further, and I am not at all disposed to differ from them in their action in that respect. The only other laws now remaining in force with respect to the public health are those contained in the Local Government Acts empowering the different governing bodies to make by-laws for the regulation of the public health. These provisions are neither sufficient nor satisfactory. There is no doubt that a great deal may be done, and has been done in many countries, for improving the public health by satisfactory legislative provisions. The attention of the Imperial Parliament has been called to the subject for many years. They have passed various Acts, and there is no doubt the public health in the great cities of England has immensely improved since these measures have been in operation. The Act now in force in England was passed in 1875. It is an extremely voluminous measure—about four times as long as this Bill—containing provisions to meet almost every conceivable case. It has not been found necessary to amend it except in one small particular, and its operation has undoubtedly had the effect of preventing the extension of infectious and contagious diseases to a very large extent. This Bill is founded, not altogether, but almost entirely, upon the Imperial Act; but, as I pointed out, it is very much shorter—not more, I think, than one-third or one-fourth its length. The scheme of the Bill—and I think it is the best one—is to entrust local authorities with the administration of the laws relating to health. I think that is a function that may very properly be left to them, and if they are not fit to administer it they fail in one of their most important functions. At the same time, I think there ought to be a central or supervising authority to look after them and see that they do their duty; and that central authority should have power, if the local authorities dangerously fail in the performance of their duty, to perform those duties for them and at their expense. In England, the operations of the Health Act are entrusted to the Local Government Board which

is a committee of the Privy Council. We have no board here corresponding to that; but it is necessary that there should be some central authority. Therefore, we propose that instead of it being the Governor in Council—that is, the Minister in charge of the department and his colleagues—there shall be a board to assist the Minister in that respect. In that regard the Bill is not altogether a departure from the present system, as to the Central Board of Health. I will refer more particularly to the powers of the board later on. We propose that the Bill should at present be in force in the more populous municipalities and divisions; taking power to extend it to other divisions or municipalities as required. The municipalities enumerated are Brisbane, Bundaberg, Charters Towers, Cooktown, Gympie, Ipswich, Maryborough, Roma, Rockhampton, Toowoong, Toowoomba, Townsville, and Warwick; which are the most populous municipalities at the present time, and the places in which the greatest loss of life has occurred from diseases that are now recognised to be preventable, especially typhoid fever, which during last summer proved more deadly than many diseases that are regarded by the public with much greater alarm. Probably typhoid fever is as deadly a disease as smallpox, although it is not regarded as so dangerous. There is no doubt that typhoid fever—although no one pretends to know all about it yet—arises from filth, and its extension is enormously diminished in proportion as filth is removed. I consider, sir, that it would certainly be worth our while to spend a little money and a great deal of attention to preserve the lives of people in the colony, considering that we willingly spend so much to bring them here. The provisions of the Act will also be in force in the divisions of Booroodabin, Toombul, and Woollongabba, which are really parts of the city or suburbs of Brisbane; and in any other places as occasion may require. Power is also given to suspend the operations of the Act if necessary. It is also proposed that, where this Act is in force, the provisions of the Local Government Acts, giving powers to local authorities, shall be suspended; but that the by-laws made before this Act shall remain in force as if they had been made under the authority of this Act. The central board is to consist of the Minister and not less than seven other persons, of whom three are to be medical practitioners. Power is proposed to be given to them to hold inquiries into any matters requiring investigation, and to make orders as to the cost of such inquiries. The most important function of all is the power to enforce the performance of a duty by the local authority. If the thing to be done is simple, power is given to make the local authority do it; but if not, the central authority may do it themselves and charge the local authority with the expense. The 16th section provides for cases of emergency:—

“In any case of emergency the board may, if ordered by the Governor in Council so to do, exercise all or any of the powers by this Act conferred upon a local authority. In any such case the expenses incurred in the execution of such powers shall be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.”

That is a most important provision, because in many parts of the colony the local authorities might not be able to be summoned together suddenly, or they might not have sufficient experience to do the work; and in cases of that kind the board are to undertake the work as being the most capable body. The third part of the Bill deals with sanitary provisions. I do not suppose that it is desired that I should go exhaustively into the different clauses. The first deals with sewers and drains; the word “drains” in the Bill being

used to signify drains for draining one building only, or premises within the one enclosure, merely communicating with a cesspool or with a sewer. A "sewer" includes drains of every description except those which are defined as "drains," and is any general drain draining several properties. These provisions are adapted from the Health Act at present in force in England, but in a very much abbreviated form. Power is given to make or enlarge sewers, and take them through private property, if necessary, under the provisions of the Local Works Land Resumption Act, which provides for the compensation of the owner. Power is given to the local authority to compel the owner of private property to drain it properly, and it is expressly provided that no building is to be erected in a municipal district—that is, a town or shire—without proper provision for drainage. I believe that the open drainage in the streets that we see about here has had a very great deal to do with the prevalence of disease during hot weather. Then there are provisions for the protection of sewers and for the disposal of sewage; and local authorities are empowered to take land beyond their districts for that purpose. Take the case of Brisbane. There is no doubt that a different system will have to be adopted here, and the sooner it is adopted the better. The question of privies, water-closets, etc., is also dealt with. I need not describe particularly all the provisions. It is proposed that the statute shall declare that it is the duty of every owner of a building to provide proper accommodation of that kind, and provisions are contained for enforcing it. Passing on, we come to some clauses dealing with the subject of scavenging and cleansing. The local authority, it is proposed, shall have power to undertake that function itself or to require individual owners to do it. It is also proposed that the local authority may be required by the Government to undertake that function. It would probably be better performed by the local authority under its own supervision than under the system of contracting. The 48th and 49th sections are very important ones also, especially the 48th, which empowers the local authority, on certificate of the health officer, to have a house that is unfit for human habitation, by reason of its filth or dilapidated condition, pulled down or destroyed; an analogous power to that existing in Sydney, where it has been used with great effect. It is no uncommon thing to read that the mayor of that city has inspected various parts of it and directed that certain buildings be pulled down. It is not proposed to give the power to the mayor alone, but to the local authority, on the certificate of the health officer. The 49th section empowers the local authority to require that buildings unfit for human habitation shall be cleansed or purified. Then there are other provisions as to offensive collections of matter. I pass on to Part IV. of the Bill. It deals with the regulations of cellar dwellings and lodging houses. The regulation proposed as to cellar dwellings is not to allow them at all. We do not want any underground dwellings in this country. No doubt they are extremely unhealthy. I believe that some exist in Brisbane, and it is quite time that they were stopped. In reference to "common lodging-houses," the same expression is used in the Imperial Act. The term is perfectly well understood as indicating lodging-houses open to anybody that may come or go. It may occur to hon. members, as it has occurred to me, that this term should be defined; but on investigating the matter I find that no attempt has ever been made to define it, and I think it is sufficiently

understood not to require any special definition. It is a question, to my mind, whether the provision ought not to apply to all lodging-houses, of whatever class they may be. Common lodging-houses are places where anybody can pass in and ask for a bed, and get it for the payment of a small amount.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Would the Australian Hotel be a common lodging-house?

The PREMIER: No; that is an inn. It would never be called a common lodging-house. I mention the difference, because I am disposed to think it would be well to apply this provision to all lodging-houses. Those provisions are not in force, as far as I know, in any of the Australian colonies. They will enable local authorities to deal to a great extent with houses of ill-fame. This is the manner in which an attempt has been made in some English countries to deal with that subject. Persons will not be allowed to take in lodgers unless their house is registered, and the local authorities can refuse to grant a licence to unsuitable persons. A distinction is drawn between lodging-houses and houses let in lodgings. Of course, those are houses let in rooms. Clause 70 empowers the Governor in Council to declare this portion of the Bill to be in force in any district, or part of a district, by proclamation. In this respect I have adopted the provisions of the English Act. A very important provision is contained in clause 65, which requires the keeper of a common lodging-house to give notice to the health officer of any fever or infectious disease occurring in his house. Part V. deals with nuisances and food. At the present time, nuisances can only be prevented by a proceeding at the suit of the Attorney-General, or by an action at the suit of any person specially aggrieved, and cannot be dealt with in a summary proceeding. By this Bill, it is proposed that all cases of common nuisances, which continually occur, and which are injurious to health, should be dealt with in a summary manner. They are defined in section 72 as—

"Any pool, ditch, gutter, watercourse, privy, urinal, cesspool, drain, or ashpit, so foul or in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health.

"Any animal so kept as to be a nuisance or injurious to health.

"Any accumulation or deposit which is a nuisance or injurious to health.

"Any house or part of a house so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of the inmates, whether or not members of the same family.

"Any factory, workshop, or workplace, not kept in a cleanly state—

Or not properly ventilated; and any fireplace or furnace, which does not, as far as practicable, consume the smoke arising from the combustibles used therein; and any chimney, not being the chimney of a private dwelling-house, sending forth black smoke in such a quantity as to be a nuisance. These are matters which it is proposed shall be dealt with summarily. Proceedings are to be taken at the first instance by the local authority or their officers. Provision is made that, on the receipt by the local authority of any information respecting the existence of a nuisance, notice is to be given to the person, by whose act or default the nuisance arises, to abate it. If he will not do it, then they may summon the person before a court of petty sessions, which may make an order for its abatement. The local authority may enter the premises to which any order relates and abate the nuisance, and, in a summary manner, recover the costs of so doing from the person by whose default the expense has been incurred. Then any person specially aggrieved may make complaints as well as the officers of the local authority. This is provided for in section 85. Some provision is

there made with regard to offensive trades, which are not to be allowed to be carried on within a municipal district without the consent of the municipal authority. This provision is much wanted in this colony. Section 95, and the following sections, deal with unsound meat and unsound food of any kind. I have often wondered why we have never had such a law before. Part VI. deals with infectious diseases. Section 99 authorises local authorities to cause premises to be cleansed and disinfected, and to direct the destruction of infected bedding and clothing, and such things. It also provides for taking sick persons to hospitals. That is a very important power. It is a power which, of course, will not always be exercised by the local authorities, but power is given them to make by-laws directing persons to be removed to hospitals. Probably that power exists now under the Quarantine Act, under which the Governor in Council may make the necessary order. Then there is the provision in section 105, making it penal for a man infected with any infectious disorder to expose himself in any public place without proper precautions; or dispose of, without previous disinfection, any bedding or clothing which has been exposed to infection from any such disorder; or to use a public carriage for carrying persons suffering from an infectious disease. Section 109 deals with epidemic diseases, and gives power to make regulations as to the treatment of persons affected with cholera, or any epidemic, endemic, or infectious disease, and for preventing the spread of such diseases. Those regulations are to be made by the board and approved by the Governor in Council. If there is any danger to any part of the colony—if it is threatened with any formidable epidemic—the board may make regulations for the provision of medical aid and accommodation, and for otherwise guarding against the spread of the disease. Then provision is made for the local authority to see to the execution of regulations. Then come provisions for the payment of medical officers, to which I need not call particular attention. By the 115th section a heavy penalty is imposed upon persons who wilfully violate the regulations or obstruct the performance of duties. The 7th part gives municipal authorities power to provide slaughter-houses. That is the only provision in that direction I think it is possible to make this session. Whether the municipal authorities will make such provision I do not know. At present, I believe, it is their idea that the Government ought to undertake the functions of slaughter-houses. Probably the business would be profitable if properly managed, and it may be left to the municipal authorities. Part VIII. deals with officers and the conduct of business. Part IX. provides for the payment of expenses, which are to be paid out of the fund of the local authority. Power is given by section 122—a most important power, I think—to levy health rates. They are to be made in the same way as ordinary rates, and the same endowments are to be payable in respect thereof. Any objection to this would be a short-sighted objection. It would pay us, even as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, to try to preserve good health amongst our people. To the provisions of the 123rd and 124th sections I wish to call particular attention. The 123rd section provides that, if the local authority declines to do its duty, and the board is compelled to perform the duty instead, the expenses incurred by the board in performing the duty shall be deemed to be a debt incurred by the local authority, and payable by them, and a rate shall be made for the purpose. The work has to be done, Mr. Speaker; and if it is not provided in that way it will have to come out of the Consolidated Revenue. I hope no such power as that will

require to be enforced. If the work is too large to be done by rate, power is given by section 124 to enable the Colonial Treasurer to advance, by way of loan, the sum necessary to carry it out; and the municipal or divisional fund is charged with the repayment of the loan, in the same way as in the case of other loans made to municipal bodies. The 10th part of the Bill deals with legal proceedings. They are the usual provisions, and I need not explain them in detail. All the clauses are necessary to prevent any objection that might be taken to proceedings under the Bill. The 11th part of the Bill contains some miscellaneous provisions. I should have liked to make the Bill shorter than this, if possible. Of course a long Bill always creates a certain amount of disinclination to read it to begin with. I have cut it down as much as possible, but all the provisions are so important for the preservation of the public health that I did not see my way to omit any of them. A great many others might have been inserted, as may be seen by comparing it with the Act in force in England to which I have already referred. I hope that we shall be able to pass this Bill during the present session. I have every reason to hope that it will be as successful as the Act in Great Britain, where the state of the public health has greatly improved since the Legislature compelled the local authorities to set themselves deliberately to remove those causes which have led to the spread of infectious disease. I now move the second reading of the Bill; and I may say that I hope to receive from every hon. member all the assistance in their power, in order to deal satisfactorily with this important subject.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I have some objection to this Bill on the ground that it might be shorter than it is. The English Act is made, according to the opinion of the Premier, as applicable to the circumstances of the colony as possible. No doubt a good deal has been done in the last few years towards the preservation of the public health. The Divisional Boards Act, and other Acts conferring self-government, have all had that as a special part of their provisions, and a good deal of attention has been paid to it, with considerable effect. It was quite plain, however, to me, when I was Colonial Secretary—and no doubt it has appeared to my successor—that there was something wanting which I believe this Bill supplies—some means of stimulating the activity of these local authorities when the public demanded it, and possibly they were not inclined to act. There was also another deficiency, and that was that there was no central authority that could quicken them to action. That is the only practical way in which it can be done—by having a central board of health, the chairman of which will be of course the responsible minister—a board having full power under the Bill to put all the clauses relating to the public health in the various municipal Acts into operation, besides the powers given to local authorities by this Bill itself. It is a matter of considerable difficulty to adapt English Acts to the circumstances of this colony, but I think it has been done in this case as far as possible. I must say, however, that after considerable application I could not see my way through those clauses applicable to common lodging-houses. The Premier referred to the difficulty of defining common lodging-houses; but that is a matter of detail that will come out in committee. Attention will have to be paid to the side-notes also. There is one difficulty, of course, which a Bill of this sort should try to avoid—that of interfering unduly with what are called obnoxious trades. The English population is so crowded that the Act there requires to be more severe than the Act here. At the same

time legislation in the colonies is far more inclined to be severe on obnoxious trades than there is any justification for. I do not believe that in such a town as Swansea or Glasgow such an Act as the Health Act of Victoria would be possible. Take for instance this:—

"Any fireplace or furnace which does not, so far as practicable, consume the smoke arising from the combustible used therein, and which is used for working engines by steam, or in any mill, factory, dye-house, brewery, bakehouse, or gaswork, or in any manufacturing or trade process whatsoever; and any chimney (not being the chimney of a private dwelling-house) sending forth black smoke in such a quantity as to be a nuisance:

shall be deemed to be a nuisance liable to be dealt with summarily in manner provided by this Act."

That applies to engines on the railways, and to any steam-engine in the colony; and I do not see the use of including them. When we come to this clause we shall have to pay particular attention to the matter to which I have drawn the attention of the House—putting obstructions in the way of industries which are considered obnoxious. Instead of that we should give every possible encouragement to the industries of the colony. I need not say that I consider the Bill a good one. So far as I have been able to examine it, it will be a wonderful improvement, when passed, compared with the present law in that direction; and I see no reason why it should not be passed with a fair amount of speed, consistent with the careful attention it must receive while going through committee. All the clauses have worked well at home. The power that is given to the central board and the Government is necessary to be passed at once. The formation of a connecting link between the Executive and the divisional boards is a thing that is very much wanted, and I believe this Bill will supply it.

Mr. BEATTIE said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad to see the Government introduce a Bill of such importance as this, dealing with the public health of the various centres of population throughout the colony. At the same time I do not think they have been quite explicit enough with reference to the powers vested in local authorities, nor have they given those bodies opportunities of complying with the measure, which, if passed, will be a good one. The Bill is too long for me to go through the whole of the clauses, but I have made a note of one which was referred to by the leader of the Opposition—that with respect to common lodging-houses. In looking at clause 63, I notice that a common lodging-house is one that shall be whitewashed from time to time. I do not know whether that is a definition of a common lodging-house or not, but, if all the information I receive is true, there are many that will take a great deal of whitewashing to make them clean. There is one matter which I wish again to bring under the notice of the Premier, as I had the honour of bringing it under the notice of the late Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith; and that is, that you are not giving power to local authorities to grapple with the disposal of any filth and rubbish within the different municipalities and divisions. The chief difficulty I find—and I have heard it complained of over and over again by the local authorities—is, where are you going to deposit filth and rubbish? That is a question which the Government must certainly take into their consideration. Wherever large centres of population exist, they will have to set aside some particular place for that purpose, and that purpose alone. If not, it will be perfectly useless to talk about preventing the dissemination of disease. We have a proof of that in the epidemic

which swept over the whole of Brisbane last year, when everybody was crying out about the fearful scourge of typhoid fever. There was a difference of opinion amongst medical men and local authorities as to the causes of that fever; but those who have lived for many years previous to the system of earth-closets being introduced know very well that in those days, and under those conditions—although, of course, the population was not so crowded as now—we never heard of any of those extreme cases of fever. And I maintained, when the new system was introduced, that unless it was properly managed fever would arise within our midst. That has been the case. Let us take the case of the northern suburb of Booroodabin, which is mentioned in the Bill; and I speak of Booroodabin because I am more intimately connected with it than with any other portion of Brisbane. The whole of the filth of the southern part of the city, of the city itself, and until lately of Woollongabba and Kangaroo Point, is emptied into that small but largely populated division. There is something radically wrong if that is going to exist, and all the Health Bills in the world will never do any good until we get that evil removed from our midst. If that subject is grappled with, there will be nobody more anxious to see the Act administered in its integrity than the local authorities in centres of population, for they all desire to have healthy people living in their several localities. But until some better plan is devised for depositing this filth, they will certainly not be able to carry out this measure as they ought. At the present time the division of Booroodabin is calling for applications for removing the filth out of their midst, and it is a very serious thing for them to undertake. They have petitioned the Government, over and over again, to remove the manure dépôt, and I am sure I am not going to be one to advise the members of that board to continue it where it is. Either land must be set aside in all populous districts for the purpose, or a better system of depositing it—and I do not think the present system is the best—must be introduced. If that is done, the local authorities will be glad to see this Bill become law, and will do all in their power to make its operation effective.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think clause 52 will be found to apply to what the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has referred to, as far as the sanitary information of the day is capable of solving the difficulty. I find that the central board, under this Bill, is constituted on nearly the same lines as the corresponding board under the Act of 1872; and I do not think any hon. member will contend that that board carried out its duties in such a satisfactory manner as to be continued under the measure now under consideration. I know that there are many places in Brisbane—lodging-houses in particular—that are unsafe residences; their very aspect alone speaks for the way in which the board have carried out their duties. I suppose many hon. members will ask how a Health Bill applies to the pastoral districts; but I am sometimes a lodger in towns, and have to stay in lodging-houses, although I belong to a pastoral district. Clause 58 says that no person shall receive a lodger unless the house is registered in accordance with the provisions of this Act. How will that affect members of a family, some of whom lodge with their parents? I believe the clauses dealing with lodging-houses will be very much altered in committee. There are several that seem to me to require it. For instance, to insist upon having a sign painted, and put up, "This is a common lodging-house," will be rather repugnant to some of the first-class boarding-houses in Brisbane. In the

English Act there is a specified limit to the room that shall be given in lodging-houses to each individual. The limit is 250 cubic feet. In Dublin it was raised to 300 cubic feet. Such limitation in a hot climate like this might be very well introduced. I think everyone will admit that such a Bill as this has long been called for; and I believe the thanks of the community will be given to the Premier for having introduced it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot allow the second reading of this Bill to pass without expressing my great pleasure at its introduction. It deals with a great many nuisances; but it omits one which appears to me to be as great as any that are dealt with. I do not know whether it has any right to be in this Bill; but I maintain that one of the greatest nuisances in Brisbane is the building of houses on small allotments. It is a nuisance which is likely to affect the public health, because, if you put half-a-dozen houses on one allotment, or, perhaps, on half-an-acre of land, they are packed in such a way that the prevention of disease is almost impossible. I think, therefore, that some provision ought to be introduced into this Bill, preventing allotments being cut up into such small portions as twelve, fifteen, or even twenty perches. I am informed that some are as low as eight perches. If that is not done, then I hope that at the earliest opportunity a Building Act will be passed for that purpose. There are a great number of nuisances to be dealt with. One of them was referred to by the hon. member for Mulgrave, and also by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—that was in reference to smoke from smoky chimneys, and so forth. In passing along the streets, I have had to suffer more from people smoking bad tobacco than ever I have had to suffer by smoke from chimneys. You cannot go into an omnibus or a railway carriage, but you will find gentlemen who are ungallant enough to smoke in the presence of ladies. I think that the nuisance caused by smoke coming from smoky chimneys might almost have been left out of the Bill. If smokers could be compelled to consume their own smoke—as this Bill proposes shall be done with chimney-smoke—it would be a very good thing. I was rather amused at the hon. member for Fortitude Valley when he spoke about nuisances. He asked where they were to put the refuse that caused such a nuisance at Bulimba and other places. I look upon refuse as good manure; and if it were utilised it might be made profitable to the State. I see no reason why all the refuse from the whole of the city should not be carried down the Brisbane River to some place where it could be made into good manure and sold to the farmers. In reference to another nuisance—persons found drunk in the streets—they are simply taken to the watch-house until they get sober. I think that something should be introduced into this Bill to give some kind of power with regard to these persons. Public-houses ought to be so regulated that if they produce a nuisance of that kind they ought to take care of it; if they make a man drunk they ought to take care of him until he is sober. I think there ought to be a law that any persons made drunk in a public-house should be supplied with straw there until they got sober. As I have already said, I am glad the Bill has been introduced, and I hope it will pass. It is a very long one, and, having only recently come into our hands, we are not in a position to criticise it very closely; but I suppose in committee we shall do so, and that there it will be so altered as to make it a really good measure.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a long and, I think, a good Bill; but there are one or

two points in connection with it which I think require consideration. I would direct attention, in the first place, to the matter of common lodging-houses. I do not see the difference between common lodging-houses mentioned in the 57th clause and houses let in lodgings, referred to in clause 70. There does not seem to be any distinction, and I think that it is impossible to make a difference; at all events, it appears to me that, if there is a distinction, it is a distinction without a difference. There really is nothing to guide anyone as to the difference in the Bill as it now stands. Another point I would like to draw attention to is in clause 37. I refer to earth-closets. I think it is the most filthy, disgusting, dangerous practice ever instituted in any civilised community; and I believe it has been the means of spreading disease far and wide where it never existed before. Until that abominable practice was adopted, typhoid fever was hardly known here. Wherever it is practised—and I am sure no such enactment was ever in force in any civilised community before—typhoid fever has spread, and will continue to spread. I should like, therefore, to see those words expunged from the Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think myself that some very serious matters have been pointed out by the hon. member who has just sat down, and the other hon. members who have spoken on this subject. I see a great difficulty with regard to the definition of the term "common lodging-houses." We are told by the Premier that it is a phrase well understood but not easily explained. If it cannot be explained to hon. members of this House, how will it be understood by people outside? Looking at these clauses dealing with common lodging-houses, it appears to me that it would be very hard on some well-known houses—such as "Longreach," say, though that has ceased to exist as a lodging-house—if the proprietor were compelled to put up a notice that "This is a common lodging-house." I should like to know whether such a place as "Longreach" was would be a common lodging-house within the meaning of this Bill?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, those things require more explanation. There are numbers of people who augment their incomes by taking in one or two lodgers. There are hundreds of families in Brisbane who do this. Are they keeping common lodging-houses?

The PREMIER: No. They are dealt with in the 70th section.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It ought to be made very much clearer—a very much plainer definition should be given than that in the Bill as it now stands. With regard even to what are known as common lodging-houses, some of these clauses appear to me to be very arbitrary. The 67th clause reads:—

"Any keeper of a common lodging-house who * * * fails to make a report, after he has been furnished with schedules for the purpose in pursuance of this Act, of the persons resorting to such house on the preceding day or night"—

shall be liable to a penalty. That seems to me to be introducing a sort of inquisitorial system, which, up to the present time, has not been sanctioned by any measure of this kind. It appears to be pushing inquiry to the point of interference with the liberty of the subject, and is quite opposed to the old idea that an Englishman's house is his castle. Any person who kept a common lodging-house—whatever the interpretation of that phrase may be—would simply be at the beck and call of the officer of any local authority—municipality or board of health—who might choose to interfere. The 81st

clause seems to me a very extraordinary one. I do not know in whose hands the duty of offering this particular commodity for sale will be; the clause may commend itself to some auctioneers, but I do not think there would be a rush of business. With regard to what fell from the hon. member for Leichhardt as to this part of the Bill, I quite agree with every word he said. A more filthy and disease-creating system has never been introduced into any community than that system, as worked in the city of Brisbane; and the sooner steps are taken to abolish it the better. I am perfectly well aware that two members of this House are deeply interested in its continuance; but, if they choose to make their money in that way, that is no reason why the people should suffer. Let the valuable deposit be taken to South Brisbane, or to the body that the hon. member for Bulimba is chairman of, and let them divide it amongst themselves. They will then have an opportunity of seeing that it is got rid of, to the vast advantage, not only of the community, but of themselves. I shall assist the hon. member in every possible way to prevent the continuance of this nuisance, and disease-creating grievance.

Mr. CHUBB: I certainly do not rise, sir, to oppose this measure; I shall do all I can in committee to assist in making it as perfect as possible. Some reference has been made to the expression "common lodging-houses," of which the Premier said no satisfactory definition had ever been given. That is quite true, but I find in Chitty's Statutes a reference to common lodging-houses, which may be useful. He says—

"The Act contains no definition of common lodging houses, but in 1853 the law officers advised that the term as used in the Common Lodging Houses Act of 1851 consolidated by this Act"—

that is the Act of 1875, from which the present Bill is taken—

"had reference 'to that class of lodging-house in which persons of the poorer class are received for short periods, and though strangers to one another (*i.e.*, lodgers promiscuously brought together), are allowed to inhabit one common room.'"

That appears to be the best definition which can be given to the term.

"They were also of opinion that the term did not include hotels, inns, public-houses, or lodgings let to the upper or middle classes, and that the period of letting is unimportant. With regard to the keeper, they advised that if the owner neither resides in the house nor exercises control over its management, but simply receives the rent, he cannot be considered the keeper; but that where the owner, though not resident in the house, either in person or through an agent, colourably or otherwise exercises control over its management, he must be considered the keeper."

The 64th section of the Bill provides that the keeper is to give a report of the persons who have resorted to the lodging-house on the previous day. The corresponding section of the Public Health Act, upon which this is based, makes this compulsory upon the keeper of a common lodging-house "in which beggars or vagrants are received." Of course we may assume that these words have been omitted from the Bill because we have no beggars or vagrants in this colony. The object of that section appears to be not only to enable the authorities to exercise control over this lowest class of houses, but to serve the very important purpose of enabling the police to know where many of the criminal classes are in the habit of resorting, so that they may put their hands upon them when they are wanted. I shall support the Bill.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to prolong the debate, but I wish to say that I am very glad indeed that this Bill has

been brought before the House, and I hope it will be passed during the present session. There was a time when Queensland was considered to be one of the healthiest of the British colonies, and, in fact, the healthiest place in the world. I remember about twenty-two years ago, when I was going to England, I got the Health Officer to write me a return, which I might use on any suitable occasion, with reference to the health of the colony. He made the remark, amongst others, that endemic diseases were unknown, and epidemic diseases of very rare occurrence. He could not say so now, for Queensland is now one of the most unhealthy colonies of the Australian group. The death-rate is higher in Queensland now than in any other of the Australian colonies. I know—and it has frequently been pointed out by the Registrar-General—that the high death-rate in Queensland is largely attributable to the great mortality amongst Polynesians. For some years now a very proper distinction has been made in calculating the death-rate, and the death-rate amongst Polynesians and Chinese has been calculated separately. But even when this distinction is made, the death-rate here has been higher than in the other colonies. I hold this is not attributable in any way to any peculiarity of climate, or any other natural cause; but that it is to be ascribed exclusively to the fact that, presuming upon the known healthiness of Australia, and of this part of it in particular, we have allowed our large towns to grow up without any thorough system of drainage and sewerage, and without proper sanitary arrangements. We know that the death-rate in Great Britain has been going down for the last thirty years, lower and lower, and is now something like only 19 per 1,000 persons; and in some of the most healthy districts in Great Britain the death rate is as low as 15 per 1,000. When sanitation has been more thoroughly and properly carried out here, the result will be the same. Large sums of money are every year expended in the centres of population in Great Britain, and they have been most wisely and economically expended, as they have brought about an immense saving of human life. It costs us about £20 for every person we introduce into this colony, and I was very glad to hear the Premier say that, as we expend so much in populating the colony, we may very fairly spend a considerable sum of money in saving life. I have read calculations, published from time to time, showing the immense amount of money which may be saved by proper application of sanitary measures for the reduction of the death-rate to what, for instance, it is in some districts in Great Britain, 15 per 1,000. The effect is really marvellous. I believe the provisions of this Bill are excellent. I have not had time to thoroughly study them. I have not had time, in fact, to read the Bill through, but, so far as I have read, and from the explanation of the Bill by the Premier, I believe it is an excellent Bill. He has told us that it is framed on the lines of the Health Act of England; and that is almost sufficient of itself to commend the Bill to us. I differ from the hon. member who said that the earth-closet system is a bad one. I know it has been abominably carried out here, and has, in consequence, become a filthy system in the large towns of this colony; and I believe a great many of the diseases which people suffered from here are attributable to the abominable abuse of a good system. Twenty years ago I visited the town of Dorchester, and had the pleasure of being introduced to Dr. Moule, who introduced the earth-closet system, or rather its modern application into England. We know that the earth-closet system was known thousands of years ago, and was part of the Levitical law. Dr. Moule, however,

introduced it in its modern application, and he carried it to such perfection that nothing disagreeable or offensive in the slightest degree was noticeable from its operation. Since I came to the colony I have carried it out myself with much success. It is one of those arrangements which require minute care. I would commend to the notice of the hon. Premier a little pamphlet published a short time ago by Dr. Bell. I daresay the Premier has read it. It is a valuable pamphlet, and in it Dr. Bell has carried the earth-closet system to perfection, and has illustrated it with useful diagrams. He has explained the separating system—separating the fluid from the solid matter. The fluid is carried away to the sewer, and the solid matter is dealt with separately and deodorised. Some of the large towns in England carry the system thus far: Instead of having a filthy cart going about through the night diffusing pestiferous odours, and awakening people out of their sleep and almost poisoning them, they have carts provided with pails fitted with air-tight covers. There are duplicate pails for each closet. The clean pails are brought in the cart; they are taken into the place, where the air-tight cover is fitted on to the pail which has been in use, the clean pail is left, and the other taken away in the cart without any nuisance whatever arising. This is a very good system, and very simply and easily carried out. The question was very properly asked by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, what is to be done with the refuse? I certainly object to its being taken to South Brisbane, as was suggested by the hon. member for Balonne: and I would suggest that it be taken to somewhere near his residence, or near the residence of some hon. member who needs stirring up to do something in this matter. Before this Bill can be made effective to put a stop to preventible diseases, I believe we should have a system of national sewerage through all the towns of the colony. That will cost something like a million of money, but it will be money well expended. It is all very well to say that this Bill provides subsidiary drainage, and that everyone is to be compelled by the municipal authorities, or by the board—and I think it is a very good arrangement to make the board see that the municipal authorities carry out the provisions of the Bill—that every householder must communicate with the principal sewer. That is a very good thing, but where is the principal sewer to go to? We have no thorough system of drainage in this town, and it will cost a great deal of money to initiate one. Another matter which has had a great deal of consideration and attention in England, is that of carrying refuse matter into rivers. If the refuse matter is carried into the river here it will be brought back by the tide, and we shall have pestiferous matter floating on the river all day long. It is most important that all this refuse matter should be carried away to some suitable place outside of the town; and I believe the place known some time ago as "Childs' Farm" should be secured by the Government, at whatever cost, for that purpose, because it is lower than any place in the town. There the refuse matter should be taken, and there should be established deodorising works, as in England. It is not my intention to say much more on this subject, which is somewhat wearisome, but it is an important one because it affects the lives of the whole community—the lives of our children, and the lives of ourselves. I have myself seen in one large town in England—and I know such works are in existence in other large towns—a deodorising establishment for receiving and dealing with sewage. The sewage, the moment it comes out of the great main sewers, is immediately treated with milk of lime, and the

unpleasant odour at once disappears, so that there is no nuisance at all about the works themselves, and they are no annoyance to the neighbours. When the sewage has been in contact with milk of lime for some hours the solid matter settles to the bottom, and the water on the top, after a certain time, being deprived of all noxious matter, is run off into the river and is perfectly inodorous. The solid matter is then taken out and burnt, and makes a very valuable cement—equal to the best Roman cement—which might be used for making our pathways and for other purposes. That in itself would go a great way towards paying for the whole system of treating our sewage. Speaking of the mortality in this colony, I say the high percentage is due to the great mortality in the centres of population. The mortality generally, as separated from the mortality in the towns, is low, and I believe if we had sanitary arrangements in the large towns equal to that of the other colonies we should have a lower death-rate than in many of the colonies of Australia; and to bear that out I will read a few figures which go to prove what I say. The death-rate in the whole colony, in 1882, exclusive of Polynesians, was only 13·94. It was very low that year, but the death-rate that same year in the suburbs of this city of Brisbane was 26·64. That speaks for itself. In the municipality, it touched 16 per 1,000. In the large towns the average death-rate was 19·54, and in the country the death-rate was 15·02. I think those figures tell us pretty plainly that if we had a complete sanitary system carried out in our towns, combined with a thorough system of sewerage, we should reduce the death-rate of the whole colony by several thousands of persons in the year.

"The Registrar-General of England, in his annual report, generally gives the mortality of the largest towns in England and Wales, and from these death-rates it will be seen by comparison that our Queensland towns are more unhealthy than some of the great centres of population in the old country, although we know nothing of the hunger and cold which proves so fatal, especially in the winter season of the year, in those densely crowded places."

That was from the Registrar-General's report for 1882. And again—

"The cost of sewerage in towns has been given by Richard Rawlinson, Esq., C.E., F.G.S., Engineering Sanitary Commissioner to the British army in the Crimea, thus:—The cost of main sewers, taken at a rough average, may be stated to be about £1 sterling per head of the population. The cost of house drainage varies with circumstances, but in towns, stated in round numbers, the cost, on the whole, will be equal to the cost of main sewers—about £1 per head of the population."

I think this Health Bill will prove very efficacious, but beyond that we want a complete system of drainage in our large towns. If the Government were to put themselves in communication with Mr. Rawlinson and other gentlemen who have been connected with this subject for many years, and who are authorities on sanitary reform in Great Britain, they would obtain a mass of information in the briefest possible form, which would indicate to them what would be the right course to adopt in saving the lives of our people in this colony by sanitary arrangements in the great centres of population. Failing that, it would be worth while to appoint a Royal Commission to make inquiries, and to examine the Registrar-General, Dr. Cannan, and other gentlemen who have been many years in the colony, and who could compare the mortality in the altered condition of the colony now with what it was twenty years ago. They would give us invaluable information which would enable the Government to arrange a complete system which would effectually meet the case.

Question put and passed; and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bill.

The PREMIER moved that the preamble be postponed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that this little unpretentious Bill was one of the most important measures the Government had brought before the House this session. No doubt the hon. Colonial Secretary did full justice to the measure from his point of view, but he failed in this respect: that the country had not understood the provisions of the Bill, or how it would operate. Everyone knew, and both sides of the House would give him (Sir T. McIlwraith) credit for this: that whether in office or out of office he had always advocated a strong stream of immigration from the mother-country to our shores. Consistently, he had carried that principle out, and had done it under an amount of personal unpopularity which the hon. gentleman, he did not think, had felt yet; and it was because he considered that the Bill aimed the most serious blow that had yet been aimed at immigration to Queensland, that he took the stand that he intended to take against it. The hon. member, in introducing the Bill, put it on these grounds: that the country had decidedly shown at the last general election that it would not have any black labour imported into the colony. This was the remedy for that. He admitted, with the hon. member, that the verdict of the constituencies was most decidedly to that effect; but he thought that the matter was not put properly before the constituencies. The decision that they came to was, unmistakably, that they would have no black labour here; but had the alteration which the Colonial Secretary proposed been put before the constituencies, as hon. members would see it was put before them before the Bill passed, he was just as satisfied that their verdict would have been as unmistakably against the provisions of the Bill. What was it that the hon. gentleman said? "The sugar industry, the planters say, cannot be carried on without black labour." The constituencies of the colony said, "We will not have black labour." Then the hon. gentleman came forward and said, "This industry shall not perish; we will provide a means by which you will be enabled to carry on your industry, and make it as profitable, possibly, as it was before." In order to do that he came to a conclusion that must certainly startle the working men of the colony when it was properly put before them. Up to the present time the sugar-growers had imported their own labour; they had been at the exclusive expense of bringing those men to the colony. No Government aid had in any shape been given to the sugar-planters. They had brought their own labour and paid for it, and had received no aid whatever. The proposition brought forward by the hon. member was simply this—"The constituencies have decided that you shall not have black labour, and we come forward with the alternative that we will give you your labour at the expense of the people of the colony." This was one of the most extraordinary conclusions to come to, and involved a most serious consideration on the part of the colony. He regretted it, for the reason he had always felt that they were on most touchy ground with the working men of the colony when they dealt in any shape with immigration. They looked with the utmost jealousy upon it. He thought he was not going far wrong when he said that the most educated constituencies in the

colonies had decided that they should have no immigration in any shape or form subsidised by the State from European countries. He referred to the unmistakable verdict of Victoria, and to the repeated verdict of New South Wales, on the same subject. There the amount of immigration that was supported by the State was far too little for the country, and far too little for its prosperity; for it had always been held by statesmen of all classes that it was touchy ground on which to approach the working men. If the working men were once alive to the danger that they must expect from a Bill of the present kind, then the verdict would be just as unmistakably that they should have no immigration from the old country subsidised by the State, as they expressed that they should have no black labour whatever. With great regret he would have accepted the decision as it was—that they should have no black labour—for he did not consider that the sugar plantations could be carried on without it; but the only alternative put before them by the Colonial Secretary was a *non sequitur*—a *non sequitur* that he was sure would not be endorsed by the working men of the colony. The Colonial Secretary said to the sugar-planters in effect—"We believe that you cannot grow sugar unless you have labour at a certain price; you have been importing cheap labour at your own expense, but we will bring in European labour for you, and pay the expense; and not only the expense of that labour, but the whole expense of bringing the wives and children of those labourers to the colony." Who would pay for that but the people of the colony? In what respect were working men interested in making sugar pay, when it involved the necessary conclusion that they must reduce the wages of the labourers in such a way that wages in every other department of labour in the colony must also be reduced. They must be reduced. They could not reduce the wages on sugar plantations for European labour, without reducing wages all over the colony. They might bring those labourers on to the sugar plantations, but previous experience showed that they would not stop there when they found that they had been brought to work for a lower rate of wages than was paid in other parts of the country; and the effect would be that they would spread all over the colony, and reduce the price for every other kind of labour in the colony down to the same pitch. Take a cask open at the top; it did not matter whether they took the water out of the top or took it out of the bottom—down went the water. And if they introduced a large amount of cheap labour into the colony the result would be to bring down the price of labour everywhere. Why should they bring down the price of labour everywhere? At the present time Queensland offered in Europe the best wages that labouring men could find in any part of the world, and this had had the effect of inducing a great many immigrants to come to the colonies during the past two or three years. Was it not a fact patent to anyone who had studied the subject of immigration that that was the best inducement they could possibly offer? And what would be the effect of that Bill? The immediate effect would be to lower wages all over the colony; and the men who would pay for lowering the wages were the very men who were interested in maintaining a good rate of wages—who made their living by labour; and those men were actually asked by the Government to bring labour into the colony in order to lower their own wages. He defied the hon. gentleman to explain the Bill to any meeting of working men in the colony, and ask their verdict on the matter. The subject had not been debated very much out of doors, much to his astonishment. It was inevitable that the effect

would be as he had stated—that those very labourers, brought out here simply because they were cheap, and European—brought in to buoy up an industry that it was said would fail unless they were introduced—would lower the price of labour in every part of the colony. But supposing the measure had not that effect—supposing that by any strictness in the law, or by any ingenious arrangements made by the Colonial Secretary, those men were confined to the plantations and kept there, what would be the result? Why, they would have a far more servile class than the men who were here now—men brought out here to buoy up an industry that could not do without them, and not allowed to work as free men in other parts of the country. That would be a far worse state of affairs than existed at present. Hon. members would not forget—for it was only two years ago—what was the condition of the colony when he introduced the Immigration Act. Business was dull, the colony was not well known, and they had very great difficulty in filling their ships with the quantity of men that they were willing to bring out. The number obtained was not supplied by voluntary enlistment of the people, at home; they had to be beaten up, and the colony had actually to take a class of men that they would otherwise not have accepted. That was only two years ago, and then every inducement was offered to immigrants. The Act provided for nominated, indentured, and free immigrants. There was a clause introduced into the Act—clause 17—by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, the operation of which had been very much misunderstood. That clause was proposed and advocated as a means by which a different class of immigrants would be brought out than was provided for in indentured immigrants. It was urged that men with some capital—men with means—men with, at all events, £200 or £300—would not like to come out in immigrant ships, as long as they did not come as Government immigrants. He did not think at the time that the clause would have much effect; nor had it had any effect in the way expected, but he was glad the clause passed, because it was conducive to an immense amount of saving in the cost of immigration, and had induced their own countrymen to come to these shores. Since then, the prosperity of Queensland had been great, and there was scarcely an industry that was not in a thriving condition. He did not want to take any credit for it. He might, however, say, that the late administration, of which was the head, had taken every opportunity to bring the colony before the world, and the consequence was that the people looked upon it as a most favourable field for immigration. In England, at the present time, under the clause to which he had referred, they could get as many men as they liked to come out, and pay one-half their passage money. They could get some ship companies to bring out any number they liked; in fact the companies had proved themselves to be better immigration agents than the Government. They could therefore get any amount of immigrants from the old country at the present time willing, as he had said, to pay one-half their passage money. Under those circumstances, one asked at once where was the necessity for bringing in that Bill? They could get the best agricultural labourers in England to come to the colony now, but they would not get men to come out here who would be servile enough to work out three years on sugar plantations, as the hon. gentleman desired. They could get English labourers to come out in any quantity; and why should they provide for the introduction of a class of men, for whom the Government would have to pay the whole of the passage money—for the one pound that had to be

paid was a mere bagatelle? What was the use of introducing a scheme of that sort? Only to flood the colony with cheap labor. Why, in the name of common sense, when they could get their own countrymen to come here under the present law, should they go to a foreign country for immigrants, and pay the whole expense of their introduction? That was a question which the hon. gentleman had to answer, and which the constituencies had to answer. Brisbane, Maryborough, Townsville, and Rockhampton, and other towns along the coast had not considered the question; they had not the slightest notion what was the effect of the Bill. They did not realise it. They did not consider that the men who had spoken to them at the late election as the hon. gentleman had done would have the audacity to put such a proposal before the House. The planters would be the greatest fools in the world to accept such labour. And the inevitable result would be that when the working men of the colony knew what it meant—that they were asked to contribute out of their earnings towards the introduction of men to make a non-paying industry a paying industry—they would turn round and say, "Why should we pay for the introduction of cheaper labour?" He had drawn attention to the effect of the action of the late Ministry, in regard to immigration, on wages in the colony; and he had pointed out that it was a matter they should approach with the greatest caution. They knew how touchy the working men were on the point; they saw by the experience of the other colonies that before now they had put their foot on immigration in any shape or form; and why should the Government come forward with such a scheme at the present time? Did they think the constituencies would not understand it—that they could not see its effect—that its inevitable effect would be to reduce wages all over the colony, and that men would be forced out of the colony into the other colonies? It would not only have the effect of levelling down the wages in the colony, but also the wages in the other colonies; so that the hon. gentleman had undertaken a task far beyond his powers. He would see those men go out as fast as they came in, as long as they found bigger wages in the other colonies. The late Government had brought immigration to such a point that the working men of England were willing to pay a large amount for their passage money, and they could get plenty of labourers, mechanics, and men of all descriptions to come on those terms. But now it was proposed to bring out a class of labour for the express purpose of reducing wages; because, as he said before, the only reason for the introduction of the Bill was to make a non-paying industry a payable one, and that must be done by bringing down wages. But the effect of introducing a lower class of labour would be to stop immigration from the old country. The time was when they had to hunt up every man willing to come to the colony, but now there were any number anxious to come; and if they baulked those men by taking away the work to which they looked forward, the natural stream of immigration would be stopped; and if the proposed stream went on it would be at double the expense. That the Government contemplated a lower class of labour the Bill itself showed. The clause which the Bill was intended to repeal was never meant for such a purpose. The Premier glossed it over by saying it was a mistake that no provision was made for bringing out the families of indentured labourers. But it was never the intention of Parliament to bring out those families; it was their intention, seeing that good workmen were required in different districts, to offer them

the same inducements as ordinary labourers to come to the colony. If it had been hinted at the time the clause was introduced that it could possibly be used to bring out a large body of labourers to make a non-paying industry payable, not two members would have voted for it. It was never intended that the wives and families of indented labourers should be brought out under the clause at the expense of the Government—and why should they? The men were brought out to earn good wages, that they might save enough to send for their families. It might be asked, “Why should they bring out the wives and families of nominated passengers?” But nominated passengers were always looked upon as the best class of immigrants, because they were recruited by their friends who had already been successful in the colony, and privileges were extended to them which were never intended to be given to the others. There was no doubt as to the meaning of the Bill. It was intended to carry out a promise made by the hon. member during the elections. That was perfectly plain, and was shown in the plainest way by the speech of the hon. gentleman. The Premier said the country had decided not to have coolies. No doubt they had so decided; and if the question were put to the country now they would decide it in the same way. But they never decided on the alternative the hon. gentleman now put forward—an alternative which, if put to the country, would be scouted by them who placed him in the position he now held. The hon. gentleman said in effect that the sugar industry did not pay, but that if the planters got cheap labourers for 10s. or 15s. a week—cheap labour, at all events—if they got those men at the expense of the taxpayers of the colony, they would avoid the nagging and harassing policy of the present Government. And the labouring men of the colony had not had time to reflect on that position. They saw clearly enough that the nagging, harassing policy of the Government had resulted in the reduction of wages, in throwing a good number of white men out of employment of which they had plenty before, and to which they formerly looked forward with certainty; but they had not seen the remedy proposed—that men should be brought from England and the continent of Europe, who would do what the working men who had as yet come to the colony would never do—that was, reduce the wages of the working men all over the colony. That was what the Bill aimed at. And the fact that the proposed labour was of a lower class, so far as wealth was concerned, was proved by the fact that the Bill was an amendment on a Bill which provided that £2 should be paid by the immigrant or his employer for the passage of each indented immigrant. The hon. member came in and said—and it was cutting it very fine—that there was a class of men who could not afford £2; but they must have some guarantee, so they would take £1. Then he proposed to bring out the wives at £1, and the children at 10s. each. Those were the bare provisions of the Bill. But the hon. gentleman had to answer one thing. Were the working men of the colony going to put their hands into their pockets to pay for the bringing out of labourers, the effect of whose presence would be to reduce their own wages? It was plain that he must answer that question, because not only the effect, but the design also, of the Bill was to reduce the price of wages. The working men would have their wages lowered in every industry, and would be asked by the Government to pay for that reduction. The country did not yet understand the Bill, but he had not the slightest doubt that before it went through committee they would thoroughly understand what its effect would be. The hon. gentleman would find that

his own constituents did not agree with him. He challenged him to call a public meeting in Brisbane, and explain the effect of the Bill to it at the present time. If the hon. gentleman would do so, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) would go alongside him and give his version of the matter, and he had very little doubt as to on which side the meeting would be. The inevitable effect of the Bill would be the reduction of wages, as even the hon. gentleman admitted; but in the same sentence he gave the alternative by asking whether they would not rather have wages lowered, than have a horde of coolies and kanakas coming into the country. But the hon. gentleman was in error. Because it had been decided that the colony was not to have coolies and kanakas, it did not follow that they were to have a horde of cheap labourers to destroy the chances of the working man in the colony. Whatever contingency arose it was quite certain that the working men of the colony would not consent to have an Act passed to bring out cheap labour to compete with them and lower their honest wages. He had said nothing about the German question; but he had hinted that it was perfectly clear that the hon. gentleman intended to get a class of immigrants into the country who possessed qualities which were not to be found amongst their own countrymen. It was a matter of indifference to him—and he had always held the same opinions in the House—what the German people might think about it, but he had always held that it was their first duty to bring out men from their own native country—everything else being equal—in preference to any continental country. At the present time there were men willing to come out from Great Britain on very good terms to the colony—that was by themselves paying a very large amount of their passage money, if they were only allowed to work at the profitable industries that already existed in the colony. He therefore combated the notion of going to a greater expense in bringing out men with the only object of reducing wages in the colony. He did not care what the result of his remarks might be on the German vote; he spoke out to the people of Queensland; and he was quite sure that if the Germans did not understand the politics of the country now they would understand them before very long, when they got better guides than they now had. He believed there was no class in the community to whom political questions had been more grossly misrepresented than to the Germans.

Mr. ISAMBERT : Certainly not.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he would tell the Committee the reason why some Germans voted against him at the late elections. One adviser of the Germans, in a position analogous to that held by the hon. member for Rosewood, went round and told those men—with whom he had always been on good terms, with whom he had been friendly, whose families he had helped, and whose sons and daughters he had employed—told them both verbally and in writing that if McIlwraith was returned the first thing he would do on getting into power would be to call in the title-deeds of their estates, and convey all the land back to the squatters. Men who would listen to advisers such as the hon. member for Rosewood, showed that they had not got to that point of perfection in their education as electors which he, at all events, desired to see. No doubt the Germans were in many respects good citizens, but they were not going to sacrifice the whole colony for them. But the Colonial Secretary, as had always been the case, was in politics wagged by the tail of his party. The hon. gentleman had never been in any position where he was not directly influenced by men who had nothing like his

ideas. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) admired the ability of the Colonial Secretary, but he never saw him devote it to the good of the country by putting sound legislation before it. The Minister for Works had got the hon. gentleman into many a scrape, and the hon. member for Rosewood was getting him into a scrape at the present time; because if he believed that the working classes—the real electors of the colony—were going to permit the wholesale immigration of cheap labour from Europe to do away with kanakas on the sugar plantations, he was very much mistaken. No doubt the working men did not believe in kanakas and coolies. That question had been settled by them so far, and he would take their verdict. But what he asserted was that they did not believe in cheap European immigration either; and when they understood the effect of the present Bill they would be the first to scout it and turn out of power the men who now sat on the Government benches.

The PREMIER said that, as the hon. gentleman was not present during the debate on the second reading of the Bill, it was only fair that he should have an opportunity of expressing his views upon it on the motion in Committee for the postponement of the preamble. After listening carefully to the hon. gentleman, he wondered if he really understood how flatly he had contradicted himself. The hon. gentleman began by saying that he had always been in favour of the introduction of immigrants at the State expense, and then went into an elaborate argument to show that the introduction of immigrants at the State expense was the most dangerous thing for the welfare of the colony that could possibly be resorted to—using the stock arguments of the orators of Sydney and Melbourne—because it would necessarily have the effect of reducing the wages of the working men—his great friends—and that they would very soon see through the evil intentions of persons who proposed to do anything so diabolical against their interests. Surely the hon. gentleman was aware that what had always been urged against the introduction of immigrants at the State expense was that it necessarily reduced wages. What was the justification for introducing labour into the colony at the expense of the State? There could only be one possible justification, and that was that there was not in the colony at the time sufficient labour, and that it was worth their while to spend money, if necessary, for the purpose of introducing more labour. If they were to introduce more labour than they wanted, either wages would be reduced or the labourers would leave the colony; but if they did not, he failed to see how either result could be brought about. The hon. gentleman used some strange arguments, and he (the Premier) must be pardoned if he forgot some of them. He would refer only to those that struck him most forcibly. The hon. gentleman said that during the late elections the working men—he, (the Premier) preferred to call them the electors—made up their minds that they would have no coolies. He was glad the hon. gentleman recognised that fact. He also contended that the prevailing rate of wages in the colony would be the lowest rate. He (the Premier) was quite prepared to concede that. But what was the hon. gentleman's panacea? Black labour.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I did not say so.

The PREMIER said that had been the hon. gentleman's consistent policy, and he did not suppose he was a convert to the views of the electors, although he admitted the existing fact that they had declared against the introduction of coolies. He maintained that the prevailing rate of wages would be the lowest rate.

If the lowest rate was that at which Asiatics would work, that would be the ruling rate. He gave the electors credit for knowing all about their own affairs, and about the interests of the colony, and being able to see through the transparent fallacies of the hon. gentleman; and he would continue to give them credit for it. They knew what had been pointed out over and over again—that they would have to choose between competition with European and competition with Asiatic labour. They knew that that was the alternative, and he had no doubt what the answer would be. They would compete with their equals. The hon. gentleman said that the basis of the Bill was—he put the words into his (the Premier's) mouth—"The planter must have cheap labour; we recognise that they must have labour at a low price, and we propose to give it." Now he (the Premier) entirely repudiated that statement. He had never used any such argument, either inside or outside the House. It was an argument which the hon. gentleman himself and his friends had for some time past been trying to put into the mouths of the Government. But the Government were quite sure the electors would not believe all they were told about them. They had been so long listening to the kind of misrepresentation used against the Government and their policy that they were not likely to believe all that was imputed to them. The Government, he said, had never used any such argument; and the planters themselves, though they were not always consistent, emphatically disclaimed any such idea. They said—"We do not want cheap labour by any means. We have no complaint about the price of labour; what we complain of is that we cannot get it. Where is the labour? We have no desire for cheap labour." That was what they said, not inside, but outside the House. When he had spoken on the subject he had always warned them that if they expected Europeans to come to the colony and work for lower than the current rate of wages they were making an egregious mistake. Only last week, in speaking to a deputation that waited on him with regard to the Labour question, he stated that they must understand that any Europeans engaged to come out here would be made fully acquainted with the state of affairs in the colony, the nature of the work they would have to do, and the ruling rate of wages; and that if they attempted to engage any labourers on any different terms they must expect to meet with failure. Let that be distinctly understood. If the planters could not get their work done without reducing the rate of wages for European labour, then he was sorry for them, but he could not help it. The Government were willing to do what they could to get them labour. The hon. gentlemen who led the Opposition also said that at the present time they could get any quantity of agricultural labourers from England; but he (the Premier), with the experience and the history of the last few months—with the history of what happened before—had found that it was the most difficult class of labour to get. Ships could be crowded with labourers of every other class; but agricultural labour was the most difficult of all to get. The difficulties were almost insuperable. The hon. gentleman said that during his administration they were able to bring agricultural labourers out. He (the Premier) found the contrary; he found that a great portion of the men were entirely unfit for agricultural labour. Even with express directions given, and with the altered administration of the London Office, he was obliged to say that the proportion of agricultural labourers was still insufficient. When he took office, he found that free

passages were given to all classes. One of the first acts of the present Government was to order that free passages be given only to agricultural labourers and single women. Since then, when every effort had been used, they had been unable to get a sufficient supply. They did not, therefore, intend to confine their efforts to England. He had said that they did not in any way believe that it would reduce the rate of wages in this colony.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : The hon. member admitted, in his speech, that it would reduce it.

THE PREMIER : He was glad the hon. gentleman had reminded him of that. The best way of answering such a statement was to quote the words he used, as reported in *Hansard* on the 6th of August :—

"Then we are told, as against this argument, and as an attempt to frighten the white labourers of this colony, that the introduction of labour from Europe will reduce the rate of wages. Well, supposing it did, which would be the better—that the rate of wages should be diminished to a small extent, or that the white labour should be driven out of the field, as it certainly would be? Undoubtedly the introduction of black labour would in one sense prevent the decrease of European labourers' wages in the field, because no European labourers would be employed at all."

All the Government proposed to do was to introduce European labour; and no one supposed that European labourers would be likely to remain as they were. They would remain as labourers for a year or two, and then they would no longer labour for others, but for themselves and families. That was distinctly different to the policy of the hon. member; and the sooner the distinction was recognised the better. He (the Premier) denied that, in order to make what the hon. member called a non-paying industry into a paying industry, it was necessary to reduce the rate of wages. The hon. gentleman said it was. If the sugar industry could not exist without reducing the rate of wages of the European population, then he was sorry for it; but the planters themselves said otherwise. They said they were prepared to pay a fair rate for labour. A proposition had been made to the Government to introduce thousands of labourers at 10s. a week. No hon. member had moved for a return of the correspondence with regard to that subject; but he intimated to the persons who made that request that the manner in which they made it indicated that what they asked was absurd, and that it was not intended to be carried out in a way to be beneficial to themselves or to the country. If any person thought that the Government were going to help them to reduce the rate of wages of Europeans to 10s. a week, they were mightily mistaken. The Government would take all sorts of care that labourers were made aware of the current rate of wages in this colony. They were quite willing to deal with the planters in every spirit of fair play. But let him say at once—he might as well say it now—that if the planters or any other class liked to place themselves in hostility to the rest of the community, then the weakest must go to the wall. The Government were not going to bring out men to work at less than a fair rate of wages. He had indicated that outside the House. He wished it to be distinctly understood by the electors of the colony that the issue between them was that which he had often put into plain words before now—Europe against Asia. That was the question; let them understand one another. If they agreed that they were going to look to Europe for labour, they could help one another to look for it and get it. The hon. gentleman had said—though it had nothing to do with this Bill—that

the planters had been injured by the "nagging, harassing" policy of the Government. He wished the hon. gentleman would say what he meant. The difficulty he found was that he could not get hon. gentlemen to say what they meant. What did he mean by the "harassing" policy of the Government?

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : I will tell you directly.

THE PREMIER : If the hon. gentleman is going to tell me, I will not say anything about it till he does so.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : Go on; say what you have to say.

THE PREMIER : The only "nagging, harassing" policy he had heard of yet had been in the steps the Government had taken to retrieve the credit of the colony and prevent the infamous abuses of the South Sea Island traffic. That had been spoken of in various parts of the colony as the "nagging, harassing" policy of the Government. He should like to know what else the hon. gentleman meant. If he was going to stand up as champion for these abuses, he (Mr. Griffith) had no objection to his doing so. The hon. gentleman also said that the 17th clause of the Immigration Act had not worked in the way in which it was intended. The 17th clause of the Immigration Act had been brought into operation, evidently with the desire that it should not work at all. It had been successful to a very great extent, but it had been abused. When he went into office, he found it was simply a scheme by which shipowners were enabled to fill their ships with any persons they chose to send. There were absolutely no restrictions, no safeguards, no precautions whatever; it was simply a matter of speculation with the shipowners. That was all changed now, and a better class of people was coming under the 17th clause of the Immigration Act. The hon. gentleman had not addressed himself to the provisions of this Bill; he had addressed himself at large to the immigration policy of the Government. He (Mr. Griffith) did not think there was any necessity to go into the matter at greater length, as he had already spoken once on the main principle of the measure. He had indicated what the Government proposed to do. They recognised the insufficiency of the supply of agricultural labour in the colony, and they believed it would pay the colony to introduce more of that class of labour. They could not get it all from England, even if it were desirable to do so, but they knew that there were in other parts of Europe people of a most desirable class, not only for agricultural labourers, but for permanent colonists—men who in an especial manner would settle on the land, cultivate it, and live upon it, and make homes for their families and their children after them. They also knew that, in some parts of Europe, the insults that had been levelled against them by hon. members who for a time occupied conspicuous positions in the colony had not done the colony any good; but nevertheless they believed they could settle the land of the country in that way. They desired when they spent the public money in introducing people into this colony that the people they introduced should be people who would themselves settle upon and occupy the lands—that was to say, agriculturists. Those were the people it was specially profitable to introduce at the expense of the State; and it was with the object of facilitating the introduction of such people that this Bill was brought in, as well as with a view to increasing the supply of a class of labour which at the present time was admittedly deficient. But to say that they had any intention of reducing the rate of wages was perfectly absurd. The hon. gentleman had appealed to

the electors, and, no doubt, some day he would have an opportunity of getting their views. He (Mr. Griffith) was quite sure the electors of this colony understood the matter quite as clearly as the hon. gentleman himself, and many of them a great deal more clearly, if they were to judge by the contradictory speech with which he had favoured them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was glad the hon. member had made the speech he had made, because it had proved that he did not understand the sound principles upon which immigration should be carried on in this country. He had told them as plainly as possible—ignoring altogether the disastrous results of immigration to Victoria and New South Wales—that the inevitable result of the introduction of labour must be to reduce wages.

The PREMIER: I did not say anything of the kind. I said that was your argument, and proceeded to combat it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I took down the hon. member's words. What in the name of common sense has the hon. member been speaking of?

The PREMIER: I said you were trying to prove that.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member appeared to think he would get over the matter by thoroughly misunderstanding every argument he had used. He would take care, at all events, that the country should not misunderstand that argument. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) contended that the introduction of labour, assisted to any extent by the State, ought not to have the effect of reducing the wages of the working men of the country. He had not only repeated that, but had brought several arguments to bear on it. If the hon. gentleman would only listen to the experience of good government for three years, he would find that it was so. They passed the Immigration Act at a time when it was most difficult to get any men to come to this country unless their whole passages were paid.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. gentleman is forgetting!

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he repeated that it was most difficult to get men to come unless the Government paid practically the whole of the passage money, because the £2 each the immigrants paid was nothing; it was only intended to show that they were *bonâ fide* immigrants. When they passed that Act, he took special care to impress on the people the importance of recognising the fact that a time would come when the working class would not look so amiably at immigration. The times changed; the industries of the colony flourished, and attracted working men of all classes; and the consequence was that the ships, under the 17th clause, filled up at once. He denied *in toto* what had been said by the Colonial Secretary as to their being filled up with an inferior class, because as good men came by them as by any other means. Gradually immigration grew into such favour that the Government found there was no necessity to bring out any immigrants paying their full passages, except single women, who were very difficult to get. All other classes of labour could be got at once, under this 17th clause, and might be got at the present time. It was perfectly plain that immigration of that sort had not the effect of reducing wages. After they had worked it for three years, the Government over which he presided brought out more immigrants than any other Government had brought before, and wages were higher than they had ever been before. That was the effect of a judiciously administered immigration law: the

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immigrants had plenty of work and good wages. The hon. member had denied facts. At the present time there were any number of agricultural labourers at home perfectly willing to come out under the 17th clause. It was not true that the hon. member found such a state of disorganisation in the office at home, and that no agricultural labourers were coming. Mr. Randall's reports repeatedly referred to the fine class of labouring men from the agricultural districts who were coming out. They had every encouragement from them, and they sent out an immense number, just as many as were wanted. At that time it had never been a subject of complaint, though it had since been a subject of complaint in the colony, that there had been too many mechanics sent out. But that had been brought about entirely by the harassing, nagging policy of the present Government. He would tell them what he thought of the harassing, nagging policy of the present Government. The hon. gentleman knew that he had admitted that the conclusion came to by the constituencies was that there should be no black labour introduced into the colony. Having got the constituencies to believe that, and having worked them up on that subject by a great many very bad arguments—having worked up the working man of the colony to that conclusion—he betrayed his trust by not stamping out black labour at once. Instead of that, what had he done? He had brought the colony into disrepute in every possible way, and tried to show the abuses which existed in the labour trade. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) knew that those abuses were brought about by the policy which the hon. gentleman initiated. More cruelties had been perpetrated against the blacks since the hon. member came into office than had ever been perpetrated before. He (Sir T. McIlwraith), as Colonial Secretary, had conscientiously worked night after night on that matter, and taken far more trouble—at all events, the hon. gentleman could not have worked harder than he did, or have given more time to the question. He believed he had "spotted" every blemish in the trade when he was in office; but the hon. member had created a state of things that made men rush down to those islands and do almost anything. Instead of saying, "These things ought to be stopped," and obeying what the constituencies told him, by appointing a day when the trade should cease, he allowed the trade still to go on. That was what he called "harassing and nagging." It would have been far better for the hon. gentleman to talk the straightforward truth to the planters and tell them that the trade should cease; and those men would not then have gone on putting their money into the colony as they had done. The hon. gentleman knew well that the question decided was not that the white man objected to the black man; but the one argument used, and the argument which decided the question was, that if they brought those coolies into the colony wages would be reduced. That was the only argument used, and the working man could only see it in that way, and it was with the idea that he was protecting himself against the coolie and the kanaka that he voted as he did. But the hon. gentleman proposed to do exactly the same thing in another way. At the present time they knew that they could get any number of their own countrymen to come out here with very little assistance. He believed there would soon be a stream of population coming here of the best people they could have from the old country. He believed that the time was not far distant; but the hon. member came down and said, "Nothing but cheap labour will do, and we must pay the whole of the passage money."

The PREMIER: I said nothing of the kind,

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Bill spoke for itself. The hon. member had denied over and over again that it was the object of the present Government to bring cheap labour into the colony; but it was in the Bill. He said that Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen, the best agricultural labourers they could get from the British Islands, would come out if half their passage money were paid, and if the hon. member would encourage them. Ignoring that fact, the hon. member still proceeded to introduce men with their wives and families to do nothing else when they came here but reduce wages all over the colony. That was evidently the hon. member's intention, for it was the immediate effect of the Bill. The Bill spoke for itself. It was degrading to hear the hon. member talking about the reform he made in the London office. If ever there was a fiasco—if ever there was a gross system of misrepresentation so exploded in this world—it was when the hon. gentleman took charge of that office and found everything perfectly as it should be. The hon. member had listened while he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was hounded through the streets of Brisbane, as having been a party to receiving a portion of the passage money of every immigrant coming to this country. It was currently reported by men in position in the country, and backed up by the hon. member, that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had received £4 for every immigrant introduced into this colony. More than that; that was believed in by many people in the colony, and they had voted against him at the election. Still when the hon. gentleman put in a man to do his dirty work—and he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) believed that that man was a great deal too honest to do it for him—he found that the work could not possibly be done better than he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had done it himself; and the immigrants had been coming out in the same way ever since. Still, there was not a word of apology from the hon. gentleman for the degrading position he had occupied for so many years in that House. That Mr. Hemmant was expected to find out a great deal against himself, he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had not the slightest doubt. He would tell them more. He believed that Mr. Hemmant was sent into that office with the idea and intention that if he did not find a case against him he was to make a case against him. He was very glad to know that the man was too honest for the party; and when he did not find a case against him he would not make one. Not a single thing was found out to have been wrong, and certainly there was nothing found to be dishonest. Still the hon. gentleman, in referring to that, came forward now and said that the office was in such a state of disorder then that no good immigrants were coming out. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) said that the office was in a better position then than it had ever been in before. He said that with all due deference to the hon. member for South Brisbane, whom he did not wish to question in any way; but when he left office the London office was in a better position than it had ever been before.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had almost repeated what he had said before; but there were two matters upon which he had spoken which he felt it necessary he should refer to. The hon. gentleman said that some time since it was currently reported in the streets of Brisbane that he had been receiving a profit out of all the immigrants brought to this colony; and he imputed to him the authority for that statement. He (the Premier) certainly had never made any such statement or authorised it in any way whatever. He did not believe it; and he had no reason to believe it. The hon. gentleman had evidently got his information from some of his own friends.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I got it from your friends at the time of the election.

The PREMIER said he did not know where the hon. gentleman got his information, but he thought he must have got it from some of his own friends, who were only too glad to tell him all the evil things said about him. He (the Premier) was sometimes told of dreadful things said about him. The hon. member must be extremely credulous. For himself, he could say that he had never heard of the charge before. If it had been rankling in the hon. gentleman's mind he was sorry for it, but he should certainly be ashamed to say any such thing.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You said it on a public platform.

The PREMIER said he had never heard of the charge before.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You insinuated it as plainly as possible at the Ipswich banquet.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman must have a very evil conscience. That was the only conclusion he could come to if he vilified himself in such a way and brought such charges against himself. He had certainly never said anything of the kind or thought anything of the kind; and if it was any satisfaction to the hon. gentleman he would contradict it now in the most emphatic manner. As he had never said anything of the kind, he simply rose to say so, and the hon. gentleman could rest assured on that score. The hon. gentleman had stated also that he had said that the office in London was in a demoralised state. That must have been said by one of the hon. gentleman's own party. No such idea ever existed in the mind of any man on the Government side of the House, or of that party. If any suspicion of the kind existed, it must have been in the minds of hon. members on the other side of the House.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why did you get rid of Mr. Archer?

The PREMIER: He had never in the slightest degree imputed any want of honesty to Mr. Archer—never. On the contrary, he had on every occasion, when the matter was referred to, distinctly disclaimed any such insinuation. The hon. gentleman had been living in such an atmosphere of suspicion that he imagined things. He thought that Mr. Hemmant was sent to London simply for the purpose of finding out something about him. Again, he (the Premier) said the hon. member must have a terribly guilty conscience. There was nothing but his own conscience that would suggest anything of the kind. It had been disclaimed in every possible way on that side of the House.

Mr. STEVENSON: That shows what you mean.

The PREMIER: He did not know of anything wrong, nor did he suspect that anything was wrong. He suspected that business arrangements were not satisfactory, and it had been proved that they were not. That was a different thing from being dishonest. So much for that. Let the hon. gentleman rest assured that the stories told him by his friends were not all true. He believed that he had been injured and maligned in many particulars; but the maligners had not come from that side nor from that party. He believed the hon. gentleman was really getting a craze that he had been misrepresented shamefully, and maligned by members of the Government and members on the Government side. He (the Premier) could tell him that there were members on his own side in politics who made it their business to go about and repeat things of that kind. They said, "I heard something the other day that

somebody said that you said you were told by So-and-so." He was sorry to say there were men who made it their business to do such things, but let him warn the hon. gentleman not to be so credulous—nor to believe that everything his friends said was said against him, was really said. His reputation was not so bad as all that.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I do not want you to defend my reputation.

THE PREMIER: He had wanted to know what the hon. gentleman meant by the "harassing and nagging" policy of the Government with regard to the planters. They had got it at last. It was this: the regulations made under which the Polynesian traffic was to be conducted.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is not what I said.

THE PREMIER: He confessed then he could not understand the hon. gentleman. He said that the Government should have crushed out the industry at once.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he said nothing of the sort. What he said was, that after the verdict of the constituencies, which was forced from them, the only thing a man of honour or a Government would have done was to put his foot on black labour at once.

THE PREMIER said he understood the hon. gentleman to say the Government should have put its foot on the sugar industry. He did not understand that the verdict of the constituencies was that the supply of kanaka labour should be suddenly brought to an end. That certainly was not the verdict of the constituencies. It was the duty of any Government to have suppressed the abuses, and if anybody said that was harassing the planters he was sorry for them—that was all. The hon. gentleman said he had worked hard to suppress those abuses when in office. He (the Premier) was glad to hear it, and could only say the hon. gentleman had not had the facts before him. He himself had found considerable difficulty in getting the facts brought before him, but he succeeded at last. The hon. gentleman did not forget, of course, what he said in that House and out of it when official representations were made to him of the abuses in the labour trade. The hon. gentleman denied the statements, not only in the House but in official papers—denied the truth of those statements, and characterised a most respectable class of men as common liars.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Whom did I characterise as liars?

THE PREMIER: The missionaries. Those gentlemen, he thought, were as worthy of credit as the hon. gentleman.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Where did I make the statement in official documents?

THE PREMIER: The hon. gentleman made the statement in the House, and in official documents he flatly denied the statements made by the Commodore of the Australian station. But he did not think it necessary to go into the Black Labour question or the labour trade, as the Bill dealt with the question of indentured labour from Europe.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought it rather unworthy of the hon. member to drag up what he had said in a temper such as he was in the night that he used the word "liar" towards the missionaries. He said it *sotto voce*. It was an interjection that he need not say he was sorry for afterwards. He had, amongst the missionaries, some friends whom he esteemed, and whose work was worthy of all admiration; but the hon. gentleman must know that at the time the expression was used he was labouring under a strong sense of injustice that certain missionaries had done him. They gave

him an immense amount of official work, and he had proved in some cases that their statements were lies. With regard to Admiral Wilson, he had said officially that he did not believe him. Admiral Wilson reported to the Home Government certain facts connected with the kanaka trade, and the inference was as plain as possible that the facts he reported had come under his own knowledge. Now, considering that Admiral Wilson was only in the colony once—that he was only here for three days—he was at the club once and at Government House once, and the remainder of the time he spent down the Bay; he was never on a plantation, and to his knowledge he had never been up north; and taking into consideration the fact that he got his information from the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan—

THE HON. R. B. SHERIDAN: He never got any information from me.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was in the report. The Commodore referred to the hon. gentleman two or three times. That was the source of his information, and it was very plain that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was justified in saying what he had said. That he conscientiously inquired into every abuse connected with the kanaka trade, no man in the House could deny. His labours in the Colonial Secretary's Office would show that. The hon. gentleman wanted to make the House believe that he had found out new abuses, whereas that was not the fact. The only thing to be ashamed of in the whole affair was the utter incompetency shown by the law officers of the Crown in prosecuting in the case in which murderers got off; to the disgrace of all Queensland. How it was possible to mull that "Alfred Vittery" case he did not know. It was considered a perfect disgrace that those men should get off; and any man who had read the report of the evidence could come to no other conclusion than that it was through the incompetency of the law officers of the Crown that those men escaped punishment. But he was not going to go away from the subject of immigration, and wanted to keep the hon. the Premier to that point. The hon. gentleman had got to explain to the House a matter which had been put before him very clearly. He had got to explain to them distinctly the policy of the Bill, because he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) wanted to confine the question within the limit of facts. He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) said that at the present time they could get immigrants from the old country in a constant stream, so long as they offered good wages and paid half the passage money. The Government proposed to get a lower class of labour, and pay the whole of the passage money—£1 for a man, and £1 for his wife—and bring out the whole of these people's families. What he wanted the hon. gentleman to answer was this: In what way would the working classes of this colony be benefited? He wanted him to answer that, and say what justification he had for bringing out a lot of cheap labour from Europe to lower the existing rate of wages?

THE PREMIER said the hon. gentleman met assertion by assertions. He said there was a large demand for agricultural labour; that there was a large and ample supply of agricultural labourers willing to come out here by paying part of their passages. He (the Premier) could only meet that assertion by the statement that those labourers could not be got.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Where did you get your information?

THE PREMIER: The information was from official sources. The ships coming here did not contain a large number of agricultural labourers,

It was only to them that a free passage was being given; and Mr. Randall, to whom the hon. gentleman had referred, had told him over and over again, personally and by letter, that the most difficult class to get in England was agricultural labourers. The greatest inducements had to be offered; and they were the most difficult men of all to be got. That was undoubtedly a fact that could not be denied, but he believed they might be got in an increased number by special efforts. They could get any number of mechanics or townspeople, but few agricultural labourers. He did not speak from going about the agricultural districts himself and trying to get them, but from reports from the Agent-General, and especially from Mr. Randall, who was as well acquainted with the subject as any man living. He knew how to get agricultural labourers probably better than any man in ten thousand. He was content to take his word for it. The hon. gentleman had asked the question, and that was all the information he could give him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said he should not have risen to take part in the discussion, which was to a certain extent irrelevant to the Bill, had it not been that he was referred to by the hon. member for Mulgrave, whose position in the House entitled his utterances to a great deal of weight. The hon. gentleman made the statement that the "Alfred Vittery" prisoners got off owing to the incompetency of the Crown law officers, and that the verdict of the jury awakened a feeling of horror in England. He should like to know how it came about that a feeling of horror was awakened in England if it were not for the fact that the trial, as conducted by the Crown law officers, brought out clearly certain facts. How could the feeling of horror arise if those who had charge of the prosecution had not produced those facts to the court and the jury? It was the function of the prosecutor to bring out the facts,—have all those facts upon which a jury might give a decision fairly placed before them. That the hon. gentleman admitted was done.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: No, I do not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the feeling of horror could not have existed had it not arisen from those circumstances. How could any person say, on reading the trial, "That is a miscarriage of justice!" if not that, the verdict was not upon the evidence that was given. The verdict was not upon the evidence. He had all along felt exceedingly sorry for the fair fame of Queensland that the verdict was not according to the evidence. His duty in having charge of the prosecution was to place that evidence before the jury; and there was not a tittle or scrap of evidence that could have made the guilt of those men appear more strong than it was that was not placed before the jury. He was not responsible for the verdict of the jury. The jury gave those men the benefit of what was thought to be a doubt. Great as the miscarriage of justice was, the jury convicted one of the men who was charged. It was not for him, nor for any prosecutor, to compel a jury to convict prisoners; and as for the incompetency of the Crown law officers, he challenged any hon. gentleman to say in what particular way there was any incompetency shown in connection with the trial. It was a miscarriage of justice, and he said that to attribute that miscarriage of justice to the fact that there was any incompetency on the part of the Crown law officers was to attribute it to a wrong reason altogether. He did not wish to suppose that the hon. gentleman wilfully intended to damage him by making statements of that kind. The hon.

gentleman had been inflamed for some time by reports which had been made of him. He made bold to say that the strongest things he had said against the hon. gentleman in his political capacity—and he had never spoken of him in any other—had been to his face in that House. Any man who said he had slandered the hon. gentleman in the colony would be a calumniator and a man unworthy of belief. He hoped that if anybody else made a charge of that kind—that the prosecution of the case referred to was improperly conducted—he would have the goodness to show in what particular, and then there would be some justification for the statement, and not before.

Mr. ARCHER said he must stand branded as a calumniator, because then he insisted that the hon. Attorney-General, when travelling up north with the junior member for North Brisbane—and he would be prepared to prove it, although he had not the proofs with him—had used the most opprobrious expressions about Sir Thomas McIlwraith.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. ARCHER said he could prove it. They went about the North using language to damage him—not as a politician, but as a private man—that he was introducing into the House schemes for his own personal advantage. No charge had been made against the hon. Attorney-General's honour, but only against his competency.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Prove it!

Mr. ARCHER said he did not know whether the hon. gentleman was incompetent or not—at all events, that was a charge that would not affect his honour in any way. He said again, that the hon. gentleman did—not once, but several times—impute motives to the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, as a statesman—that he was carrying out certain things for his own aggrandisement; and he would be able, if the hon. gentleman liked, to bring proofs forward, and the paper in which the statements were published. The hon. gentleman would feel that sitting on the Government benches was not quite so easy, when he had got men criticising him, and had a good judge who could put his thumb upon him—he would find that being Attorney-General after being as a barrister for a couple of years was not so nice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are wrong again in your facts.

Mr. ARCHER: Being Attorney-General after being a barrister for a few years was not probably such a brilliant or pleasant office as the hon. gentleman was led to expect. That was all he had to say—that in future the hon. gentleman had better remember that his speeches up north were in print, and were in that House, and he could easily ascertain the time his voyage took place—that great voyage up north. He could very easily lay his finger on the charges brought against members on his side of the House, and dynamite explosions and other things; so that they were not at all afraid of the hon. gentleman in that quarter; he need not think that. He did not take much note of what fell from the hon. member for North Brisbane, except one thing, and that was that he was not prepared to build gaols for people who got low wages. If they in their ignorance had connected the Bill, which was introduced some time ago, and on which they were sitting in Committee, with the promises the Premier made last session to find some manner by which, the country having decided against black labour, the planters would be able to carry on their work with other labour—and he would do the hon. gentleman the justice to say he admitted it was a difficult question—still he gave a promise that he would take such steps as would enable

them to carry on their business, and although such regulations were made as would prevent kanakas coming to the colony—did the hon. gentleman therefore think they were illogical? He had admitted himself that the Bill was the fulfilment of his promise. The complaint of the sugar-planters, he stated himself, was not so much the want of cheap white labour, as of unreliable labour. They now understood from him that he did not bring in that Bill for the purpose of holding men to a bargain for low wages. What did the hon. gentleman call low wages? He (Mr. Archer) only knew that in one instance at a sugar plantation—and that not further north than Rockhampton—worked by white labour, the men, who were engaged at £1 per week and rations, dropped their tools in the cane and went to gaol for three months sooner than do another stroke of work. He would like to know what were the low wages which had been spoken of. If the people would not work for £1 a week and their rations, which he regarded as remarkably good pay for new chums, he should like to know what were considered low wages. A very little thing soon taught men the absurdity of refusing to work; and other men dropped their tools and ran away, although they were engaged at the rate just stated. The planters said they were prepared to pay higher wages, although a kanaka was by no means a low-priced man, if they took his passage money into consideration. They were now prepared to pay higher wages if they could get reliable labour. That was what they wanted. The Premier said he would do his best to supply them. The scheme proposed—say what he would—would introduce a large number of labourers, who, having made engagements at home for two or three years at 12s. or 15s. a week, would undoubtedly break their engagements, and flood the country, and enter into competition with the very labourers who had paid their passage to the colony. There were some things the Premier said during the late election which were so absurd that a sane man would hardly believe that they would be made, had they not got into print; but the hon. gentleman wanted to hold up the black bogie to the people. And this was the way he did it. The extract he (Mr. Archer) now read was from a speech delivered by the hon. gentleman at the Town Hall, Brisbane, on the 10th August, 1883:—

"One of the reasons why he dreaded coolies was, that there were unlimited numbers of them. Mauritius was only a patch compared with the Mackay district, and that was but a speck in our sugar land; yet the Mauritius had 250,000 coolies, 50,000 of whom were born there; that showed how they went home. Mackay could alone absorb more than that number; and we should have 1,000,000 of coolies in the colony in a short time."

Now to bring a coolie here would cost from £27 to £28. That was to say that the planters of this colony, not the taxpayers, would expend £27,000,000 or £28,000,000 to bring in coolies. The thing was too absurd for discussion! That was a specimen of the claptrap which had been used.

The PREMIER: It is utterly absurd.

Mr. ARCHER: It is absurd.

The PREMIER: The absurdity is in your argument.

Mr. ARCHER: My argument is quite correct; the absurdity is in the argument of the hon. gentleman.

The PREMIER: That is not my argument. I did not say that they would spend £28 to bring out a coolie.

Mr. ARCHER said that was what planters paid for those who had come here. They knew what the coolies cost before they got them here,

under the law that had been repealed. The planters, he repeated, would actually have to expend £27,000,000 or £28,000,000 sterling to introduce the number stated by the hon. gentleman. It was an absurdity.

The PREMIER: Everybody knows that it does not cost anything of the kind.

Mr. ARCHER said it did cost something of the kind. But suppose they divided it by 2 they would have £13,000,000 or £14,000,000, and that would still be an absurdity; and if they further divided it and reduced it to £6,000,000, it would still be absurd. There was no absurdity in his argument—the absurdity was in the statement made by the Premier. As far as the discussion had gone, nothing had been said that would controvert the argument advanced by that side of the House. There was not the slightest doubt that the Bill was brought in as the result of the promise made to the planters by the Premier, that he would try to get labourers to supply them for want of kanakas. The Bill, if carried out, would tax the working people of the colony for the purpose of bringing men here to compete with them, and reduce wages all over the colony.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the same arguments had been used by the few speakers on the opposite side who had addressed the Committee that night, as were used by the Opposition on the second reading of the Bill—namely, that the Bill had been brought in for the purpose of lowering the wages of white men. The Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith had stated that under clause 17 of the Act passed in 1882 a sufficient number of agricultural labourers could be obtained for the purpose of meeting the wants of agriculturists in this colony. Under that clause a man paid half his passage money. He maintained that the class of people who were brought under that provision were of a superior character to those contemplated under the Bill—as a rule, he believed they were small farmers, men who were in such a position that they were able to pay half their own passage out, and, when they came out, to commence operations on their own account. The class of people that would be introduced under the Bill was a different class—a poorer class of people. Many agricultural labourers in England, Ireland, and Scotland could not raise sufficient money to come out under the 17th clause; and the Government, to meet the wants of the sugar-planters, were willing to bring out a class of labourers exactly suited to the need which had arisen in consequence of the short supply of black labour. It had been stated that the inevitable effect of the Bill would be to introduce a class of labourers who would lower wages generally all over the colony, and that an answer was wanted to that argument. He maintained that the Bill would have no such result. What were labourers getting at the present time? In many agricultural districts they were receiving from £20 to £30 a year.

Mr. NORTON: Where?

Mr. MACFARLANE: In West Moreton, where there were plenty of young men willing to work for £30 a year and their rations.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: There was nothing of that sort when we were in power.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it had existed for the last twenty-two years—since he had been in the colony—and people had been content to take a great deal less sometimes. But the man with £30 a year and board was in a far better position than the man earning from 15s. to 30s. a week and paying his own board.

Mr. NORTON: No.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that was a matter of opinion. The man with £30 a year could save more money at all events. But if they got labourers under two years' engagements, at £30 and rations, those men were not going to content themselves with working at that rate for the following two years. They would begin working for themselves; and if the present Land Bill passed they would be in a position to go to other parts of the country on their own account. As one who had been a working man, he could say that hundreds of people in the United Kingdom, if they came out to the colony and got £30 a year and rations, would be in a better position than ever they were in in their lives before; and they would be only too glad to take advantage of the provisions of the Bill. He had been employed in the old country amongst hundreds of men, and the class of people of whom he had the management did not earn, on an average, more than 12s. a week—that was over twenty-four years ago—and they had to board themselves. If those people came to Queensland they would benefit, not only themselves, but the colony also. Hon. gentlemen had lost sight of another argument. It was proposed to bring those people out free—he looked upon the £1 as nothing—but in the course of five or six years they would pay back their passage money in the shape of taxes, so that the colony would lose nothing. And as to lowering wages, the Bill would have no such effect. There were always some classes of wages lower than others. At present labourers received from 5s. to 6s. a day, carpenters 10s. a day, and bricklayers from 12s. to 14s. a day. Did the labourer who was paid 5s. a day fall out with the bricklayer who was paid 14s.? No. As a labourer, he was in a lower position than the bricklayer. He might be a better man, morally and physically; but as a workman his position was lower, and he was paid only 6s. a day. If he (Mr. Macfarlane) were a planter he would indent labourers, and get them out as cheaply as he could. If he could he would engage them at 12s. a week and their rations for two years. When they came out, if they would agree to take fifteen or twenty acres of land, he would agree to buy all the cane they grew. The responsibility would then be thrown off his shoulders as a planter; and he could simply buy back the cane from those people, charging them so much for rental. If the planters would study their own interests in that way they would benefit, not only themselves and the people they employed, but the colony at large. He hoped some progress would be made with the Bill that evening.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member who had just spoken had let the cat out of the bag. The Premier had told the Committee that he would take care the planters would not get cheap labour—that he would take steps to have men's eyes at home opened to the fact that big wages were the rule in the colony. The hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane), whose information regarding working men staggered him when he said that £20 or £30 a year were common wages in his experience, told the Committee that he would get them cheaply; and so would every other common-sense man. And if the Bill should pass, that was exactly what they would do. The hon. gentleman did not seem to realise the arguments against the Bill. He said that the labourer did not object to the bricklayer having 14s. a day while he was earning 6s. That was very likely. But when the labourer was called upon to put his hand into his pocket to force down his own wages to 4s. a day he would certainly object, and that would be the effect of the Bill.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member for Ipswich had given the planters some valuable advice. The only weak part about it was that he did not understand anything about the matter. No doubt the hon. gentleman understood everything appertaining to his own trade, but when he laid down a scheme about growing cane and having it crushed at mills his opinion was not of very much value. It was a system already tried to a certain extent, but the difficulty that arose was that after the small farmer had grown his cane he wanted it crushed, and it was found that without the labour they had employed up to the present time the planter who crushed the cane was not able to give him a remunerative price. It was quite likely that the small grower might not personally employ coloured labour, but the moment he wanted it crushed he could only have the work done at a profitable rate by the planter employing coloured labour. The price of sugar was now so low that even the question of cheap labour was becoming an important consideration; and he could safely say that without really cheap labour the sugar industry would undoubtedly go to the wall. The hon. member gave them to understand that £20 or £30 a year would be a remunerative rate of wages for European labour. He (Mr. Black) had no hesitation in saying that if the planters could be certain of getting equally reliable labour at that rate they would not object to pay it; but it was his intention to make a determined stand, while the Bill was going through committee, on the ground that they were not justified in bringing out labourers from Europe or England to do the work that was now done by kanakas at £20 or £30 a year. It was quite possible that the Government might be able to force that measure on the country, and that the planters in self-defence would be compelled to make the experiment; but he (Mr. Black) asserted most emphatically that, if so, it would be the greatest blow that had ever been aimed at the working man in the colony. The Premier had said that the lowest rate of wages would be the ruling rate, and in that he entirely agreed with him. At whatever rate of wages those immigrants were brought out, that would be the ruling rate of wages for the ordinary labour of the colony. First of all, it would apply to the sugar districts. Afterwards, the men would become discontented; they would naturally try to get the higher rate of wages that they saw ruling in the southern part of the colony; they would leave the North and seek a more congenial clime; and then the rate of wages all through the colony would be lowered. It was not a matter of sentiment with him. He considered, in the first place, that the kind of labour proposed to be introduced to take the place of the kanaka was unsuitable. Before leaving Europe they would misunderstand the work they had to do. If anybody were to explain to them that they were to take the place of black-fellows they would not come out, or if they did, they would be misled. The planters did not wish to mislead them. The Premier gave him to understand at the deputation the other day that the Government did not intend to introduce cheap labour. The hon. gentleman evidently wished the country to believe that it was the planters who were going to introduce it. But the planters were not going to do anything of the sort, except to protect themselves from absolute ruin. But in order to keep up the supply of labour for the plantations, it must be remembered that a very large number of cheap European labourers would have to be introduced. It was estimated that there were at present 8,000 coloured men in the country, the majority being under a three years' agreement; and that meant the introduction of 3,000 of those labourers every year to

take their places. The Government had harassed the sugar industry by rendering it impossible to get a supply of labour from the islands. No doubt they intended that that should be the result of their policy; otherwise they might safely have taken the whole matter into their own hands. In order to keep up the supply no less than 3,000 indentured labourers would have to be introduced every year, without allowing for any extension of the industry. And it would be of no use bringing them out in small lots—bringing out a shipload, half at high rates of wages, and half at low rates. They would have to be brought out in shiploads of 400. At Mackay alone they would want 1,200 of those labourers within the next year, and they would want them in three shiploads of 400 each. Those men would outnumber the other Europeans in the district, and the result after two years would be that the majority of the existing white men of the district would be supplanted by those cheap labourers. Those men, again, would be compelled to leave the district, and they would come south, and thus have the result of lowering wages in Brisbane, to the extent that, whereas now a ordinary labourer got £1 a week and his rations, the ruling rate of wages would be reduced to 12s. a week; and the working men, who had undoubtedly put the Premier and his party into power, would look upon him as having been a perfect curse to the working men of the country.

Mr. ANNEAR said it was still quite possible to get labourers from the islands. There were thousands there who were willing to come to Queensland under the new regulations. A few months ago Captain Henderson—he believed that was the name of the commander of Her Majesty's warship, the "Miranda"—landed in the island of Aoba, and there was Mr. Labour, who had resided there with over 2,000 islanders. At that time the "Roderick Dhu," a vessel owned by Cran and Company, of Maryborough, was there recruiting. She filled up in three weeks and brought a splendid collection of men to Maryborough, who were now working on the plantations under the new regulations. The House had heard a great deal about the working man, but the working man had returned him as their member on the Liberal platform. If hon. members had read the speech he delivered at Maryborough they would see that he told the working men on that occasion that he believed the kanaka was a good fellow; that he had been the means of increasing the value of property in Maryborough 50 per cent.; and that there were hundreds of skilled artisans present who would not have been in the town but for the sugar industry. But the planters had got a catechism, and all they could say was that the Premier had made up his mind to ruin the sugar industry by the new regulations. But the new regulations would be the means of making the sugar industry. Up to the present time the planters had done nothing to assist the Government in obtaining labour in a proper manner from the South Sea Islands. When Captain Davis, now in Fiji, was master of the "Stanley," he had no wages, but a capitation grant of £1 per head, so that the more men he caught the more money he would receive. The captain of the "Alfred Vittery" was also part owner of the vessel, and it was well known how unscrupulous he had been in obtaining islanders for the colony. At the present time an inquiry was being held at Maryborough in reference to the schooner "Ethel." Captain Loutitt, the master, was also part owner of that vessel, and the Government agent had had to order him back to Maryborough, whether rightly or wrongly—he was inclined at present to believe wrongly—with only fourteen islanders. He was sure if the planters would make up their minds they could do away with that capitation allowance; and the kanakas would be treated

as human beings, as he maintained, in a great many instances, they had not been. Something had been said about the large number of immigrants that had been brought from England. He was sorry they came, because they were rushed in here very fast, and the majority of them went to New South Wales, where they were now. A remark had been made about his hon. colleague, Mr. Sheridan. He (Mr. Annear) maintained that the working men—he preferred to call them that—working men, like the gallant 603 who returned him at the last election—were indebted to that hon. gentleman for the able report he wrote, every word of which he (Mr. Annear) maintained had been proved to be literally true. Then, with regard to another remark, he did not look upon any European as a low white. It was said that some of them were a low class of labour; but neither Frenchmen nor Germans, nor Italians, as far as he knew, were low-class men. He hoped that whoever went, as representative of and agent for this colony, would bring "low-class" men here. He was convinced that when they came, and especially under the new Land Bill, they would settle down and help to make up the revenue which was now being obtained through the Customs. Some hon. members talked as if the whole colony was populated. Why, there was only a fringe of it occupied! Let the colony rise to its position, as in America, where from 30,000 to 50,000 immigrants a month went into New York. There was no distinction there between Frenchmen and Germans and Italians or anyone else.

The HON. SIR. T. McILWRAITH: Is there not?

Mr. ANNEAR: No; he had mixed with all classes, and he had never found any difference made between people from Great Britain or other parts of Europe. And he thought the voters of this colony had pretty well cut their eye-teeth by this time. He was confident that if the hon. member for Mackay would assist the Government he would find that he would be helped. He (Mr. Annear) knew the importance of the sugar industry, and he was sure that the Premier and his colleagues would never disturb it by hasty legislation.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not know what to understand from the hon. gentleman's last remark; he thought "destroy" would have been better than "disturb." There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that the Premier had done all he could to destroy one of the most important industries in the colony.

The PREMIER: How are the Government destroying it?

Mr. MOREHEAD: He would tell the hon. gentleman. Twelve months ago, if a man with a sugar property wanted to get an advance of money against it, he could get it quite easily. Now, if a man with a sugar property in any part of the colony went to a monetary institution or an individual for an advance, he would simply be bowed out. That showed that capitalists held the same opinion that he had expressed that evening.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Nothing could be more clear than that his contention was a true one. The hon. gentleman got into power almost wholly on the cry against black labour. The hon. gentleman's colleague, Mr. Sheridan, was elected for Maryborough on the anti-black question. But a change had apparently come over the spirit of the electors of Maryborough, because the other hon. member for Maryborough said he was elected because he advocated the employment of kanaka labour. That looked as if public opinion in Maryborough

ad altered. At any rate the fact remained that the Government got into power on the anti-coolie cry. It must be known to everyone that the cry in the electorates of Brisbane and Fortitude Valley was: "Vote for Griffith and no black labour," "Vote for Beattie and no black labour," "Vote for Morehead and black labour," "Vote for Douglas and black labour." He simply mentioned that, in support of his contention that the cry was, "Vote for the Opposition and no black labour," and that they got into power on that. The hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan) also advocated the importation of 40,000 immigrants, to get 12s. a week wages.

The PREMIER: Who said that?

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman was reported to have said it; but at that time there was a readiness of assertion as feelers of public opinion, and afterwards there was a readiness of denial, which was amusing, if not edifying. The hon. gentleman had shown by his proposed legislation that the statement he was reported to have made was a fact; because he now proposed to introduce immigrants on a scale which, if carried out, would compete with the present white labour, and reduce the wages of the white men in this colony. Labour brought out in that way would, he maintained, be brought under false pretences, and of course at the expense of the State. As was pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, the working men of the colony were asked to cut their own throats. There could be no blinking that fact; no matter how much the hon. member denied it, the fact remained the same. If they introduced immigrants indented at a low rate of wages at home, it must prejudicially affect the wages of the white labouring classes in this colony. He maintained, however obnoxious it might be to some hon. members of the Committee, that it would be very much better for everyone concerned—not only those interested in the sugar industry, but for the whole community—if coolie labour were introduced under the regulations which were agreed to between the Indian Government and the late Government of this colony. It had been denied by the hon. the Premier that any such arrangement was entered into; but he repeated that it was entered into. Coolie labour, under regulations, would have carried on the great sugar industry, not only without detriment to the white labouring classes of the colony, but to their great benefit; and not only to the benefit of those residing in the sugar districts, but also to those residing in Brisbane. It would hardly be denied that any legislation which tended to injure that industry would tend as much to injure those who were in business in Brisbane as those resident in the sugar-producing centres. Every merchant in Brisbane, and all those employed by him, would suffer tremendously if the sugar industry, or any great industry, were injured by legislation of this kind. Speaking for himself, though he was not a very large employer of labour, if he did not get so much sugar to sell, and if his earnings fell off in consequence, he would have to do with less labour, and some of those he now employed would, of course, have to go seeking work elsewhere. Again, if the colony were to be flooded with cheap white labour, he was not likely to pay his storeman 45s. or 50s. a week if he could get a man for 25s. or 30s. Every man regarded his own interests and he would feel that he was doing wrong to himself and those dependent on him if he did not reduce his expenditure. He did not think there was a member in the House who would pay 25s. a week to do work which he could get a man to do

for 12s. or 15s.; and 12s., he believed, was the amount mentioned as the weekly wage likely to be established amongst the men imported under the proposed immigration scheme. The hon. the Premier, in his speech, had got into one of his oratorical moods, and when he attempted to go beyond the mere legal way of addressing the Chamber he sometimes made mistakes. He had stated that these men would labour for a year or two and then cease to be labourers for their employers, and labour for themselves. Those, he thought, were the hon. member's words.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOREHEAD said he supposed this immigration scheme was to be worked as part of one great scheme—a link in the Premier's great legislative chain—and thus was a portion of the plan which embraced the Land Bill. Would the hon. gentleman explain how these men, whom he was going to bring out from home as labourers at a low wage, were afterwards to become labourers for themselves, if he would not give them land? The hon. member proposed to strip them of any chance of getting a homestead. How did he propose to reconcile those conflicting statements? He first proposed to introduce labourers from Great Britain and Europe, and having got them here he proposed to debar them from what he (Mr. Morehead) thought was every Englishman's right in the colony—the possession of a piece of land of his own. That was the great inducement to a man to leave the mother-country and come out here. The comparisons drawn between this colony and America by the hon. member for Maryborough were certainly very far-fetched. In the first place there was no subsidised immigration to America. If a man went there he went at his own expense, but here they were actually called upon to pay all except £1 per head to bring men out to compete with themselves; and their wives and families were to be brought out in the same way. Further, he (Mr. Morehead) distinctly objected, and always would object while he had the honour of a seat in the House, to going beyond the British Islands for immigrants so long as they could get the inhabitants of the British Islands to come out here. They had their duties with regard to the mother-country as well as their rights, and so long as she had a teeming population desirous of quitting her shores, every reasonable facility should be given to attract the stream here. He would go further, and say it would be better to pay half the cost of bringing our own countrymen than £1 a head for the people of any foreign nation. Blood was thicker than water; and it was our duty to build up this great and growing nation as an English-speaking nation so far as that was possible without doing anything improper or unjust to other nationalities. Let the others come, by all means, but at their own expense. When they were done with the British Islands, then it would be for the House to decide what particular nationality they should favour. He hoped the Premier would vary his song with regard to the late Ministry, and not indicate, as his manner had done more than his words, that he held the opinion which some hon. members had expressed when they said it was better that the sugar industry should perish. He had said, "If such-and-such a thing comes, I am sorry for the sugar industry." The sugar industry would probably not benefit much by the hon. gentleman's sorrow; and he was afraid his sorrow would not be very deep. The hon. gentleman had played with that industry, and had betrayed it. He had led those who were engaged in it to believe that their rights—and they had strong and vested rights—would receive full and fair consideration at the hands of the Government, and enormous sums of

money had been spent on the good faith of the colony in the development of that industry. Now the hon. the Premier was doing all he could, in a manner which he was happy to say was solely his own, to bring that industry to disaster and ruin.

The PREMIER said the hon. members on the other side, like the poet's brook, appeared as if they meant to go on "for ever." He challenged the hon. member to show in what way the Government had done anything to destroy the sugar industry. He wanted to get an answer to that question. They would never give a straight answer to that question. The hon. gentleman's answer was that some time ago any amount of money would be lent on sugar plantations, and now not so much would be lent.

Mr. MOREHEAD: None.

The PREMIER: Supposing they said "none," the hon. member's conclusion was that, therefore, the Government had destroyed the sugar industry. The hon. member might just as well say—as he believed he did in his heart—that the Government were responsible for the bad weather. He supposed the low price of sugar all over the world at present had something to do with it; but, of course, the Government were responsible for that, as they were for the fact that the price of sugar in England now was lower than it had ever been before; that the sugar industry in the West Indies was in a most depressed condition; and that the French and German Governments gave sugar bounties! Of course, according to the hon. member, the Government were responsible for all that, as they were for the bad weather! In answer to the question—What had the Government done to destroy the sugar industry?—the hon. gentleman was obliged to come down to the one thing and say, "The Government will not introduce coolies." That was the head and front of their offending. The objection really was that the Government had kept their word. The hon. gentleman had also said that the Government denied that the late Government made an agreement with the Indian Government. The hon. gentleman knew as well as he did that the correspondence had been laid on the table, and when they came into office the present Government informed the Indian Government that they would not carry out any such agreement. The statement the hon. member had made was absurd. The agreement was made by the late Government as far as they could make it. They had not completely made it, when the present Government came into power, in time to inform the Indian Government that the negotiations were at an end. What the Government had done to destroy the sugar industry amounted to this: that they had not taken any steps to introduce coolies. As he had said before, he hoped they had no animosity against the sugar industry any more than the agricultural industry, the auctioneering industry, the coffee-grinding industry, or any other industry. They had no animosity against the sugar industry, but they sincerely hoped that those engaged in it would try to help themselves to some extent, and not lean entirely upon the Government. They were prepared to help them in every legitimate way, as they would help any other industry.

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said he thought it was a duty he owed to himself, to his constituents, and to that honourable House, to set himself right with regard to some observations which had fallen from the lips of the Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and also from the hon. member for Balonne. The Hon. Sir Thomas McIlwraith had stated that he had given certain information to Admiral Wilson—

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I never said anything of the sort.

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said the hon. member inferred that—

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I made no such inference.

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said he understood it so; and he wished to state now that on the subject of Polynesians he had never had one word of conversation with Admiral Wilson.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I never said you had.

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said if Admiral Wilson quoted him, he must have quoted from his report—a report which he had written something more than eight years ago, and which he meant to read to the House now. What he stated then had come literally true. There was never a prophecy more accurately made in this world than what he prophesied on that occasion as to what would be the result of the kanaka trade, or the Polynesian trade, if the nefarious practices, which he hinted at then, were allowed to exist. The consequence of his having written that report was that he supposed that, in the whole of Australia, there never was a white man more universally persecuted than he was.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Not for that!

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN said it could have been for nothing else. Notwithstanding that, almost every newspaper in Australia, and many English and Scotch newspapers took up his cause, and reprinted his report, and praised it as much as a report could possibly be praised. It had been stated also that he went before his constituents at Maryborough with the cry "No black labour." He should read from a speech at the election, to show that he had done nothing of the kind. He should commence by reading his report, as he was exceedingly desirous that it should appear in *Hansard*. Hon. members of the Opposition might go out so that they might not hear it, but they would read it to-morrow morning in *Hansard*; and he might say that, if the effect of his speeches was to drive those hon. members out of the House, he would speak all night, and every night. Notwithstanding the absence of certain hon. gentlemen, he should read the report.

Mr. STEVENSON: What is the date of it?

The Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN: The date of the report was the 28th of January, 1876. The hon. member ought to know it, because he was one of the persons interested:—

"Immigration Office,
"Maryborough, 28th January, 1876.

"Sir,—With a view towards, to the best of my ability, acquainting myself with the circumstances surrounding Polynesian immigration, I have, since my appointment to the office of Polynesian Inspector, given the subject as much consideration as my otherwise fully-occupied time enabled me to bestow upon it, and I now do myself the honour to state:—

"1st. That I am not quite satisfied that in all cases recruits are obtained by their own free will and accord; nor do I believe they in every instance understand the nature and terms of their agreements. I am led to those conclusions by the facts—firstly, from the knowledge that the description of men sent as Government recruiting agents are not, at least from this port, such as much reliance can be placed on; that in most instances either being too young, too inexperienced, or, I am sorry to say, too dissipated; hence readily become the tools or dupes of the masters and owners of the trading vessels, whose interest it is to fill up quickly, no matter how the cargo can be obtained; secondly, because I have good reason to believe that in very many instances the bargain for a certain or given number of recruits is made with some chief, who, to gratify his lust for the luxuries of civilisation, gives

so many boys for so much trade—*i.e.*, beads, tomahawks, old muskets, powder, tobacco, and calico; thirdly, because the result of my inquiries convinces me that, before their arrival in Queensland, the Polynesians who have not been here before do not understand the nature of the so-called agreement nominally signed by them at their native islands.

"2nd. That the Polynesian Labourers Act when passed did not contemplate that the natives of the South Sea Islands should be otherwise employed than as agricultural labourers in the tropical and semi-tropical districts of the colony, yet, much to the detriment of European immigrants, they fill the places of draymen, storemen, grooms, and of all sorts of domestic servants—even nurses. But the worst feature regarding their employment appears to me, their being engaged for sheep and cattle stations in the far-off interior of the colony, where, if the weariness and solitude of the long journey have not proved fatal, the rigour of winter rarely fails to bring on those pulmonary complaints of which so many Polynesians die in this colony.

"3rd. That I have very grave and serious misgivings as to the kind treatment Polynesians employed on plantations, stations, &c., receive from their employers. I am led to this conclusion by the fact that, even in the short period since my appointment, three complaints of ill-treatment have been made to me; in two of the instances alluded to I am quite certain—although I cannot by white witnesses' evidence prove—that Polynesians were whipped on different sugar plantations. I saw the marks of the blows cut through the skin in one instance; therefore, I respectfully suggest that some regulations be made for taking the evidence of South Sea Islanders, otherwise many offences against them must remain unpunished.

"4th. That there is not any regular system of medical treatment of the Polynesians on the different plantations, nor is the cause of death in every case satisfactorily accounted for; whilst, as to burial, I am led to believe that the interment of a South Sea Islander in nowise differs from the burial of a dog or any other carrion. As I am informed, a hole or grave is made in the most convenient place, the body—as soon as possible after it has ceased to breathe—is rolled in the blanket in which it died, and put in its shallow last resting-place without further care or ceremony. As an instance of the necessity which exists for medical attendance, I may mention that the Maryborough district registrar's returns show for the last quarter that out of a population of 6,000 whites 69 deaths were registered; while out of a population of some 700 or 800 Polynesians 69 deaths have been reported. I would therefore most respectfully suggest that a regulation be made, making it compulsory on the employer to, in every instance, produce a medical certificate as to the cause of death; also that a medical man be appointed to visit every plantation;—his salary need not cost the country anything, as a small sum per head per annum, paid by employers on each islander employed, would cover all expenses.

"5th. That as almost every Polynesian who dies has some wages due and owing to him by his employer at the time of his death, and that as no account is taken or kept of such wages—

"I would suggest that a regulation be made compelling all employers to hand over, immediately after the certified death of a Polynesian, all wages which may have been owing to the deceased, to the Polynesian Inspector, to be accounted for to the Government. I have, as well as possible from the vague dates before me, caused a return of all moneys due to deceased islanders to be made out, and I now forward the same to your address under a separate cover.

6th. With reference to security being given for the return of Polynesians to their native islands, sec. 6, Forin K, Polynesian Act, I would remark that some time ago it appears to have been the practice to deposit in the hands of the Government the funds necessary for paying the return passage of each Polynesian. Now this latter method has become obsolete, and the bond in accordance with the Act is all that is required. It strikes me that three years' wages, and, say, from four to six pounds return passage money, in all about £24, seems almost too substantial a reason against an islander's return, more particularly applicable to such employers; and I fear such exist, as look upon Polynesians at mere animated machines; I therefore think that deposits of passage money, and actual yearly or half-yearly payment of wages, is the best and safest plan.

"7th. It appears to me to be very essential, and greatly in the interest of the employers as well as the employed, that the Polynesian Inspector should, without notice, from time to time visit the plantations in their districts, and inspect all registers, books, labourers,

house accommodation, food, clothing, &c.; also, when deemed advisable, to muster all islanders, and question them as to their treatment, and hear such complaints as they or their employers might wish to make.

"Twice since my appointment I have deemed it my duty, in consequence of complaints having been made, to visit plantations; in each case I have been able to redress grievances, and settle complaints to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

"8th. I would also observe that the indiscriminate way in which Polynesians are allowed to supply themselves with firearms, ammunition, bayonets, knives, &c., is objectionable, not only because of the inferior, hence dangerous description of guns which are being specially imported for their use, but because the weapons alluded to are used at their native islands for the purpose of either exterminating each other, or to murder white men who may come amongst them; besides, there is constant risk of the considerable quantity of gunpowder with which each islander provides himself, exploding, and thus severely injuring if not destroying all who may be in the neighbourhood. Therefore, I think some restriction should be put in the way of Polynesians obtaining firearms and ammunition.

"9th. The result of many inquiries leads me to conclude that, at least, not more than a moiety of the South Sea Islanders who come to Maryborough have been taught some of the rudiments of religion by the missionaries on their native islands; but I am sorry to have to add, that no effort whatever is made in this district to continue the teaching of the good missionaries; on the contrary, I know for a fact that a Polynesian who acknowledges that he is a Christian is accused of 'knowing too much,' and hence treated with suspicion and severity.

"10th. I have ventured upon respectfully directing your attention to the foregoing opinions and suggestions, not from any desire to thrust myself prominently into notice, but because I know that much discontent exists, particularly amongst white new arrivals, at the indiscriminate employment of Polynesians in the town; also, because I feel quite certain a great deal has to be done towards protecting and befriending the poor simple trusting South Sea Islanders, who are but as children in the hands of their white employers, and capable of much good or great evil, according to the treatment they receive.

"I have, etc.,

"R. B. SHERIDAN."

Subsequent to his writing that report another report was sent in, after he ceased to be Polynesian Inspector, by the Police Magistrate of Maryborough, which had reference, as hon. members would see, to the document he had read:—

"I enclose, for the information of the hon. the Colonial Secretary, list of islanders indentured to Tooth and Cran, Robert Cran and Company, and their partners, from 1874, with the deaths, as registered in this office. Inquiries are useless, but an intimation from the Government that until the death-rate has been reduced to a reasonable limit, and kept so, no further islanders would be allowed to be indentured to the firm, would, I believe, check the evil. It is not fair to the other planters, and dishonourable to the colony, that the lives of the kanakas should be so wasted. I should recommend that the wages of islanders dying before the three years have expired should be claimed by the Government. No persons having power over the islanders should be gainers by their death. The more the masters lose by the death of their servants, the more expense they will incur in keeping them in health. At present there is a gain on the death of those near the end of their time, which is balanced against the loss caused by the death of those newly arrived. I have no copies of the regulations issued with regard to the trade in islanders. Many of the islanders on the plantations are boys; some mere children. This increases the death-rate, and would lead to the supply of labour being exhausted sooner than it otherwise would be. Many of the applications for leave to import islanders are merely dummies to fill up the ship. The transfers immediately on arrival of labour vessels will show this."

That was Mr. Buttenshaw's report which confirmed what he (Mr. Sheridan) had previously written. Now, with regard to what he was said to have stated to his constituents in Maryborough. It had been said by the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith, and by the hon. member for Balonne, that his (Mr. Sheridan's) colleague and himself went before the Maryborough electors on the cry of "No black labour." He should quote from his speech

on that occasion to show that that was an entire fallacy:—

"He would now come to the Black Labour question. They were aware he took an important part in the discussion on this some years ago, by writing what was well known as his Polynesian report. He would take this occasion to say that he never opposed the introduction of Polynesian labour for purely agricultural purposes. He did object to the employment of kanakas as draymen, stockmen, store labourers, nurses, and in other capacities in which they came into competition with white labour. He did say in his report that they were not employed in their legitimate occupation, and he rightly complained, for such an infringement of the Polynesian Labourers Act was not fair to European labourers, and not fair to kanakas themselves., (Cheers.) The very gentleman who at that time was his greatest persecutor because he was frustrated in his efforts to send drafts of kanakas to his stations in the never never country—he meant Mr. Morehead—was now endeavouring to assure the electors that he was strenuously opposed to black labour. He had always been in favour of Polynesian labour if confined strictly to semi-tropical agriculture. (Cheers.) If he had his way he would not allow a single kanaka in town without a special pass from his employer. (Applause.) And if he owned fifty acres of sugar-cane on one side of a fence, and his neighbour on the other side had fifty acres of maize, he would make no difference in the class of labour, but allow every agricultural industry on the same footing as the sugar planters. (Applause.) The sugar industry was a great benefit to the colony, but still it must not introduce a coloured race here which would elbow Europeans out, and overrun the colony. (Applause.) The kanaka was a tractable and unassuming labourer, easily managed, and harmless, and the supply should be improved. They should be recruited in an intelligent manner like white men, and a doctor should accompany every recruiting vessel. He should try to improve the system of recruiting, and the planter would find that there was not a better friend to their class than himself. He would strongly oppose the introduction of the British Indian coolie."

That would show that, in going before his constituents, he had stated what was his opinion of the black labour question. That was to say he resisted the introduction of the British India coolie, and would continue to do so; but not the kanaka, so long as he was properly employed. What had been the result of the present system? They had only to look at the reports that had lately appeared in the newspapers of the "Alfred Vittery" case, and of the terrible outrages which had occurred. All persons who had listened to his report would agree with him, that if the Government of the day had made regulations and carried them into effect, hundreds of kanakas that were now dead might have been still alive; and scores of white men who had lost their lives in the islands in pursuing that nefarious, outrageous slave trade, might also have been alive. He was sure he had satisfied every member in the House that, so far as he was personally concerned, he did not go before his constituents upon the cry of "No black labour." He honestly and plainly advocated the introduction of the kanaka on the terms he had stated; but said he would resist the introduction of British India coolies, and he should continue to do so.

Mr. STEVENSON said that if the hon. gentleman had gone before his constituents on the lines he had stated, he certainly went before them on very different lines to what the hon. Premier did, because that hon. gentleman certainly went in on the "No black labour and no coolie" cry. The hon. gentleman had told them he never went against black labour, and had actually said that he wished to see the kanaka labour increased under proper conditions. The hon. gentleman had entirely distorted what the hon. member for Balonne had said about his colleague, Mr. Annear. The hon. member for Balonne clearly said that the hon. member (Mr. Annear) stated distinctly that he had gone before his constituents as advocating kanaka labour; and, regarding the report that the hon. gentleman had read to the Committee, he (Mr. Sheridan)

distinctly stated to a select committee that was appointed to inquire into that report, that he retracted the whole of the charges he had embodied in it. He (Mr. Stevenson) was sorry they could not get the evidence that the hon. gentleman gave at the time; but he did not see that that report had anything to do with the question before the Committee, which was, whether they should import cheap white labour to compete with the labour at present in the colony. It had been pretty clearly shown that the object of the Premier was not to introduce kanaka labour, for although he pretended to advocate kanaka labour, it had been shown that he was simply putting such difficulties in the way of procuring that labour, that it was impossible to procure it. He (Mr. Stevenson) simply said, that it was impossible for that labour to be procured; and, notwithstanding what the Premier had said, there was not the slightest doubt that he did intend to introduce indentured labour, to the detriment of the working men at present in the colony.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. STEVENSON said, then what was the use of getting that labour at all? The hon. Premier had told the planters that his solution of the Labour question was, instead of getting coolie labour to get cheap white labour.

The PREMIER: Never.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government told a deputation which waited upon him at Mackay that the solution of the Labour question was this: that, instead of looking to the South Sea Islands for labour for the sugar industry, they were to look to the continent of Europe to get cheap white labour.

The PREMIER: I did not.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman did say so, and he would repeat it as long as he liked. He had read the statement in the papers, although the hon. gentleman might say he had been misrepresented, as he had said over and over again. A deputation waited upon the hon. gentleman at Mackay with reference to labour for the sugar industry, and he advised them, instead of looking to the South Sea Islands, to look to the continent of Europe.

The PREMIER: I would like to see the report of that deputation.

Mr. STEVENSON said he remembered reading it. If the hon. gentleman did see it, he would say he was misrepresented, as he had often done before. At the same time he knew that the hon. gentleman did say it, and he was perfectly certain that the hon. member for Mackay could produce the report. The hon. gentleman's statement simply meant that if they did away with kanaka labour, and did not introduce coolies, the sugar industry was done, unless the hon. gentleman could find a way of introducing cheap European labour. It simply resolved itself into that. The hon. gentleman said he never said so. Then what was the use of the present Bill? If the hon. gentleman did not mean to reduce wages, so that the sugar industry could exist, what was the good of the Bill? The squatters were not complaining of the rate of wages at present, and he did not know that any other class were. What was the hon. gentleman introducing the Bill for if he did not intend to solve the question of labour for the sugar industry, so that it could live and not be ruined? It had often been said in that Committee that the supply of labour from the British Islands was exhausted. The hon. gentleman admitted that he could not possibly get labour from England, Scotland, or Ireland, to solve the question of how to provide labour for the sugar industry. He could not get

cheap enough labour from that quarter. He then admitted that he must get labour from Italy, Germany, Malta, or some other place to solve the difficulty; and he did this simply to show that he did not want to ruin the sugar industry. He (Mr. Stevenson) said that if the hon. gentleman did not mean to introduce cheaper labour than could be got in the colony at the present moment for the sugar industry, his idea must be to reduce the wages of the white men of the colony. There was not the slightest doubt about that, because it was clearly shown that the object of the Bill was to keep the promise made by the Premier to the constituencies when he was elected, that he would do away with black labour in any shape—not only with kanakas but also with coolies. That promise was made to the constituencies, but the hon. gentleman could not keep his promise in a straightforward manner. As was pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, a man in his position ought to put his foot down and say, "I will have no black labour from a certain date." But he did not do that. He simply harassed the planters by the restrictions he imposed on the introduction of kanakas, so that now there was not the slightest chance of obtaining South Sea Island labourers. In fact it was pretty well known by those who had tried to procure island labourers that instructions had been given to the Government agents to put every obstruction in the way of recruiting them.

The PREMIER: That statement is absolutely without foundation.

Mr. STEVENSON: I say those are the instructions given to Government agents by the gentleman at the head of the Immigration Office.

The PREMIER: I must rise formally to state that there is not a shadow of foundation for the statement the hon. gentleman is making.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. gentleman often put himself in a position that he was not able to prove, when everything was brought forward. He put himself in such a position that hon. members could not bring evidence to the House to show that the statements he made in that House were not true. Lawyer-like, he sheltered himself in a position in regard to which they could not get evidence. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well, and they all knew, that since the hon. gentleman came into power vessels had gone to the South Sea Islands to procure labour under proper conditions, and in accordance with the spirit of the Act; but the hon. gentleman had given such instructions through the Immigration Agent to the Government agents, that it was impossible to get labourers. It was a well-known fact that planters were so harassed in that matter that it was simply impossible to send a vessel to the South Seas for labourers, except at such a loss as meant ruin. If the hon. gentleman had any idea that the sugar industry should exist at all, the only idea under the Bill—considering the position that he had put the planters in with regard to black labour, and with regard to coolie labour—was to introduce white labour at a cheaper rate than the planters could get it in the colony at the present time. Must not that have the effect of cheapening labour all over the colony? That was the argument he (Mr. Stevenson) advanced. It had been clearly proved by the hon. member for Mackay, and other hon. members, that if they were going to have a supply of that kind of labour, and it was to do any good to the sugar industry—which he (Mr. Stevenson) doubted very much, unless it was introduced to a very large extent—it would spread all over the colony and cheapen the rate of labour generally.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished to correct the hon. the Premier in one or two matters. The hon. gentleman stated that evening that he (Mr. Morehead) had made a misstatement in saying that the late Government had made arrangements with the Indian Government for bringing coolies here under certain regulations and restrictions. The hon. gentleman contradicted him, and said that they had not done so. The statement he (Mr. Morehead) made was perfectly correct; and there were hon. gentlemen in that House who knew that they had done so, among whom was the hon. member for Port Curtis. The hon. gentleman further stated that he was in error when he said that the hon. gentleman had in any way attempted to injure the great sugar-producing industry. Well, the hon. gentleman had dealt with that question with the cunning brutality that was characteristic of the feline race—in the way a cat played with a mouse. The cat gave the mouse a slight tap and then ran away, and then gave it another tap and ran away again, but not so far. Finally the mouse was crushed, but sometimes it escaped. He (Mr. Morehead) hoped that in this case the sugar industry would escape.

The PREMIER said he rose to say once more that no instructions whatever had been given by him or by the Government to Government agents in the Pacific Island trade, except the instructions published in the *Government Gazette*; and that any statement made to the contrary was absolutely without foundation. It was analogous to other statements that he had referred to at an earlier period of the evening. With respect to the late Government and coolies, he would have understood the complaint of the hon. gentleman, if he (the Premier) had said they had not done all in their power to introduce coolies into the colony. He was glad the hon. member for Normanby had at last said what had been kept in the background so long—what they really meant when they complained that the Government were harassing the planters. They had it out at last—the harassings meant the restrictions placed on the South Sea Island trade by the regulations under the Act. If labour vessels had not been harassed in that way, many months would not have passed before the Imperial Government would have declared that they should be treated as pirates.

Mr. JORDAN said he rose to correct the hon. member for Balonne. He never proposed or said anything about 40,000 immigrants in a year—that was mentioned by the Premier. He never spoke at South Brisbane of cheap labour for the planters. What he said was that there would be no difficulty in getting a sufficient and regular supply for the plantations of respectable labourers suitable for the work they would have to do—men who would be only too glad to come out for two years, at 15s. a week with rations. He could not suppose for a moment that the hon. member would misrepresent anything he had said, but his memory must be a short one; and, considering that he was a young man compared with him (Mr. Jordan), he should have a longer memory. The hon. member knew well that he had corrected that mistake several times; and he appealed to hon. gentlemen—there were several who heard what he said at South Brisbane—whether he was not correct in saying that what he said on that occasion was, 15s. a week in addition to rations, with an engagement for two years.

Mr. GRIMES said he could not help thinking, while listening to the speeches of hon. members opposite, that if there were no *Hansard* very few of those speeches would have been made.

Nearly the whole of them were addressed, not to hon. members, but to the working men outside, the voters of the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRIMES said he could tell hon. members opposite that they had mistaken the voters of the colony. They were too intelligent to be bamboozled by speeches from those hon. gentlemen; and there was not that amount of jealous feeling in the minds of the true working men of the colony to make them feel that there was not room for thousands more of their own people and the people from the Continent.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who are the best employers of white labour in this House?

Mr. GRIMES said there was plenty of room for all; and he maintained that the Bill would not lower the wages of the agricultural labourer. A great deal had been said about cheap labour. He thought those who talked so much about cheap labour did not know what it really was. Cheap labour, he took it, was intelligent labour—where a man, on being told to do certain work, honestly did that work without blunders; and that kind of labour would maintain its wage all over the colony. The real agricultural labourer, if he did not command his wage in working for a master, had the opportunity under the land laws—and much more so under the new Bill—of starting a farm of his own; and that was the reason why he did not fear that the agricultural labourer, if agricultural labourers only were brought out under the Bill, would lower the wages of other working men one penny. There was a great deal of difference between low-wage men and cheap labour. They sometimes got low-wage men offering, whose work was not by any means cheap labour. They were broken-down swells who would be gentlemen but had lost the needful. Their pockets were not deep enough, or if deep enough were empty, and not knowing how to earn a living in any other way, and fearing to lose caste by remaining in the towns, they went outside and offered themselves for 5s. and 6s. a week and rations. There was another class—the so-called young gentleman—it was a mistake to call him “gentleman”—who had been forced to leave his home for fear of being disgraced or exposed by reason of some shady transaction. Those individuals came out and skulked to outside places where they were willing to work for little or nothing, if only they could hide themselves from those who would know them. But that was not cheap labour; it was very dear labour, and anyone who knew anything about managing a farm would never take them into his employ. It was not often that the agricultural labourer moved into other spheres, except to become his own master. It was seldom that they became bricklayers’ or blacksmiths’ labourers or even navvies. It was well known that they seldom shifted, even when railways were made in the immediate vicinity of farms. His firm had had experience of that. Though men had been able to earn 6s., 7s., and 8s. a day on railways in the vicinity of their land, their men preferred to stay at the work to which they were accustomed. The agricultural labourer would sooner accept a moderate wage and constant employment at work to which he had been used, than labour as a bricklayer’s or blacksmith’s labourer, or a navvy. Therefore, he did not fear that the Bill would have the effect of lowering the wages of the agricultural labourer. As he said before, when he could not command his wage, he would be able to go on land of his own—and there would thus be an outlet for the surplus labour. The hon. member for Mackay said that a large number of Europeans would have to be introduced to take the place of the kanakas on the plantations, and

that they would spread themselves abroad and reduce the rate of wages. But there would be plenty of work to be obtained on the plantations if it was true that no more kanakas could be obtained; and he believed that, when once white men were employed on the plantations, the planters would be able to give better wages and would have their work done more cheaply. The planters had said up till now that they did not want cheap labour—they wanted more reliable labour; and he said that by passing the Bill they would make provision for the most reliable labour they could get.

Mr. BLACK said he quite agreed with most of the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley. At the same time he wished to point out that the very thing on which he argued—that the labourer, if not satisfied, would be able to get a piece of land, cultivate it, and become his own master—was exactly what he stated would undoubtedly happen. But that did not solve that very difficult question. The Premier promised last session that he would bring down a comprehensive scheme by which labour should be supplied to the plantations. Without in any way disparaging the qualifications of the European labourers whom they would be compelled to bring out, he felt bound to say that they could not be the reliable labour that was essential to the successful working of the plantations. Within six months after their arrival they would see that they were working at a lower rate of wages than other men doing the same work alongside of them were getting. The consequence would be that they would become dissatisfied, and, no doubt, under the provisions of the new Land Bill, their first idea would be to get a piece of land and work it themselves. He was not prepared to say whether they would succeed or not, but the planter would be left without the reliable labour which he considered essential. The Premier wanted to know what it was that the Government were accused of doing, when it was charged against them that they were ruining, or had ruined, the sugar industry. He (Mr. Black) was prepared to show not only that they were ruining the sugar industry, but that they had ruined it. The ruin of the sugar industry dated from the moment that hon. gentleman came into office. It was brought about by the electioneering utterances of the Premier especially, and those of his party. The hon. gentleman wished it to be understood that the issue at the last general election was chiefly on the Black Labour question. His (Mr. Black’s) opinion was that it was not entirely so, but that the objection of the electorates, as far as he understood it, was to the indiscriminate employment of coloured labour. He believed he was correct in saying that the majority of the Northern constituencies said, “Keep your kanakas, but keep them on the plantations.” They objected to the time-expired kanaka rambling off the plantations and being employed in pursuits for which he was not introduced, and thereby competing with the European labour of the colony. But this Bill proposed to interfere in a very much more dangerous manner with the legitimate employment of Europeans. The Northern constituencies would have been willing to admit coolies, but the Premier was always saying, “If you once admit coolies you can never regulate them; you will be flooded with hordes, with millions of them, and Europeans will be driven out of the colony.” That was a most exaggerated way of putting it. Such a state of affairs was never likely to be brought about, and the hon. gentleman knew that it would be quite as easy to control the employment of coolies as of kanakas. The same clause which prevented the employment of kanakas outside the plantations could be made to restrict the

employment of coolies. That was the first blow at the sugar industry. The following passage in the Governor's Opening Speech—and he assumed that it expressed the intentions of the hon. gentleman as the head of the Government—confirmed the opinions of the investing public on the subject:—

"The subject of immigration, and of the supply of labour for the numerous and increasing industries of the colony, has received the anxious attention of my advisers. Improved arrangements will shortly be completed for the selection of suitable immigrants in Great Britain and the Continent of Europe, and for their conveyance on arrival to the places where their labour is most required; and a Bill will be laid before you to amend the provisions of the Immigration Act relating to the engagement and introduction of indentured labourers from Europe. I trust that by these means, and by offering liberal inducements to settle upon the public lands, a constant stream of immigrants of all classes may be steadily maintained without an undue burden being laid upon the Treasury, and that the dangers attendant upon the introduction of large numbers of Asiatics into the community may be successfully avoided."

That, in the opinion of anyone having any knowledge of tropical agriculture, was seen at once to forbode the ruin of the sugar industry. It was no use hon. members looking at the question from a sentimental point of view. Either the industry must pay, or it must go to the wall. It was an industry which required far more capital than the ordinary agricultural industries of the South, and it was absurd to expect to get a settlement of small farmers who had the capital necessary for its development. It was therefore considered, as soon as the intentions of the Government were clearly laid down in the Governor's Speech, that the sugar industry was likely to be in a very bad way indeed. And that had been the result. The financial institutions of the colony, to whom every industry had to look for occasional assistance, had simply put their foot down, and would give no further assistance. It was not that they preferred a man with a coloured face to a man with a white face, but they knew from the experience of all sugar-growing countries that the cultivation of sugar in Australia must be carried on on the same terms as elsewhere, if it was to compete with them in the markets of the world. That was why he considered the Government had, since their accession to office—perhaps not intentionally—by their labour policy—ruined the sugar industry. But that industry had been harassed in many other ways, and he should not now again refer to them, but that the Premier so persistently got up, and in a most innocent manner—although knowing that he (Mr. Black) was in possession of the facts—asked—"What have we done? You are always accusing us of having brought this ruin about, but what have we done?" The hon. gentleman knew the ruin he was bringing about by the way in which he was putting the regulations under the Act into force. One of the first acts of the Government after they came into office was to have their attention called to an anonymous letter which they must have known was written by one of their own officers—an anonymous letter about the state of the kanaka hospital at Mackay. That officer's name was Mr. Latour, who had been referred to in terms of praise rather higher than he deserved. It was the Government who were to blame for allowing the hospital to get into such a disgraceful state, and Mr. Latour would have been perfectly justified in writing a report to the Government on the subject, but he was not justified, as a Civil servant, in writing anonymous letters to the Press about it. He thought that when the Premier found that one of his own officers was so transgressing the rules of the Civil Service his suspicions should have been aroused, and he should not have

allowed that gentleman to go on a labour vessel to continue the system of bringing almost every vessel to grief that he had to do with.

The PREMIER: He had gone away before that, and has only just come back.

Mr. BLACK: He would again refer to the case of the "Heath," as he had already done this session. Did that not show the harassing policy of the Government? Did the Government intend to compensate the owners for the loss they had sustained through the incompetency of one of their officers—the Government Agent who went down with the vessel? What had the owners done that they should be mulcted in a sum of £3,000 on account of the incompetency of Mr. Duffield, the Government Agent? That vessel, he was informed, would be taken out of the trade when she returned. Was not the conduct of the Government with regard to that vessel harassing? Was it not a vexatious interference with the trade? It would be far better for them to sweep away the whole thing than pretend to encourage the planters in getting a supply of that labour, while at the same time they were putting all the harassing conditions in the way that they could, knowing that they would shortly strangle the sugar industry. Then there was another case which he referred to earlier in the session. The Premier said he knew nothing at all about it. The case was where a large employer sent down forms regarding islanders, and in the columns where it is stated for what purpose they were to be employed a mistake was made in the department. The application was returned to him, and it was a considerable time before the Government admitted the mistake that had been made and allowed the application to be confirmed.

The PREMIER: I knew nothing about it until the hon. member stated it in the House.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman knew it perfectly well. If he did not know it, he ought to have known it. If there were more intelligent persons to administer the department there would be far less reason to complain. It was evident that the feeling of the country was not unanimously against the employment of black labour on the plantations. Both the hon. members for Maryborough had admitted that they, at all events, were returned as being in favour of kanakas being employed under proper regulations. He did not think any hon. member would wish to see them employed without those regulations. But what was proposed to be done now? In the Governor's Speech it was stated that a constant stream of labourers of all classes might be maintained without any undue burden being laid on the Treasury. Up to the present time the planter had paid for the importation of the labour he required. Surely, if he thought that European labourers would perform the work, would he not indent them under the Act of 1882, by which he would only have to pay £2 a head, rather than pay £25 to introduce Polynesians? What difference was there between the present proposal and the Act of 1882, with its £2 a head? They were identically the same. But the planters knew perfectly well that Europeans would not do the work. He was not prepared to say that they were not physically able to do it; but work that was done by coloured men was naturally distasteful to a European, and he would not do it. They were told that labour would be introduced without any undue burden on the Treasury; but they knew that the cost was to be £15 a head; and now there was an amendment proposed by

which every indentured labourer was to get a £20 land-order into the bargain. It said:—

"Any indentured labourer who shall well and faithfully serve his employer for the term of two years after his arrival in the colony, and shall not be guilty of any breach of the conditions of his engagement, shall, on proof of such service to the satisfaction of the commissioner, be entitled to a land-order of the nominal value of £20."

Was that the way in which labour was to be introduced without any undue burden on the Treasury? It seemed to him a very peculiar way. If the Bill and that amendment passed every indentured labourer would cost £35. And what for?—to try an experiment which would have the effect of ruining the sugar industry and bringing disaster on the whole of the working men of the country! The sum of £35 was to be paid to introduce cheap white labour in order to compete with the existing white labour in the colony. The existing white labour would be handicapped to such an extent that everyone would go in for cheap indentured labour. It was compelling the sugar-planter, against his will, to try an experiment which he did not believe would ever be successful. But a very much worse result would be that all branches of trade and commerce would be equally affected. One section of the community would enjoy what other sections did not enjoy, and they would go in for introducing the cheapest description of labour they could get to do their work.

The PREMIER said he was not going to enter fully into the labyrinth of the hon. gentleman's speech, because he had said nothing that was at all new, except the illustrations he had given of the harassing of the planters by the Government. He was glad the hon. gentleman had given these instances, because they now knew what he considered harassing to be. The hon. gentleman gave three instances. One was that some months ago, shortly after the new regulations were made, some clerk in the office made a mistake. That mistake was never brought under his notice or that of the Under Colonial Secretary, and nobody heard anything of it until the hon. gentleman mentioned it in the House. Long before that time it had been corrected. Was a mistake of a subordinate clerk in the department to be looked upon as deliberate action on the part of the Government to harass a class of employers? It was a very strange thing that his attention was not called to the matter before the hon. member brought it up in the House. Another illustration was the receipt of a complaint made some months ago about the condition of the Kanaka Hospital at Mackay, for which it was said the Government were to blame. He admitted that the Government were very much to blame; but what Government? Why, the Government that made the arrangements! That was not the present but the preceding Government. The first the present Government heard of it was when they received complaints that the arrangements were not satisfactory.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: "When was that?"

The PREMIER: In February, when the hon. gentleman was away. As soon as the complaint was made, immediate steps were taken. A reference to the papers laid on the table of the House would show that there was not a delay of twenty-four hours. Immediate steps were taken to remedy the evils as soon as full information was obtained. The papers laid on the table of the House would show that in no case was there a delay of twenty-four hours. He knew that on one occasion he received the papers late at night,

and went through them at once; and by 10 o'clock next morning full instructions were given to carry out what had been determined upon. The third illustration which had been given of the harassing conduct of the Government was the case of the "Heath." He was glad that case was mentioned. A shipload of Pacific Islanders were brought to the colony, and when they arrived it was found that not one of them had the remotest idea of the nature of his engagement. It was also found that they were all in such a condition that if they had been allowed to remain in the colony for a month or two they would all have died. What could any Government do under such circumstances—any Government worthy of the name of men—human beings—anything but slave-drivers or taskmasters—but direct them to be taken back to the islands? No man with the ordinary senses of humanity or decency could have acted otherwise than have them taken back to the islands from which they should never have been brought.

Mr. BLACK: Whose fault was it?

The PREMIER: The fault of the man who engaged them—who enticed them to go on board the ship. The Government were not responsible for the action of the recruiting agent appointed by the owners, and who decoyed the natives on the ship in that way.

Mr. BLACK: Who appointed him?

The PREMIER: The recruiting agent was appointed by the owners of the ship. That the Government Agent had not done his duty he would admit, as he had admitted before. The hon. gentleman spoke of this as harassing the planters. Where did the harassing come in? He supposed what the Government ought to have done, according to the hon. member's idea, was to allow these natives to go to the plantations and die like rotten sheep. Then the owners of the ship would have got their £3,000. What other course was there for the Government to take? There was no middle course between the two—either to let the owners earn their blood-money, and allow the men to die, to the everlasting disgrace of the colony, or to send them back and give them a chance of life. The Government adopted the latter course, and that was what the hon. gentleman called "harassing the planters." So long as the present Government remained in power, any man who decoyed men to the colony in that way would be harassed in the same manner, or even more severely. If that vessel had fallen in with one of Her Majesty's ships she would in all probability have long since been forfeited, and the persons on board would have received a severe punishment which they would have well deserved. Those were instances of "harassing." If the hon. gentleman had any more of the same kind he should be proud to hear of them. He was proud of actions of that kind; he would be ashamed to hold his office for a single hour and allow such matters to pass and treat them otherwise than he had done.

Mr. BLACK said it was all very well for the hon. member to assume that air of virtuous indignation outside the House where he was not known. He quite endorsed the hon. gentleman's action in sending those men back; that was a most justifiable thing to do; but what he blamed him for was, sending a Government agent down who, if he was to be believed, had gone with a secret commission from the hon. the Premier. He had stated to a certain extent in vague terms, but yet somewhat distinctly, that that commission was to act as special reporter for the hon. the Premier.

Mr. BLACK: You know he had no such commission,

Mr. BLACK : I do not know it.

The PREMIER : You do know it.

Mr. BLACK said he knew nothing of the kind. It was all very well for the hon. gentleman to talk about blood-money, and all that sort of thing. He was perfectly justified in sending these men back, but he was not justified in sending down a Government agent ostensibly to see that the trade was properly carried out, but really for the purpose of preventing any honestly inclined captain from ever getting any labour at all. Who had framed the regulations? The hon. gentleman himself—he and his Cabinet. They did not receive the assent of the House, as they should have done, before having the force of law. If they had received the assent of the House they would have been put in something like an intelligible form. The clause about interpreters rendered recruiting almost impossible. To anyone at all acquainted with the labour traffic, it was well known that the inhabitants of nearly every island spoke a different language. It was quite possible to get a boy at the island who had been to the plantations and could interpret between the Government Agent and the natives, and assure the Government Agent that the boys were properly recruited. But these men were supposed to come down here; and they were not always willing to come to Queensland for the purpose of satisfying the Inspector of Polynesians that the boys were properly recruited. There was hardly a clause in the regulations which had not been framed in such a loose and vague way that it could be used for the purpose of harassing those engaged in the trade. He would rather see the whole thing swept away than left in the hands of a hostile Government.

The PREMIER said there was one other charge of harassing he had overlooked. He had been asked whether the Government had censured Mr. De Latour for writing the anonymous letter. As soon as it was alleged that that gentleman had written the letter, the Government called upon him for an explanation. At that time he had gone to the South Seas, and did not return until a fortnight ago, and since then he had resigned; so there was an end of that matter. The hon. member had complained of the regulation requiring that there should be an interpreter aboard the labour vessels to enable the Government officer at the port of arrival to see that the men understood the nature of their engagement. Could any hon. member object to that? The very Act passed by the Government of which the hon. leader of the Opposition was head, required the immigration agent on the arrival of the ship to satisfy himself that the boys understood the nature of the engagement; but that was not carried out because there was no interpreter—no man in the colony who could speak the men's language. How could the officer carry out his duty with no interpreter? The very statement of the objection amounted to this: that it was perfectly immaterial to the persons making the objection whether the men understood their engagement or not. All they cared for was to have the men; and to insist that they should understand their engagement was to them perfectly monstrous! All he had to say was, that the engagement of men who did not understand the nature of their engagement was nothing more nor less than slavery.

Mr. NORTON said he could not but think that the hon. member had overstated the case with regard to the "Heath." He did not wish to say it was not right to send these men back, but the hon. member had talked rather loudly about blood-money and kidnapping. But what was the report of the gentleman who, in a

pamphlet he published, signed himself, "Attorney for the Queensland Government"? Did he report that these men were kidnapped? Did he not report that they came willingly?

The PREMIER : On board the ship.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman said "on board the ship," but why did the attorney for the Queensland Government allow them to be brought on board and taken away if they were unwilling to go? It was the labour agent of the Government who allowed those men to be kidnapped, if there was any kidnapping at all. The Premier overstated the case, because he ignored the statement of the agent—that those islanders were taken willingly on board the ship, and no one was justified in saying they were kidnapped if that statement was true. The agent was surely there for a purpose, and that purpose was to prevent labourers being brought away unless he was satisfied that they came willingly and understood the nature of the agreement they entered into. That was his business; and if he did not see it was carried out properly he was responsible, and ten times more responsible than anyone connected with the ship. He had been somewhat surprised at the arguments used that evening. It had been asserted on the other side that the Bill would not have the effect of reducing the rate of wages throughout the colony. He had not heard a single argument brought forward to justify such an assertion. As a matter of course, if those labourers were brought here in large numbers they must eventually largely reduce the wages of labourers already in the country. Those labourers, they were told, would come out, and after they had served their time on the plantations they would settle down on the land and become employers of labour themselves. How were they to do it? How were men who were not able to pay their own passage money to the colony, after working a couple of years for £30 or £40 a year, to take up land and employ others to cultivate it? Where were their funds to come from to enable them to do that? Concerning the amendment proposed by the junior member for South Brisbane, if the Government intended to accept it they could easily understand how those labourers could get the land, because it proposed that they were to get a piece of land after they had fulfilled their agreement. If this Bill passed into law as it stood it would be absolutely prohibitory for such men settling upon the land; because, before they got the land they would have to fence it in. And he said that a man coming out here at a moderately high rate of wages, even if he saved all his wages, would not be in a position to fence in the whole of his land. If the Government accepted the amendment of the hon. member it would just amount to this: that the taxpayers of the colony would be paying at the rate of £15 per head for introducing labourers to compete with themselves; and then at the end of their term those men who came fresh to the colony would be given a piece of land, which they could cultivate or hold as their own. But what would be the position of those who were already here? They were to be tied down to the land like slaves; they must remain upon the land for ten years, and fence in their selections before they could get the land; and, after paying a rent for ten years, they were then obliged to pay £1 per acre for all they wished to buy. If the amendment of the junior member for South Brisbane was accepted, it would be unfair to the men already in the colony that they should not be treated in the same way; and, on the other hand, if the amendment was not accepted, and the Bill was passed as it stood, it would be

absolutely impossible for the labourers introduced under it to take up land at all. After they had served their term as indentured labourers they would have to go on as labourers for several years—until they had sufficient money to enable them to take up land. He had been somewhat surprised with regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Oxley concerning "broken-down swells."

Mr. GRIMES: I said "low-waged men."

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know what they had to do with the Bill. He hoped they were not going to bring them out under it.

Mr. GRIMES: I said they came out under the 17th clause.

Mr. NORTON said that under the 17th clause of the present Act the Government had only to pay £10 a head for the immigrants who came out under it; but under the Bill before him, if it became law, their friends had but to pay £1 per head, and the Government paid the rest; so that those valuable agricultural labourers would be brought out to the colony at £15 per head, and he was sure the hon. member for Oxley would be very glad to have plenty of them. He did not think the arguments with regard to "broken-down swells," or young men who found it desirable to leave their own country and get to a distance, applied to the Bill at all. All the arguments adduced and the statements made on the other side absolutely failed to prove that the effect of the Bill would not be to reduce the rate of wages in the colony. He would point out one fact, which he wondered more reference had not been made to, and that was the difference between the class of labour proposed to be introduced, and the class which had been imported by the planter hitherto. The *kamakas* had been brought here at the expense of the planters, and they had been kept here at the expense of the planters. The planters paid for them if they got sick, and paid their return passages from the colony to their islands. He believed the result of that had been beneficial to all classes of the community. The planters had paid the whole cost of their present labour; but, in the case of the men proposed to be brought out under the Bill, the planters would not pay the expenses of bringing them out here at all. It was the taxpayer of the colony who would have to pay those expenses. The taxpayers of the colony would either have to provide the money for their introduction, or the money for their introduction would be raised by loan; and the taxpayers would have to pay interest upon that. The circumstances were entirely different. He wondered that no reference had been made to that point before. For his own part he thought the Bill would have a very bad effect.

The PREMIER: You took no objection whatever to it on the second reading.

Mr. NORTON asked, did the hon. member say that they took no objection to the Bill on the second reading?

The PREMIER: That is what we were told then. Even the acting leader of the Opposition said so.

Mr. NORTON: He was quite sure that the effect of the Bill would be not only to compel planters to bring out agricultural labour, but many other classes would also avail themselves of the same opportunity. It was not only the men who would be brought out to serve on the plantations who would enter into competition with those already in the colony, but those introduced for other purposes would come just as much in contact with the labouring classes.

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The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he would like to know what the Premier desired to do. They had had a very good night's discussion, and they had sat long enough for an ordinary sitting. They could not keep on at the present rate, and he believed the Premier thought it was time to adjourn.

The PREMIER: Postpone the preamble and we will adjourn.

Question—That the preamble be postponed—put.

The PREMIER said, after the acting leader of the Opposition said that there was no great objection to the Bill, he did not anticipate that they should have had four hours' debate on the general labour question.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You will have forty.

The PREMIER said, if it was desired to stonewall the Bill, hon. gentlemen on the other side could adopt that course. If they did not wish any agricultural labour to be introduced into the colony for the relief of the suffering agriculturist, they had better say so.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he thought the hon. the Premier was now in the position of a man who had been found out. He had tried to pass through the House a little Bill which was of more importance than he had at first made out. He put that Bill before the House purposely that they should not understand it. The sting was in the schedule; the schedule was in reality the whole Bill. Those principles of the Bill were not understood before, and that was the reason why the motion for the second reading was accepted. If those principles had been more thoroughly understood, no one would have dreamt of accepting them. Hon. members need not think that the Bill would pass before it was thoroughly trashed out. They would spend hours upon the subject yet, but if the hon. the Premier wished to withdraw it let him do so, and they would also have a great deal to say upon that course of action.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he wished to put the Premier right with reference to what he said on the second reading of the Bill. What he said was—

"It is quite evident that there can be no great objection to this amending Bill, as proposed by the Premier."

He had guarded himself by saying "as proposed by the Premier," which meant as set forth by the Premier; but his recent exposition had completely changed the aspect of the Bill.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said his train went at fifteen minutes past 11 o'clock, and he had something to say with regard to the statements made by the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Balonne. He would, however, defer what he had got to say to a future time.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said the order of business on the paper would be the second reading of the Defence Bill and the consideration in committee of the Health Bill and the Immigration Bill.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I think we have seen the last of the Immigration Bill.

The House adjourned at six minutes past 11 o'clock.