

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Tuesday, 9 September, 1884.*

Absence of the Sergeant-at-Arms.—Maryborough Town Hall Bill.—Skyring's Road Bill.—Maryborough Race-course Bill.—Maryborough School of Arts Bill.—Petition.—Estimates for the Year 1884-5.—Messages from the Governor.—Petition.—Health Bill—third reading.—Immigration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill.—committee.—Adjournment.

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

ABSENCE OF THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a letter from the Sergeant-at-Arms informing him that he was unable, through illness, to discharge his duties, and requesting a week's leave of absence, which had been granted. During that time, the Clerk Assistant, Mr. Ivory, had kindly consented to undertake the duties of the office.

MARYBOROUGH TOWN HALL BILL.

Mr. BAILEY, as Chairman, brought up the Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into this Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

SKYRING'S ROAD BILL.

Mr. BEATTIE, as Chairman, brought up the Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into this Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

MARYBOROUGH RACECOURSE BILL.

Mr. BAILEY, as Chairman, brought up the Report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into this Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

MARYBOROUGH SCHOOL OF ARTS BILL.

Mr. BAILEY presented a petition from the trustees of an allotment of land granted for the purpose of a School of Arts, at Maryborough, to sell the same, or a portion thereof, together with the buildings erected thereon, and devote the proceeds to the building of a new School of Arts.

Petition read and received; and, on the motion of Mr. BAILEY, leave was given to introduce a Bill with the above object.

PETITION.

Mr. BLACK said he presented a petition from 1,574 residents of the—

ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR 1884-5.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Governor stating that certain clerical errors had occurred in the Estimates-in-Chief for 1884-5, which accompanied His Excellency's message No. 21 of the 4th September, and transmitting, for the consideration of the Legislative Assembly, amended Estimates-in-Chief for 1884-5; also requesting that the Estimates previously forwarded be returned.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) moved that the Estimates be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does the hon. Treasurer intend making any motion with regard to the Estimates to be sent back?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes; immediately.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What is the motion?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That the request contained in His Excellency's message be complied with.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman ought to have explained what course he proposes to adopt. We are not going to do things in the dark. I submit that the Colonial Treasurer ought to have made his first motion in such a way that we might understand exactly what is wanted.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the request contained in His Excellency's message be complied with, and that an address be presented to His Excellency returning the Estimates which accompanied his former message. I will take this opportunity of explaining that it was only to-day that an error was discovered in the Estimates in connection with the salary of the Agent-General, which, instead of appearing in the ordinary way, as for the Agent-General's Office in London, has been inadvertently placed in the Schedules. I do not know how this came to pass. It seems to have been by some misunderstanding through Mr. Garrick being a member of the Government. It has been transferred, without any authority, to the Schedules, and consequently we wish to replace it in its proper position under the heading "Agent-General's Department." Then again another error has arisen in connection with the remodelling of the Registrar-General's Office, in the formation of the new department of the Registrar of Titles. The salary of the Master of Titles for the last nine months has been inadvertently omitted. Those two are the only errors. They increase the expenditure by £300.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I am rather surprised to hear the statement made by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer that this error was only discovered to-day. I saw it before, when the Estimates were put into my hand the other day, but I did not then think it was an error. When I first saw the extraordinary announcement made in the Schedules that the Agent-General had a salary of £1,500 a year, I took it that it was part of the very high-handed proceeding of the Government, by which they appointed that officer a member of the Executive Council. That was done by them without consulting Parliament, and it did not come to me a bit strange that this salary got into the Schedule without the sanction of Parliament. I am perfectly confident that it did not get there through any error on the part of the officers in the Treasury. I never for a moment dreamt that it was a mere clerical error. Why it was not discovered before is surprising to me.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: Ministers are not supposed to do the clerical work of their departments. When these Estimates were last read by Ministers there was no mistake in them; and I think, when Ministers have carefully revised their Estimates and seen that they are right, they are entitled to assume that no alteration will be made without consulting them. The fact is as my hon. colleague has stated. How the error arose I do not know.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I am not out of order, I think, in what I am about to say. I cannot congratulate our Clerk Assistant upon the way in which he has performed the duty of

Sergeant-at-Arms this afternoon. I think it is positively indecent to see a messenger from the Governor, or anybody else, coming in and interrupting any hon. member in this House in the way the hon. member for Mackay was interrupted just now when presenting a petition. It is an insult to this House.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER said: I would like to say, in reference to what has fallen from the hon. member for Mulgrave, that I have spoken with regard to the introduction of the messenger from His Excellency the Governor; and I am quite sure that what took place this afternoon was an inadvertence on the part of His Excellency's messenger. I will take care that it does not occur again.

PETITION.

Mr. BLACK said: I will now present the petition which I was proceeding to lay before the House when the message from His Excellency was announced. The petition is signed by 1,574 residents of the north-east coast of Queensland, and prays that the Act relating to the introduction of coolie labour be put in force in order to provide a remedy for the collapse of the sugar industry, which is otherwise imminent from the failure of the Polynesian supply of labour. The signatures comprise 1,017 residents of Mackay, 189 of Bowen and its vicinity, 301 of the Burdekin Delta, 67 of Cooktown, and McIvor, Endeavour, and Aman Rivers, and Bloomfield; and consist of labourers, selectors, farmers, merchants, planters, and others. I move that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read and received.

HEALTH BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee to further consider this Bill in detail.

On clause 1—"Act to be read with 46 Vic., No. 7"—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he would like some information from the Premier as to what action he had taken, or was prepared to take, in the event of the Bill becoming law—whether anyone had been in correspondence with him on the subject, whether applications had been made by planters and others for indented labourers, and what number of men he was likely to allow to be indented for work on the plantations?

The PREMIER said he could not give a direct answer to the question. He had received nothing but very general communications up to the present time. What he had done, however, was to communicate with the Agent-General by wire, asking him to make the necessary inquiries as to the best means of conveying emigrants from certain foreign countries, and no doubt in the course of a week or two would be able to furnish information on the subject. He could not do more than conjecture what number of ships would be required. He had received information from some parts of the North that it was desired to take advantage of the provisions of the Bill, if it was passed; but to what extent he could not tell. When the infor-

mation was forthcoming the Government would endeavour to anticipate their wishes by appointing agents for the purpose of selecting and shipping the emigrants, when the employers' arrangements were made and the necessary contracts entered into.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if the Premier would inform the Committee from what particular parts of Europe he intended those men to be shipped, and whether if a man had a fancy for men from any particular country that fancy would be gratified. It would be interesting and rather important to know from what country the hon. gentleman intended to bring those foreign emigrants.

The PREMIER said the only countries he mentioned in the telegram to the Agent-General were Norway, Denmark, and Germany. As he had said on previous occasions, the Government did not recognise it as their duty to engage servants for persons, but to enable them to get servants by assisting immigration. As to the question put by the hon. member, the Government were not prepared to answer abstract questions. A person might wish to import indented labourers from Lapland, and the Government would refuse to assist him.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman had himself raised an abstract question. He did not himself see any objection to Laplanders, and he had never heard anything about them leading him to believe that they would make worse colonists than the people of the other countries mentioned. He would like to know, from the Premier, if it was true that arrangements had been made—if not perfected—to bring out Portuguese? That was a statement that had been made and commented upon in the public Press.

The PREMIER said that, like many other statements said to have been made in the public Press, that was the first time he had heard of it. He did not read the whole of the public Press, but he knew that many statements were made in it about alleged actions of the Government which the Government had never heard of.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Premier need not be at all surprised that the Opposition were anxious to be informed with regard to the operation of the Bill; and so was the country. The question he had asked was certainly not an abstract question.

The PREMIER said the question he referred to was the one asked by the hon. member for Balonne.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had seen a statement made in one of the Premier's speeches—he forgot where—to the effect that negotiations were going on for a line of steamers from some port of Germany to the colony, bringing immigrants here direct. Were those negotiations with the Government?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked with whom the negotiations were being made? He asked the question because the Premier had put the Bill in a very important place in the Opening Speech, and had also referred to it at public meetings before the opening of the session, as a measure on a broad basis to provide for the wants of the sugar-planters and other agriculturists in the colony. The Opposition were very anxious to know how the scheme was going to work, and that, while working well for the sugar-planters, it did not work harm to others. They wanted the fullest information as to the nationality of the men who were going in future to be their rulers, because if they introduced anything like the number of men required for the purpose of carrying on the sugar industry—at least a million would

be required—they were bound by sheer force of numbers to become their masters, and it was important to know exactly the kind of men to whom they were going to hand over the destinies of the colony. Would the hon. gentleman produce the telegram he forwarded to the Agent-General? They could understand better from it what information the Agent-General was asked to furnish, and what instructions were given to him on the subject.

The PREMIER said he could almost repeat the telegram from memory. It was to this effect:—

"Make inquiries as to the best means of conveying emigrants by steamer from Norway, Denmark, and Germany."

He forgot whether the first country mentioned was Norway or Sweden, but that was of no consequence. With regard to the negotiations for a line of German steamers, a good deal had been said in the Press lately about arrangements being made for opening up direct communication between Germany and Australia. Prince Bismarck, it was well known, was anxious to bring about direct communication between Germany and the Pacific, and he had proposed to subsidise a line of mail steamers to Australia. In connection with that or some other line—he confessed he did not know which—he had been waited upon by one or two gentlemen inquiring whether, in the event of such a line of steamers being established, the Government, if introducing immigrants from Germany, would make use of those steamers. The reply of the Government was that probably they would, provided the immigrants arrived in Brisbane, but that their passages would not be paid until they did arrive. No other negotiations had taken place on the subject. He did not recollect whether the persons who communicated with him on the subject were authorised to do so by steamship owners, or simply desired to put themselves in communication with those owners.

Mr. BLACK said he thought the explanation of the Premier would not be very satisfactory to the country generally. He gave them plainly to understand last session that—

"He hoped that next session—"

That was, this session—

"the Government would be in a position to announce that satisfactory arrangements had been made for the introduction into the colony of labour which would obviate the cries that were constantly being made for what was called sometimes servile, and sometimes reliable, labour. At present they were not in a position to bring forward a complete scheme."

At the beginning of the session the hon. gentleman told the House through the Governor:—

"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."

Now, the hon. gentleman gave them distinctly to understand that, beyond communicating recently with the Agent-General as to the facilities for bringing immigrants from the Continent, the Government had actually done nothing. He (Mr. Black) wanted to know how what the hon. gentleman had said during the present session agreed with what he said last session—that he

really had taken steps to alleviate the great depression in tropical agriculture in the North. Last session he said that arrangements had been made; this session he said that arrangements were being made; and now he told the Committee that he had only recently sent a telegram to the Agent-General making inquiries. He (Mr. Black) thought that, in a Bill like that brought forward specially to encourage tropical agriculture, the hon. gentleman had failed in his promise to the House and the country; and that he was really temporising with the question, and promising to do for the sugar industry what he had no intention of doing.

The PREMIER said, did the hon. gentleman expect that the Government were going to charter steamers, arrange when they were to sail, and where they were to sail from, without knowing the number of immigrants likely to be wanted? Everything that they had promised to do they had done. The Agent-General was instructed to make full inquiries, and was in possession of the views of the Government on the subject. It would certainly be the duty of the Government to introduce labourers as far as they could, but he would have to know the number required before arranging for the ships to start. He was sorry there had been so much dilatoriness in applying for labourers. The only distinct request that had been made was from a certain association requesting the Government to bring out 2,000 labourers at 10s. a week.

Mr. BLACK said he did not consider that the Government should put on steamers; but he thought they ought to do something more than bringing in a little Bill of four clauses, which they knew perfectly well would not give the relief asked for. The Government gave a pledge last session. Had they asked the Agent-General to make inquiries on the Continent whether the labourers were really procurable? Had they ascertained from the German Government whether they would allow their able-bodied men to come here and take the place of coloured men on sugar plantations? The planters were only asking what was reasonable; and the Government had done nothing towards introducing that cheap labour which was necessary to save one of the chief agricultural industries from ruin.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said that the Premier told them that the Agent-General was in possession of the views of the Government; and he would like to know what those views were. That was just what they wanted to know. What were their views with regard to the wages at which the Germans were willing to work if brought here for the sugar-planters and other agriculturists? The hon. gentleman informed the House the other day that he would take steps to prevent any difficulty arising from those people being engaged to work at wages that they would afterwards be unwilling to work at, and that he would take care they would not work at a cheaper rate; but his supporters told him that they would very likely work as cheap as the employers could get them. What were the views of the Government on that point? That was a very important subject. If undue means were taken by the planters to secure those men at a rate so low that it would be likely to induce over-employment, what steps were to be taken, as the hon. gentleman threatened he would take, to prevent those men being so employed? Those were two great questions.

The PREMIER said the subject was discussed for a whole night last week, and the views of the Government on the Labour question had been stated plainly enough. They intended to introduce such agricultural labourers as

would ultimately remain here and settle on the soil. Those who desired to introduce some other kind of labourers—aliens, who would not remain and settle on the soil—would have to get another Government to carry out their policy. With respect to the rate of wages, he conceived that it was not the business of the Government to regulate the rate of wages. If the present Bill were passed, and the Government were enabled, by being put in possession of sufficient funds, to carry on immigration of agricultural labourers from Europe, they would appoint agents to see that the persons selected were suitable—such persons as they would be justified in paying passage money for. The persons who were selected as agents would be instructed to inform intending immigrants of the circumstances of the colony, the kind of work they would have to do, the kind of food they would get, which would have to be stated in the agreements, the accommodation they would have, and the ruling rate of wages in the colony. They would also be informed, as an inducement to come to the colony, what they might expect after they had served under indenture for the period agreed upon. Those were the arrangements the Government proposed to make. If the planters engaged them for 15s. a week, and brought them out at that, the Government had no objection. Even if they engaged them for less, the Government would not interfere, unless it was found that the introduction of these immigrants was injurious to the interests of the colony; but, as he had already pointed out, if the planters inveigled a man here, and gave him less than a fair rate of wages, they could not expect him to work; and they could not expect the Government to assist them; indeed, the circumstances of the colony would scarcely allow them to give assistance, as had been lately illustrated by a case out west, where a number of men were sentenced to imprisonment, and simply amused themselves in the town. He did not know what other information he could give. The intentions of the Government had been stated plainly enough.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that one of the principal arguments used on his side of the House against the Bill was that these men would necessarily be introduced at much lower wages than the rate current in other industries in the colony. Although the wages would be an increase to them, and they would be perfectly willing to accept them in Germany, the immediate result would be to lower the wages ruling in all other industries. In reply to that, the hon. the Premier had said the Government would take steps to prevent the introduction of these men from lowering wages. They were anxious to know the idea of the Ministers as to what the rate of wages ought to be. Now the hon. member told them he thought it would be a little lower than 15s. a week; but his organ, the *Telegraph*, seemed to consider £40 a year such a ridiculously low wage that it had had about a dozen leading articles on the subject during the elections. The company of which he (Sir Thomas McIlwraith) was a director had brought out men at £40 a year, and he would tell the Premier what had been the result of that experiment. There had been two or three lies circulated about it. If their opponents could possibly make the case better by telling lies, they never scrupled to do it. Here was the transaction for which he had been held up as an opponent of the working men of the colony. They intended to start ploughing on a large scale on the Darling Downs, and orders were sent to Scotland to engage forty men. It was necessary to go to considerable expense in making inquiry as to the antecedents of applicants, and in other ways, and so it was

thought advisable to get some sort of guarantee that the men engaged would not fail to come aboard the ship. With this view they were required to deposit a sum of £2 as security, which amount was refunded as soon as they came aboard at Plymouth. This was the £2 they were charged with having taken from the men, so that their passage would cost the company nothing. That was lie number one. It was quite competent for the *Telegraph* to have found out that that statement was incorrect, if they had chosen. The cost of bringing out these forty men was £145 13s. 11d. When they got to Townsville they were subject to the machinations of politicians and other employers, and only nineteen were willing to fulfil their engagements. That made the cost £7 13s. 4d. at once for each man. They started from Rockhampton, and were seven weeks on the road, and were paid, in kind and in money, £10 19s. 9d. a head. Their wages commenced as soon as they arrived in the colony. Subtracting the seven weeks' wages from the £10 19s. 9d., and adding the balance to the £7 13s. 4d., it gave £12 a head as the cost of putting these men on the place. That was not very encouraging. Considering that they could at the same time have employed men at a lower rate in Townsville, Rockhampton, and Brisbane, he did not think they could be accused of doing anything to bring down the rate of wages. They sent home for these men because they did not think they could get suitable men out here; and they gave them wages immensely in advance of those they were getting in Scotland, and also a great deal in advance of the rates ruling in the colony. He had forgotten to tell the Committee that, out of the nineteen who started, two bolted on the road, and two died when they reached their destination, so that they only secured fifteen of the forty they had been at the expense of getting. It was one of the most ruinous speculations anyone ever entered into. That was how this scheme would work. The planters would indent men as long as they were cheap enough; and when they came out and were dissatisfied with their contracts, what would the planters care? They would go elsewhere, and by competition reduce the wages all over the colony. They would come out ostensibly to work for the people who had indented them, but really they would bring down the wages in all other industries. The Government had made a great deal out of that interesting parliamentary document during the election. If it had been worth while to contradict lies told by an electioneering organ, he would have done so at the time; and now, when it was made a serious argument against the Bill, he brought the matter forward to let hon. members see how it worked. He did not think they were satisfied as to this question of wages. The hon. member had told them the Government would take steps to see that the immigrants were not deluded. The Government knew very well that there were plenty of men in Norway, Denmark, and Germany, who would be quite willing to engage for 5s. a week and their rations, if they had their passage paid; but even if they got 10s. a week they would become dissatisfied as soon as they arrived, and flood the labour market at once. The effect of bringing two or three thousand of these men into Mackay would be to drive out all the Europeans there at the present time. Simply in order that he might carry out his theory, he would force white men to work on the sugar plantations. That was the effect the Bill was actually going to have; still, with the doggedness characteristic of the Premier, he would not see it, but stuck to the one thing: "We won't have coolies on the plantations." They said that his scheme for the introduction of cheap white labour to take their place would prove a great

failure, and they would find that the working men would not stand it, and would not accept it. He had no doubt that as soon as the working men of the colony understood the operation of the Bill they would rise up and condemn it. The reason they had not done so before was simply because it had not been put in the proper way before them by the only journals which reached them. The true explanation of the working of the Bill would, however, reach them in time, and then the hon. member would have to face that.

The PREMIER said there were two observations which the hon. member made he should like to refer to. The hon. gentleman said the labour which his company introduced was labour which was not to be got in the colony at the time: that was exactly what the Government proposed to introduce—labour which was not to be got in the colony at the present time. There was no agricultural labour at the present time available; there was no doubt about that. They knew that the supply of agricultural labour in the colony was entirely inadequate to the demand.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: More came out last year than ever did before.

The PREMIER: Possibly more had come out last year than ever did before, but still the supply was entirely inadequate to the demand. What did the hon. gentleman and hon. members opposite mean by sometimes telling them that what the planters complained of was that they could not get labour? It was not that they preferred servile labour, but that they could not get labour. But when the Government said they would try to get it for them, they said they did not want it. They never used the same arguments for ten minutes together. They said one thing outside, another thing in the House; but their contradictory arguments all amounted to the same thing—they wanted servile labour. Another thing the hon. gentleman asked was: Did the Government suppose that if, say, 2,000 agricultural labourers were introduced from Europe and brought to Mackay, they would not reduce the rate of wages there and drive the other people there out of the place? Well, the Government did not think that the introduction of 2,000 agricultural labourers would do anything of the sort. But suppose they introduced 5,000 coolies! He would ask the hon. gentleman if that would not interfere with the white men there? He was satisfied it would drive them out altogether. The introduction of agricultural labourers—that was, those who would themselves settle upon the land—would never have the slightest injurious effect upon those settled there already; but he believed the introduction of a large number of Asiatics would have the effect of driving them out altogether, sooner or later. He took that opportunity of saying that it was a mistake to suppose that the Indian coolie would not interfere with the white man in ordinary mechanical labour. Let him tell hon. gentlemen further that, when an effort was made to bring Asiatic coolies here by the planters in the North, their agents in Asia were carefully instructed to send amongst them as many mechanics as possible, so that they might be relieved from the dangers and troubles caused by the white mechanics in Queensland. He knew those were the instructions sent. He did not know whether those were also the instructions sent in the case of the unfortunate shipload of so-called Cingalese who came here, or not. There seemed to be a burning desire now put forward by hon. gentlemen opposite to protect white labourers already in the colony. The Government did not believe that the introduction of white agricultural labour would interfere with other labourers in Towns-

ville or Mackay; but they believed, whether rightly or wrongly, that if they flooded the country with Asiatics they would eventually drive them out altogether. That there would be some trouble and inconvenience before the thing was settled, they knew. They could not make a revolution with rose-water. They could not make a great change in the social system in the northern part of the colony without some temporary disturbances. They believed the change should be made, and the sooner it was made the better it would be for all. It was far better to face the difficulty manfully now, than to leave it year after year until they would not be able to deal with it at all except by inflicting enormous loss upon innocent persons. Their views and the views of hon. gentlemen opposite were quite different. They put forward their views and proposed to act upon them, while they gave credit to hon. gentlemen opposite for believing that they were wrong. They had been told over and over again that the planters could not get the labour they wanted at the present time. The Government proposed to provide labour for them, but whether they were prepared to accept it or not he confessed he did not understand. They told them one day that they were prepared and anxious to take advantage of the offer of the Government, and the next day they told them in the House that they did not want to take advantage of it, and that it must be a total failure. They had said that, not only in the House, but out of it. He thought the House and the country now understood what the views of the Government were. They wished to try the experiment. If it failed it would fail, but he did not think it would fail; at the same time, it was very evident that those members who professed a desire to take advantage of the experiment were determined, if they could bring it about, that it should fail.

Mr. MOREHEAD said there was one phrase which was very frequently used by the hon. Premier and by those who agreed with him, and that was "servile labour." He would like the hon. gentleman to explain that phrase. If he meant to say that they had anything like slaves in Queensland, he said what was not the case. He would go further, and say that if the hon. member was right in the term he used it was quite evident that he intended to transfer the "servile labour" from the blacks to white men—and to make servile whites. That would be a new phrase, he took it, in the history of this or any other English colony. The hon. member said that he was going to bring out a class of labourers who were not now brought out in sufficient numbers; that was "agricultural" labourers. The Government were going to bring out low-waged agricultural labourers who were to be hired for a period of one or two years, or probably longer. They would be tied down to that particular occupation, and be told, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." That was quite in accord with the tyrannical mode of dealing with affairs when a Liberal, or so-called Liberal, Government came into power; a more tyrannical Government than a so-called Liberal Government could not exist. The hon. gentleman had not told them what course he was prepared to adopt if those labourers whom he intended to bring out should, when they arrived in the colony and found that they were not getting the ruling wages, and found also that they could not do the work which they were introduced to perform, therefore sought other means of getting a living. Did the hon. gentleman propose in such a case to have them sued for a breach of their agreement and put into gaol; or did he propose that they should be allowed to go into other occupations than that which they were brought out for, and compete

with the ordinary labourers in the colony? There was no such great distinction, so far as he knew, between the agricultural labourer and any other man of bone and sinew; and he had no doubt whatever that those men would be thrown into competition with labouring men all over the colony. It was all very well for the Premier to hedge himself round with the term "agricultural" labourer, and pretend that such men could do nothing but dig the ground. There was no use in pretending anything of the sort, as such men could, with very little teaching, do navvies' work or mining work, or, in fact, any other kind of work where manual labour was required, and would compete in all those occupations with the labourers already in the colony. He hoped they would hear something from the mining representatives in that House as to how labour on the goldfields would be affected by the introduction of large numbers of low-waged whites. He had no doubt they would hear about it from those men, and that they would hear a great deal more about the whole question, if this obnoxious and pernicious scheme of the Premier's was brought into full effect. He had no hesitation in saying—he did not beat about the bush—he did not believe, nor did any man in the colony who understood the circumstances believe, that the sugar industry could be carried on with anything but coloured labour. That labour had been the means of employing tens of thousands of white men in this colony who otherwise would not have been employed. He had no hesitation in saying that he was a strong advocate of coloured labour under proper restrictions and proper regulations, such as were made by the late Government, under which coolie labour, or any other kind of coloured labour, could be brought into the country without the slightest fear of their competing with white labour outside that branch of agriculture which they thought the black man was the only man fitted to perform. It was only the other day that a letter appeared in the *Courier* from a German at Mackay—a letter which he had not the least doubt the hon. member for Rosewood did not like. It was certainly not very complimentary to that gentleman, nor did the bulk of Germans in this colony feel very friendly towards the writer for the way he represented their views in that House. The writer of that letter pointed out that the Germans had very strong objections to competing with and being brought to the same level as the kanaka, as was proposed to be done. It had been admitted by the Premier that he would persuade our own countrymen to come out here and do black labourers' work, and he would induce men who were totally ignorant of the class of work they would have to perform to come out here and work on the canefields of the North. The hon. gentleman's scheme was to substitute white labour for coloured labour, and he proposed to introduce this white labour from the northern portions of the continent of Europe. He (Mr. Morehead) did not think the scheme would succeed. He was certain it would result in failure; and he was equally certain that the hon. the Premier and those who supported him knew that it would result in failure. He did not believe in it any more than he (Mr. Morehead) did, or in the possibility of working the great sugar industry by means of white labour. The hon. gentleman knew very well that the North had got to compete, as a sugar-producing country, with other sugar-producing countries where cheap black labour was used, and, knowing that, he absolutely pretended to believe that white labour would succeed in the North—in the sugar country—when he

knew from his own experience that it must fail. He pretended to be doing all he could to support an industry which it seemed he was determined to crush; and it appeared to him (Mr. Morehead) that the reason for the hon. gentleman wishing to crush that industry out was because that particular portion of the colony—the North—did not send members to that House who would support his policy. He was as certain as that he was standing in the House that, if hon. members on the Government side of the House were to advocate or be in favour of the employment of black labour, the hon. gentleman himself would be one of the strongest advocates for that system, and would give the very best reasons why no labour other than black should be introduced for the purpose of establishing the sugar industry on a firm footing. However, "the whirligig of time brings in its own revenges"; and, although the gift of prophesying had been somewhat derided by hon. members on the other side, he would venture to prophesy that within eighteen months or two years the constituencies would give forth a very different cry to that which they raised at the last general election. He felt perfectly certain of that. He felt certain that the day would come, and was not very far distant, when the old cry against coolie labour for the sugar industry would be heard the last of, and when there would be a cry in favour of the restoration of coloured labour for those particular vocations for which it alone was suitable.

The PREMIER said he did not rise to vindicate his character for sincerity from the attack of the hon. gentleman who had just spoken. His reputation for sincerity would stand without any defence. If the Government did not believe that the experiment they proposed to adopt would be successful, they would not be justified in trying it; but their justification was that they did believe it would be successful; and, therefore, any argument based on the assumption that the experiment would be a total failure was beside the question. If proof were given that it would be a failure there would be reason in the objection; but to assume that it would be a failure and argue upon that, was arguing from a conclusion before having arrived at the premises. The hon. gentleman had assumed that the scheme would be a failure, and had asked what would become of the labourers then. He (the Premier) would tell him what would become of them. They would have land of their own; they would be living upon it with their families, and they would be doing that which the hon. gentleman did not desire to see, and which the Government did desire to see. The hon. member spoke of servile labour, and said the Government proposed to replace servile black labour with servile white labour. The only countries where servile white labour existed were countries where there was also servile black labour, and where between the lower class of servile labour and their employers there existed a class of "mean whites," who were despised and looked down upon by both classes. That was brought about by the policy which the hon. gentleman desired to see adopted here. There might be advantages in that state of society—it might be a desirable state of things—but the Government did not recognise its advantages, and they did not desire to see it introduced into this country. The hon. gentleman asked what was meant by servile labour, and asked if a man who was bound to work at agriculture did not belong to that class? But did not a man who was bound to work as a shearer or a groom, or at any other kind of work for the term of his engagement without leaving it to undertake other work, not equally belong to that class? That was not what was meant by "servile" labour.

The term was, perhaps, not a strictly correct one, but it was well understood as meaning a class of men whose masters did not recognise that they had any rights. A class who simply existed and did what they were told without possessing or asserting any such rights as other men in the community asserted. The term was perfectly well understood by everyone who knew anything of the subject. It was a class of men who were never found consisting of the same race as ourselves. The hon. gentleman opposite knew all that very well. However, he had made his manifesto, and he (the Premier) hoped it might do him much good; he had ventured to prophesy a failure for the whole experiment; and he (the Premier) would venture to prophesy that, given a fair opportunity, the result of the experiment would be that the question would be settled once and for ever, and that there would be no more coloured labour. The work could be done and was done by Europeans. Perhaps, by their employment, 20, 30, or 40 per cent. profit was not brought in, but the men could earn a fair and honest living, and get a fair remuneration for their labour. That had been done in other countries as hot or hotter than Queensland. The experiment had been tried successfully—successfully in the sense that he used the word—that the soil should be cultivated by men settled comfortably upon it, but not in the sense the hon. gentleman meant—by the existence of absentee employers who derived immense profits from the employment of servile labour. They did not wish to encourage that system, and although it was perhaps a sufficiently laudable object from the hon. gentleman's point of view for individuals to strive for, yet they did not recognise it as an object towards which public policy ought to be directed. That was the great difference between them, and it was as well to recognise that difference. He did not for a moment blame hon. gentlemen opposite for entertaining their views, but hon. gentlemen on his side had different views, and they thought it was their duty to impress those views upon the colony, and if possible give effect to them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman need not have got so very warm when he was vindicating his sincerity in bringing forward the measure. It was by the course of conduct adopted by the Government in dealing with the measure that their sincerity had come to be questioned. They all knew perfectly well what the hon. gentleman had done. He had made a position for himself in the colony on the Black Labour question. He had accepted the responsibility of finding some substitute for black labour. He could not look anywhere else for a supply of that labour than to the class he had mentioned—the North Germans—and he had brought in a Bill which he never explained properly to the House, and he put it before them as the proper remedy for kanaka or coolie labour for the plantations. Then, while he was introducing the Bill, he coolly added, and in the plainest way threatened the sugar-planters, that if the measure was not a success they would have themselves to blame—the measure was so perfect when introduced that, if it failed, the failure could not possibly lie on the shoulders of the Government, but on the shoulders of the planters themselves. The hon. gentleman had all along tried to make out that the Opposition were working from the planters' point of view, and that his side were working from the point of view of the working men of the colony—a position that was perfectly false. The Opposition did not accept the position, and argue it from a planter's point of view only. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) opposed the measure as a citizen of Queensland, in the interests of the working men

of Queensland; and he was quite willing to appeal to the working men, when they understood the Bill, to give their verdict upon it. The planters of the colony knew perfectly well that that would be no remedy whatever for their position. They had been deprived of kanaka and coolie labour through the machinations of the present Government. He supposed that was admitted. The planters said that the proposed labour would never supply the place of the other. The planters themselves acknowledged that. In fact they had tried it. Had they not seen, over and over again, white men induced to try, by high wages—much higher than the wages the Germans whom it was proposed to introduce would get—and they threw down their tools and went away. If there had been anything demonstrated in the colony it had been that white men could not do the work. The planters knew that perfectly well, and were looking for a scheme of relief—not to see white men doing work that they should not do on the plantations. The Government were pledged to some remedy, and they brought in this Bill as a sort of compromise. They did not look forward to the Germans actually being a success in supplanting coolies or kanakas. But there was a much higher consideration of the matter than had been put forward by the Premier—the welfare of the colony generally. Men who were engaged in other industries of every kind said, “Why should we pay for cheap labour for sugar-planters?” Every one of them, no matter in what employment he was, was going to be taxed in order to supply cheap labour for the sugar-growers and to increase their profits. That was what its effect would be if it resulted as the hon. gentleman thought it should; but he did not believe it would have that result. He did not believe that the labourers would stay with the planters, and the effect would be that all the other industries of the colony would be contributing to introduce labourers to compete against themselves, and thus lower the general rate of wages. Why should they do that? In what way would it serve the interests of the colony? There was another point he would refer to. They had established a system of immigration, and if there had been anything demonstrated by that system it had been that Englishmen were prepared to come to the colony and take their chance as labourers, mechanics, and all kinds of tradesmen, paying their £8 to £12 passage money. That was a fact, and the hon. Premier, if he made arrangements, could put on as many ships as he liked. He could have four ships a month, loaded from English, Scotch, and Irish ports, with their own countrymen—agricultural and other labourers and all kinds of mechanics—who were quite prepared to come and pay their own passages. That had been demonstrated by the actual results of immigration during the last eighteen months. The hon. gentlemen had asserted, as his reason why we should go to Germany for agricultural labourers, that it was perfectly impossible to get those labourers in England, Scotland, or Ireland. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) asked him from what source he got that information, and the hon. gentleman said he got it from official sources; he then asked what official sources, because they ought to be indicated somewhere in the “Votes and Proceedings”; but he failed to see anything there to show that such a state of things existed. It then it came out that the information was given by one man who had gone to England as a lecturer, and who had said it was difficult to get agricultural labourers. Well, it was easy enough when the late Government had good lecturers to get them. During the last twelve months, when those lecturers confined their operations to the agricultural districts, they

had no difficulty in getting them. The fact was that more agricultural labourers were introduced in proportion to the general average of immigrants than ever were introduced into the colony before, and a great deal above the average of all those who had been introduced. What was the use of the hon. gentleman telling him they could not get agricultural labourers? He said they could get more than three times the number from England alone, of those labourers that had been coming out. It had not been disguised by the hon. gentleman that he knew or believed that they could get a cheap class of labour from Germany, who would accept conditions which men from Great Britain would never accept. That was the real reason why, when they tackled the question of European immigration, the hon. gentleman always hid himself in a cloud behind the coolie and kanaka question. The fact was as plain as possible to anyone who was watching the Government. Did they believe that the Germans would submit to conditions of labour equal to what the kanaka would submit to, if he understood it, or what the coolie would submit to if brought there? Under such restrictions white men from their own country would not come, and therefore the Premier went to a foreign country. That was just the danger of the whole system. He had pointed out that that was a great danger to the colony; but, before he went on with that, he would point out another strange thing, and that was the continued reticence of the Government with regard to the wages question. When the Government undertook to make such a change in the whole system of agriculture in the colony as to introduce white slaves for the planters in the North, they ought to have stated how it had worked in other countries. It was not a matter of trial on the part of the Government in Queensland. It was a matter of operation—and how did it work in other countries? He had seen agreements that were made between the inhabitants of Germany, of Italy, of Portugal, and Madeira, and could tell the wages that people received out there. The wages for which they were employed to go to the Sandwich Islands were £3 10s. a month for men, £2 2s. for women; and he thought, half of that for children who could labour; and they found themselves in food and clothes, and were only provided with a tent and water. The Government ought to have got all that information. Were they going among a class of people that were prepared to come out and work on the sugar plantations in the same way as those men at the Sandwich Islands, for £3 10s. a month, finding themselves? The hon. gentleman ought to have had all that information, and have been prepared to guard against the evils that would result from introducing men under such conditions as those. That was at once pointed out by hon. members sitting on the Opposition side of the House. The hon. member for Oxley knew perfectly well what would result from the introduction of labourers on those conditions; but it was the very thing he wanted; he wanted a flood of those cheap men to go down and swamp his plantations. But the working men in the colony regarded the matter differently, and did not wish to go and work on sugar plantations; they had no interest whatever in paying the passages of men to come out here and work in competition with themselves. They would not pay for the passages of those people. They would ask why should men get free passages from Hamburg and other parts of Germany to Queensland, when they were charged from £8 to £10 each? That was exactly what the colony was doing at the present time. The proposed system of immigration was not only going to ruin the class of labour

here at the present time, but would be an effectual bar to a good class of labour coming out from home. As he had said, men were now paying from £8 to £10 for their passages, and why in the name of common sense should the colony pay the whole of the passages of Germans to enter into the same labour? It would stop immigration altogether. The hon. gentleman said they only wanted agricultural labourers; he laid particular stress on that. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well, and anybody who knew anything whatever about immigration also knew, that it was difficult to get exactly the class of labour they wanted, and that it would be almost impossible to prevent all sorts of mechanics coming in every lot. The hon. gentleman laughed; perhaps he thought that was not very likely—that it would be impossible. An article appeared in the *Telegraph* the other day, accusing him (the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) of having brought out a mechanic at £40 a year. He believed the man referred to was a mechanic, but he made a false declaration, and was employed as a labourer. He afterwards turned out to be a blacksmith; but he was engaged as a labourer. The agreement spoke for itself. He repeated that anyone who knew anything about immigration knew that it was almost impossible to prevent men of all kinds—at all events, men accustomed to labour—coming out under the Bill. They could tell a labourer from a clerk, but they could not tell a carpenter from a blacksmith, or a blacksmith from a labourer. It was quite plain that there would be immense difficulties brought about by the measure. The difficulties he referred to were these:—Men would come out because they got a free passage, but could not be made to keep their engagements; the stricter their engagements were the easier they would get over them; they would get away from the sugar plantations, and the gaoles in Mackay would not hold them. No amount of restriction that might be devised would keep those labourers on the sugar plantations; and did the hon. gentleman mean to tell him that they would not reduce the wages of labourers? In speaking about coolies the hon. gentleman said, "Introduce 5,000 coolies into Mackay and you stamp out white labour." He said that distinctly. Now he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) was going to assume that coolies would stick to sugar work. The hon. gentleman failed to see how they could be made to do so.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said, perhaps the hon. gentleman failed to see that kanakas could be kept on the sugar plantations.

The PREMIER: We shall see after a bit.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he believed that kanakas could be made to keep to the work on sugar plantations. The hon. gentleman said, "Introduce 5,000 coolies into Mackay and you stamp out white labour;" but "if you bring out 5,000 Germans, up go the wages of everybody else." Did the hon. gentleman think he was talking sense, or that hon. members would take it in? Did he not know that such a course would reduce wages all over the country? And what effect would that have on the colony? Nothing would have so bad an effect upon it as the reduction of wages. They would lose the grip they had had on the working men during the last few years, and the men would go to the other colonies; and they would do perfectly right. Surely they were not going to be such fools as to assent to a policy of that kind! Summarising what he said, he would point out that the Bill would have the effect of preventing immigrants

coming from home, and it would inevitably reduce the wages of all other classes of labour in the colony. That would be a great evil, as it would send men into the other colonies, and thus cause a great scarcity in the supply of labour in Queensland.

The PREMIER said he would summarise the arguments of the hon. gentleman. The summary of his arguments was that every attempt to provide agricultural labourers for the planters must inevitably result in a reduction of the general rate of wages throughout the colony. That was the argument of the hon. gentleman. If the result would be as stated, probably it would be their duty to let the planters alone; they could not be helped at such an expense as that.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: They never asked you to do what you are doing now.

The PREMIER said the complaint was that they did not make wages low enough for them; that the only possible thing to do was to give them coolies, coolies. All their arguments came back to the one thing, "We must have coolies"—that anything else would be destructive to the colony, for any number of inconsistent and contradictory reasons. In fact he was quite sure that no reason had been given to show why coolies should be introduced, which had not been also contradicted. He knew the hon. gentleman, before he sat down, would contradict himself, and that was why he laughed when he did so. The hon. gentleman began by repeating an assertion he made the other day, that it had been shown—demonstrated, he said—that they could get any quantity of agricultural labourers. He (the Premier) asserted on high authority that they could not. The hon. gentleman went on to say that all sorts of people, mechanics and tradesmen, represented themselves as agricultural labourers. Of course! That was what he (the Premier) maintained the other day. What had been the history of their attempts to get agricultural labourers? Why, that many people said they were agricultural labourers, but they learned their agriculture in the great cities of England. He asserted that they had the greatest difficulty in getting agricultural labourers. The hon. gentleman, to prove his statement, said that during the time they had lecturers at home they were able to get any quantity; but his (the Premier's) principal authority for stating that they could not was the very lecturer to whom the hon. gentleman referred, who had assured him that it was the most difficult thing—that it required continual exercise of care, supervision, watchfulness, special ability, a special knowledge of the country, and very special efforts; and that then the number that could be obtained was limited, and the few who were obtained would not pay their own passages.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: They cannot.

The PREMIER: He said they could not; yet hon. gentleman had said that any quantity were willing to come and pay £10 passage money. He was so desirous of proving some conclusion that he forgot his previous arguments, and thus contradicted himself continually. He (the Premier) could assure the Committee that agricultural labourers could not be got if they had to pay their own passages, and that there was the greatest difficulty in getting them when their passages were paid for them. The hon. gentleman also complained—and it was a singular argument to come from him—of the unfairness of the whole community being compelled to pay the passages of immigrants introduced for a particular class. Of course it

would be unfair if continued long; but they were at present willing to pay the expenses of labourers coming out for all classes of the community. At the present time the planters claimed special consideration, and the Government were giving them special consideration, though they would not give them the special consideration they wanted. The planters would receive the consideration which could fairly be given them without injury to the rest of the community. They would be shown that they could get an ample supply of labour which would do their work, and that was all that they could expect. He had not the slightest doubt that in the course of three or four years it would be shown, not to the satisfaction of some people but to the satisfaction of the community, that sufficient labour could be got. Those who would try the experiment with the intention of making it succeed would find it a success, but those who desired that it should not succeed would most likely fail, and they would have only themselves to blame. When it was shown by those who desired that it should succeed that the experiment was a success, the community would turn a deaf ear to those who would not adopt the class of labour intended by the Bill. When it had been shown that a sufficient supply of labour was available, the planters might be left to provide themselves with that labour; in the meantime the community would not object to extending a helping hand while they were in difficulty.

Mr. SCOTT said they had been informed by the Premier that the Bill was intended to supply a want in the agricultural districts, and he had given an illustration of how it would work. Agents were to be sent home to tell the people the rate of wages ruling in the colony, and employers of labour would be allowed to make their own bargains with the people at home after the matter had been explained to them by those agents. He went on to say that when those men came out and found that the wages paid to them were not so high as the wages ruling in the colony they would, as had been done before, throw up their engagements; and that the machinery of the law would not be sufficient to enforce them to carry out those agreements. As an illustration, the hon. gentleman referred to a case which occurred out west a short time ago. He would not go over the well-trodden ground of white men not being inclined to work in the cane-fields; but he knew from his own experience they were not. He knew that even if the wages received by the immigrants were up to the ruling wages of the colony they would not work in the cane-fields, and the result would be that they would, almost to a man, throw up their agreements. That would be the result of the Bill, according to what the Colonial Secretary had said during the former part of the evening. The hon. gentleman had shown that it would be no improvement on coloured labour; and he (Mr. Scott) did not know where the good was to come in.

Mr. NORTON said the Premier had told the Committee that all the arguments used on the Opposition side amounted to the expression of an opinion in favour of coolie labour. But the hon. gentleman was quite wrong, and the whole of his arguments pointed to the fact that he must have that "little German vote." The leader of the Opposition had spoken of the difficulty of getting agricultural labourers from England, stating that mechanics, representing themselves to be agricultural labourers, engaged themselves to come out as such; and the Premier repeated that statement. But if that applied to England, it applied also to any other country from which immigrants might be brought.

How were the agents to know whether the men who came before them were agricultural labourers? In England, there was not only the Immigration Agent to see that immigrants were properly selected, but employers could appoint their friends, or any persons they liked, to select the people they wished to bring out; and those agents of the employers would be able to find out whether the persons they engaged belonged to the class to which they professed to belong. In Germany, they must trust to the agent, and there was no guarantee that that officer would be able to guard against persons who were not agricultural labourers, coming out as such. The probabilities were that if mechanics wanted to come out from Germany they would come ten times more easily than the mechanics came from England. The hon. gentleman said also that the people the Government wished to bring out were those who would come out as labourers for a time, and afterwards settle on land of their own. But would they be able to do that? Did not the Bill introduced by the Minister for Lands absolutely exclude them from the land? Was the principle it contained, so far as it went—the leasing principle—to be adhered to or not? The hon. gentleman, on the second reading, not only said that it would be a party measure, but he said there was only a small minority on the Opposition side, and that they would have to take the Bill whether they liked it or not. He could speak of that measure now because it was connected with the Bill before the Committee. It was impossible to separate the two, particularly when the probability of those labourers settling on the land after they came to the colony had been referred to. In the speech made by the hon. gentleman he not only said distinctly that they had to accept the Land Bill whether they liked it or not, but he absolutely condemned the principle of homestead selections. The hon. gentleman quoted from a report, which had certainly very little to do with the subject, condemning the system of homestead selections; and the Minister for Works, who was the next Minister who spoke, said the homestead system had been a downright failure in the colony, and ought to be abolished. Thus, of two Ministers, one absolutely condemned the system, and the other supported him in even stronger terms than the former had employed. The Opposition contended that the homestead system ought to be maintained; and it was evident, after three or four speeches had been delivered, that that principle would have to be inserted in the Bill, if not in the same words, yet in such a manner that people could take up land on the same terms as under the existing Act. Even hon. members who generally supported the Government insisted on something of that kind being done. They could only assume now that that Bill, which was to be forced upon the Opposition whether they liked it or not, was to be so altered that all the arguments urged in its favour by the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works were to be thrown to the winds. After utterly condemning the principle of homestead selection in the strongest possible language, either it or something very much like it was to be introduced into the Bill. If such was not the case, then it would be utterly impossible that men brought out under the conditions proposed by the present Bill could settle down on the land for years. They could not possibly, unless they brought money with them—which was not very probable—get land, and be able to fulfil the conditions required by the new Land Bill. Therefore the arguments of the Premier were not strictly applicable to the measure now under discussion. They were simply meant to draw

attention from the one point aimed at; and that point was, he had no hesitation in saying, the introduction of Germans in large numbers into the colony. It was not the mere matter of cost of introducing immigrants that the Opposition complained of. What they insisted upon was, that if large numbers of people were to be brought out to the colony at the cost of the taxpayers, they should be people of their own flesh and blood. They maintained, in spite of the assertions of the other side, that those labourers were to be had in England. They did not wish the Committee to be guided by the opinion of any one man, when they knew from other sources that labourers were to be had there in any number. If people belonging to Great Britain were to be brought out to the colony there could be no particular objection to the Bill. The difference between the policy of the present Government and that of the late Government was, that the late Government, in introducing the Bill of 1882, expressed their intention to bring out people from Great Britain, believing that they could get enough from there—they absolutely refused to put on any ships to bring immigrants direct from the Continent—whereas the present Government asserted that they could not get labourers in sufficient quantity from Great Britain, and therefore intended to bring out large numbers from the Continent of Europe. He (Mr. Norton) had not the slightest hesitation in believing that the Government introduced the Bill, not simply because they could not get other labourers, but because they thought it an expedient which would work for their own ends—as had been the case not very long since; their intention being to bring out a large number of German voters, who would be able to swamp the British vote at any election that might take place. In districts where Germans were numerous, it was the German vote which had sent members to the House; and it was the German element that was represented in the Chamber, and not the majority of British voters. What the Opposition objected to was, not to Germans coming to the colony, but to their being brought out at the expense of the people of the British race; and when the inhabitants of the colony came to understand the matter fairly—which was not the case now—there would be a very strong feeling against the Bill amongst them. The Premier had spoken of those indented labourers becoming themselves in time producers of sugar on land of their own. When at Mackay, he (Mr. Norton) was greatly interested to find a class of small sugar-growers who cultivated their own land, and were able to make a considerable profit from it. He was glad to see that, for it would be a bad thing for the country if it were entirely given up to large plantations, if small plantations could succeed as well. Large plantations were no doubt good, but it would not do for the country to be all large plantations. On inquiring into the circumstances of those small sugar-growers, he found that some of them received 11s. a ton for their cane—the mill owners supplying the labour to cut the cane and cart it to the mills. Others were receiving a much higher price—14s. or 15s. a ton—but they had to cut their own cane and cart it to the mills. In the former cases the whole of the receipts were profits, while in the latter the profits amounted to 4s. or 5s. a ton, all the rest being swallowed up in expenses. The reason why the planters were able to give so high a price for the cane, as it stood on the land, was because they had black labour available to cut and cart it cheaply. It would be hardly fair to take those cases as an example. The system might be a success when times were good, but at the present low price of sugar it would be utterly impossible to carry it out except on a very large scale.

Certainly, unless in the immediate vicinity of the mill, it would be absolutely impossible to do so. At the present time he understood that in the neighbourhood of Brisbane there were men with small sugar plantations who got their cane crushed at central mills, who had made up their minds that at the end of the present season they would abandon sugar-growing and substitute some other kind of agriculture; but those who had mills were not in a position to do that; they could not abandon them—at any rate, not until they had found some other means of carrying on. He believed that, if the Bill passed, cheap European labour would be the means by which they would attempt to carry on those works. Whether it would prove a success or not he did not know. It was absolutely certain that not the slightest argument had been brought forward on the other side to show that the employment of cheap European labourers would not result in a general reduction of wages in the colony. Those men, even if they carried out their agreements—even if they served the whole of their term—would be in a position to compete with other labourers in the colony, at a lower rate of wages. They were not men who would form any trades unions, or combine in keeping up the price of labour. Their one desire was to become possessed of a piece of land and settle on it. But under the new Land Bill it would be impossible for them to get a piece until they had raised a sufficient sum to be able to buy a freehold from present freeholders, or until they had a sufficient sum to fence in their land within two years after they got it, and be able also to maintain themselves during that time. It was absolutely impossible, unless the principles of the Bill were to be abandoned, that labourers brought out under the Bill now before the Committee could get land to settle on with anything like the facility that people had been able to do hitherto. The one object, he believed, that the Government had in view in connection with the Bill was to bring in a class of people who did not understand the language of the colony, and whose opinions in connection with political matters were supplied from one source. If the Premier was sincere in his desire that those people should settle on the land, then it could only be supposed that he intended to abandon the chief principles of the Land Bill, which they were told, only a few weeks since, the Government would be able to shove down the throats of the Opposition, because they were a small minority in the House.

Mr. HORWITZ said the object of the Bill was to get labourers from Great Britain, Scotland, and Germany; but it seemed to him that hon. members on the other side tried to make out that it was the intention of the Government to only get German immigrants. Hon. members, however, need not be the least afraid. If the House thought proper to get some German labourers, they would not be the slaves of the sugar-planters; he could promise the House that. They would not be labourers very long; they might be so for two or three years, but as soon as they got £20 or £30 they would get homesteads of their own. It was said that under the new Land Bill Germans would not be able to get any land, but he believed they would have a better chance than they had now, and for this reason: A German did not require much land. There were plenty of them about Warwick who had only twenty acres; and if some hon. members opposite were to visit the district they would be surprised to find those people living well and in a very respectable way. Under the new Land Bill Germans would be able to take up 100 or 960 acres of land; but they did not require

960 acres—it was too much for them. If they took up 100 acres all they would have to pay would be 25s. a year, at 3d. per acre. If a man could not pay that, then he was not worthy to take up land at all; they did not want colonists who could not do that. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that certain Germans were sent into that House by the Germans.

Mr. NORTON: I did not say that Germans were sent here by the Germans. I said hon. members were sent here; I did not refer to Germans particularly.

Mr. HORWITZ said he thought it was all the same. He himself was a German, and he did not think he received twenty votes, in the district of Warwick, from Germans. As for the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates), who was also a German, but who was not now present, he did not think he got forty German votes. They only represented the Germans to a certain extent. He (Mr. Horwitz) was sent there, not simply in the interests of the Germans, but in the interests also of the English, Irish, and Scotch; and he had always recorded his vote with the greatest care, independent of either side of the House. The Germans who were here made very good colonists, and if the Committee chose to say that more should be brought they could do so.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the hon. member would not take his remarks as referring to himself, as he believed the hon. member represented a district in which there were very few Germans. What he did say was that there were members of the House representing districts in which there were large numbers of Germans, who were returned by the German vote. In places where the votes of the British population were about equally divided, and there was a large number of Germans, then the votes of the Germans, given as one vote, must necessarily turn the scale and decide which member should be returned. Anyone with any common sense would see that in cases of that kind it was the German vote which really sent members to this House; and where a considerable majority of the British population were in favour of a particular member they might be prevented by the German vote, acting with the small minority, from returning the member chosen by the majority of the British population. He had no objection to Germans whatever; they were good agriculturists and good colonists; and so far as he had occasion to employ them he had every reason to be satisfied. But what he said was that, being British colonists, they should first look to Great Britain for the people they were to bring out; and when they could not get any more of their own nation it was time to go elsewhere. Until they had used up the supply of British colonists they should not go to any other country whatever, no matter how good the people might be. At the same time, he hoped that the hon. member would accept his assurance that in his remarks he had not the slightest intention of referring to him personally. Since the hon. member had been in the House he had always acted with perfect fairness, and in the most honourable way; that opinion, he felt sure, would be shared by hon. members on both sides of the House.

Mr. BLACK said they were getting rather away from the subject-matter of the Bill. He quite agreed with all that had fallen from the hon. member for Warwick. That these Germans were able to make a good living on forty acres in the southern portion of the colony was well known to every member of the House; but they had been given to understand that the Germans and other continental labourers were to be brought out to take the place of the

kanakas on the sugar plantations. This was where he joined issue with the Premier: The sugar-planters were firmly convinced that the ordinary European labourers would not do the work of kanakas on the canefields, and that the consequence of introducing them would be to reduce the rate of wages all over the colony. The planters were not opposed to what they had been used to call European agricultural labour. He denied that the effect of introducing 2,000 coolies into Mackay would be, as the Premier had said, to drive out all the European labour; and he maintained that no argument could be brought forward to prove that such was likely to be the case. Last year some 2,200 European immigrants had landed at Mackay, and settled in the district, and got good wages. They did not in any way displace the Europeans already there, but they assisted to achieve the most remarkable success, not only for that part of the country, but for the whole of the North. But it would be very different if they introduced this cheap Continental labour—for it must be cheap if it was to be effective, as under the present condition of the sugar industry they could only afford to produce sugar at a certain price per ton, and to prevent loss the labourers employed must necessarily work at a low rate of wages. Taking the hon. gentleman's own suggestion, supposing 2,000 agricultural labourers from the continent of Europe landed at Mackay during the next twelve months;—he merely chose Mackay as a typical district; the Burdekin, Johnstone, and other districts were exactly analogous;—these men might be introduced as agricultural labourers, but would they not be turned into mechanics? Some of them would have some aptitude to become ploughmen, and would certainly take the place of all existing ploughmen; others would become blacksmiths and engine-drivers; and no matter how inexperienced they might be when they first landed, if they had a sufficient inducement offered to them in the way of a slight increase of wages they would gradually supplant all existing European mechanics. The Europeans displaced would leave the North and come south, hoping to get higher wages; but they would be disappointed, and a reduction of wages would take place all over Queensland. He could not allow the hon. the Premier's remarks to go without reply, because the debate would excite interest all through the colony. The Premier had stated that when the Cingalese were introduced into Queensland orders were given to those recruiting them to bring out mechanics. Now, he (Mr. Black) was quite familiar with the whole of the circumstances, and he knew that no such orders or instructions were given to the agent, Mr. Nott. His instructions were to bring out Tamil coolies from India, and no one was more angry and annoyed than were the planters themselves when they found he had brought out mechanics from Colombo and Ceylon. The planters were perfectly content to accept European labour as far as they considered it suitable to their requirements, but they maintained that European labourers would not and could not do the work performed by coloured labourers in the tropics. He challenged the hon. member to tell in what country in the world, with a climate like North Queensland, European labourers were successfully employed in field-work on sugar plantations. He had said it was the case in many parts of the world. He (Mr. Black) denied it *in toto*. The only place he knew where cane was cultivated by Europeans was down on the Richmond, Clarence, and Tweed, a far more temperate climate than that of Queensland, and where the producers had the advantage of a bonus of £5 per ton on all the sugar they produced. On the Sandwich Islands they had had Portuguese labourers,

The PREMIER: Norwegians and Danes.

Mr. BLACK: It had turned out a failure; and in Honolulu, where they also attempted to grow sugar with cheap European labour, it had only been a partial success, because in consequence of their international treaty with America they received a bonus of 2½d. a pound for every pound of sugar.

The PREMIER: Honolulu and the Sandwich Islands are the same place.

Mr. BLACK: These were the grounds on which the planters considered the scheme would not be successful. If they had thought it a suitable description of labour, why on earth had they never introduced it themselves? If they had to pay the whole passage of the immigrants from Europe, it would be cheaper than getting kanakas. They could not import a kanaka for less than £25. Any employer of labour could go home to England or to any part of the Continent, and, without any assistance from the Government, bring out labourers for from £16 to £18, after they had paid every sixpence; and under the bounty clauses they could get them out for £10 or probably something less. Therefore there must be something more than the mere sentiment that it was "servile" or "cheap" labour which made them prefer the labour they had. It was simply because it was reliable and suitable. That was why it was necessary, because it was suitable to the industry. He hoped he had shown hon. members that if the planters considered European labour was suitable to the industry they could actually get it cheaper than they could get even Polynesians, or than they could even get coolies. It was not a question of sentiment at all, but one description of labour was suitable, and European labour was not suitable to the industry. The hon. gentleman talked about if planters would only be content to accept a slightly less profit than they got, instead of receiving 30 or 40 per cent., and paid their labourers more. The planters were getting nothing of the kind; and he challenged the Premier to give a single instance of a planter making 30 or 40 per cent. He ventured to state that, taking this year and last year, they were not paying their way, but were actually losing money. The consequence of that experiment forced upon the planters by the Government would be to so entirely destroy the confidence reposed by capitalists in the sugar industry that it would very likely fail. He wished to see the sugar industry flourish, not because he was a planter, but because he could see that during the sixteen years since it was initiated in Queensland it had been a source of immense benefit to the colony. They had introduced about 9,000 or 10,000 kanakas into the colony; they were working under regulations, and confined to the pursuits for which they were introduced; and he maintained that those labourers had done nothing but good to the country. They had been the means of initiating an industry which, without them, would never have existed in the northern portion of the colony. Queensland would never have achieved the notoriety which she had achieved of having such a thriving industry, and one which none of the other colonies possessed, had it not been for the assistance of black labour. Notwithstanding the experiments carried out in the southern and minor parts of the colony, it was absolutely necessary that they should have coloured labour to carry on the industry successfully. Whether Germans, Danes, Swedes, English, Irish, or Scotchmen came out here as agricultural labourers, he would be prepared on behalf of the planters to welcome them, and employ them for those descriptions of work on plantations or anywhere else for which they

were suited. But although the planters were compelled to make the experiment by the Government in self-defence, it should not be said that the planters forced that experiment upon the country. He hoped the Bill would pass; and he had no hesitation in saying, not only on behalf of the planters, but on behalf of the working men of the colony, that this measure, if passed, would do more harm to the working men of the colony than any other measure ever introduced into the country.

The PREMIER: Is that why you hope it will pass?

Mr. BLACK: I hope it will pass for your sake.

Mr. FERGUSON said that, so far as he could see, the Bill was not properly understood when it came before the House for its second reading. The Bill itself was a simple one, but the intention of it was not understood; and it was only since it had gone into committee that the real intention of it had been brought out, and it had only come out by degrees. He considered that if the Government passed the Bill with the intention of supplying labour to the planters of the North instead of the labour they already employed, they would make the greatest mistake they had ever made. He was certain the labourers of the colony would consider the Bill a most dangerous one, and the worst Bill that had ever come before that House, so far as they were concerned. It was striking the first blow towards the reduction of the wages of the labouring classes. Not only one class but every class—from the field labourer, the bush labourer, the miner, the town labourer, and all classes of mechanics. Every one of them would have their wages reduced if the Bill were passed. He guaranteed that before eighteen months were over the rate of wages would be reduced 25 per cent. He had been an employer of labour for over twenty years, and he had employed labour to a very great extent; and he had never yet attempted—in fact, he had always opposed any scheme whatever brought forward towards the reduction of the wages of the labouring classes in the colony. He considered the ruling wages of the labourers in the colony at the present time was not too high, considering the climate they had to put up with, and the expenses of living and everything else. If the wages of the working classes were reduced by 2s. a day—and he had not the slightest doubt, if the Bill passed, that would be the effect in a year or eighteen months—they would take away the whole of the labourer's profit. The labour of those men was their capital, and if they took away 2s. a day from them they would take away all their profit. What was the cause of the prosperity in the country at the present time? He said that it was undoubtedly because the ruling rate of wages was, he would not say a high rate, but a fair rate. There was no country in the world, in which the ruling rate of wages was low, that could be called a prosperous country, or a country which would entice anyone to emigrate to it. The reason why Queensland was looked upon as a good place to emigrate to was because the wages ruling here were fair. The Bill, if passed, would undoubtedly have the effect of reducing the rate of wages, and of taking away what belonged to them from the many and putting it into the hands of the few. They would be simply taking the money out of the pockets of the poor, who were in the majority, and putting it into the hands of the few, who were rich, in order to make them richer. He did not think a single working man in the colony objected to the amending Bill passed last session, restricting the Polynesian labourer to field-work and tropical agriculture.

He had not heard the voice of a single working man raised against that Bill, because it restricted that labour to the work it was intended to perform. Those labourers were engaged for three years to work in tropical agriculture; and, at the termination of their engagement, the planter, or whoever engaged them, had to send them home to their country at their expense. That was a Bill compelling the employers themselves to pay all the expense of the introduction of the labour they required, and of sending the men back to their islands, in the event of their not wishing to re-engage on the plantations. The labourers were not allowed in any way to spread all over the colony, or engage in any other occupation than that for which they were engaged. He did not think that coloured labour, under the restrictions which had been provided, would in any way interfere with the white labouring classes of the colony; in fact, it had a tendency the other way, and he believed himself that coloured labour, under proper restrictions, tended to increase the employment of the white population and increase the rate of wages. He looked upon the employment of coloured labour in this colony as almost in the same position as machinery, as it not only increased employment generally on the plantations, but throughout the whole colony, and increased the work in the foundries. The Bill before the House was quite a different thing. It was a Bill which proposed to introduce a large number of a low-paid class of Continental labour, such as Swedes, Danes, Scandinavians, Italians, and Germans. That was what he took the Bill to be, and it had been explained for the first time that afternoon that that was the class of labour it was proposed to introduce into the colony. There was no doubt whatever that that class of labour could be procured. By engaging people in their own country, they could be got for two or three years at 10s. per week; and there was no doubt that the planters, in the North especially, would take advantage of the clause, and would have them out in the colony in a year or two. What would be the result? There was not the slightest fear that those men would remain on the plantations long. He was as sure as he was standing there that not 25 per cent. of them would be on those plantations in a twelvemonth after they arrived, no matter what agreement they signed; and the consequence would be that there would be no restriction over them whatever such as there was over the present labour, and they would spread all over the colony. They would not be in a position to take up land and fence it and improve it; but they would spread all over the colony. There would be a mixture of all classes of labour, and mechanics of all kinds. It was all very well to say they could get agricultural labourers only—they could never get them. They would only remain on the plantations for the first six months until they got a few pounds, and then they would be off to the southern parts of the colony. They would get such a sickener of the North that they would clear out to the coolest parts of the colony and compete with the very class of people who brought them out to the colony. The labouring class paid just as much for the introduction of those people into the colony as the planters, or any employer who indentured them; so that they were paying actually to get men out to the colony to compete with themselves and reduce their own wages. That was the result the Bill would have, and he was satisfied that before twelve months were past there would be meetings all over the colony, sending petitions to Parliament to stop immigration—at any rate to stop that class of immigration. He was satisfied

of that. He considered that the present Government owed its position to that very class of people. He ventured to say that not 10 per cent. of the whole votes outside the labouring classes had been given to the present Government; so that their position in the colony was owing to that very class that they were trying to legislate for, and legislating to interfere with, at their own expense. That was his view of the Bill, and he was certain that a great deal of what he had stated would be realised in a very short time. He could not allow the Bill to pass without protesting against it, and if it did pass he was free from all blame. He had expressed his opinion, and he believed that that opinion would be very soon believed and understood by the whole House.

Mr. FOOTE said he could not say that he looked upon the Bill in the same light as the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. Of course the speech that that hon. gentleman had just made was a very good electioneering speech; a very good speech for a city electorate; and he supposed it would be just the speech that a member representing a city would be expected to make. Moreover, he looked upon the speech of the hon. gentleman as merely a formal matter—as one of those protests that hon. gentlemen are sometimes called upon to make, whether sincerely or otherwise. He looked upon the Bill as an indent labour Bill; a Bill to enable any person within the colony who required labour to indent it, or under which any person in the colony who had friends at home in the old country, or Germany, or elsewhere, would be able to send for them. What could be done under the Bill could also be done under the present Act. There was scarcely a scintilla which it contained which could not be carried out under the present Act. He really did not understand why all the attacks had been made upon the Bill. He certainly saw one point which the hon. leader of the Opposition was trying to make, when he said that the present Government came into power by the use of a very powerful lever—upon the Kanaka question—which he considered put them into office. Now the hon. gentleman saw there was another opportunity, and thought they could use the same lever in order to put the Government out upon the question of cheap labour, if they could possibly do so. The present Act provided that parties could be brought out for £2, and not only so, but the Agent-General had power to even defray their expenses in some cases to the port of embarkation. What in the world could be cheaper than that? Certainly, there was no clause in the existing Act which he was aware of, which enabled a person wanting labour from the old country to indent his labour; that was to say, to send home an order for twenty, or thirty, or forty men of whatever class of labour he might want, and then have them brought out to his order, consigned to him; that was to say, that they were under agreement to serve him for a certain period. That was where the difference existed. The Bill would enable a man to do so. He might say that the class of labour which had been coming to the colony was not the class of labour that had been wanted for the interior. There had been some difficulty in filling the ships, and in many cases they had been got wherever they could be found, so long as the ship was filled. The parties sailing the vessel received their money, and that was all they cared about. The colony had to look for something more than the city labourers who had been coming out, although they were very good and useful in their place—what they understood was of no use as a farm labourer; and he would give an instance. A few months ago,

when there were several meetings being held about Brisbane, of men who were said to be unable to find employment, and so on, there was a great stir for a short time, and he put an advertisement in the paper for an agricultural labourer who was accustomed to horses, and mowing machines, and ploughs. He had one reply, and that was not a suitable one even at that time, and at that time the colony was supposed to be glutted with labour. If he required to indent labour, that was just the Bill he should like to come under. He should not go to Germany, or to any other country, but should be disposed to import those people whose language he understood, and who understood him when he wished to communicate any order. Nor should he send to the Agent-General in London, for the class of labour he would want. He did not think that gentleman would be a good judge. Although he had been a long time in the colony, he still had interest enough in the old country, and friends enough there to be able to send an order to the very locality to appoint a person to select the very labourer he required and have that class of labour indented—real agricultural labourers—men who, when they came to the colony, did not want to be told what they were to do, nor yet how to do it. Not the class of labour that had been coming out under the present system—a class that, if they had to be engaged upon farms, had to be educated in every department of their work. He did not think, as he had already said, that the Bill was one that would reduce the price of labour to the extent that had been represented by the hon. gentlemen opposite. The labour market was like any other market: stock the market, and the price went down. It operated just in the same way as any other market they had to deal in. As he had already stated, there was nothing permitted by that Bill that could not be done under the Act at present in force. Some hon. members had made disparaging statements as to the class of labour to be introduced, and had said that the sugar-planters did not want that class of labour. The planters were like a sulky boy; they wanted something, and if they could not get the thing they wanted they would have nothing at all. He was of opinion that, if they were allowed to indent labour as proposed by the measure under discussion, they would not require any arguments a couple of years hence to convince them that the labour was suitable for their requirements. He did not believe that the people brought out would not keep their bargain when they arrived in the colony; he believed they would keep their agreements. The hon. the leader of the Opposition gave them an idea that afternoon of some men he and others had imported, but hon. members must remember that the hon. gentleman went to Asia and Scotland. The people from the latter country, they knew, were a very canny class of people, and knew when they were imposed on, and, coming to a land like this, were not likely to stand that imposition for any lengthened period. If the hon. gentleman had gone to England it was quite possible that the poor dupes he engaged there would carry out their agreements for the whole term of their service. Such agricultural labourers as those to which he (Mr. Foote) referred were the very class of people to settle down on the land. They were fond of home, and did not care to travel about from place to place; they only wanted to settle down, and would be perfectly satisfied to serve the sugar-planter or any other person who might employ them.

Mr. PALMER said hon. members on the opposite side of the House referred to the Bill as a Bill to supply the wants of the planters as far as labour was concerned. The petition

presented to the House that afternoon, which was numerously signed by different classes of Europeans in the North, showed that the demands made by the sugar-planters were not without foundation. He had no interest in the sugar industry, nor had he any desire to have an interest in it, and he could, therefore, speak on the question without prejudice. He had no interest in it except the interest of a citizen of Queensland who wished to see every industry have a fair chance to succeed and prosper. He saw some very grave objections to the carrying out of that Bill. If he could believe that the introduction of Europeans as was proposed in the measure would have the effect of solving the difficulty in connection with the question of the supply of labour for the planters, he should be very happy to accept such a solution of the difficulty. But he must say that, if Europeans could comply with the conditions of the work, his experience in the North, which extended now over a period of twenty years, had been wasted. From his knowledge of the North he was very certain that men introduced from Europe, softened perhaps by the long voyage and unused to a hot climate, would not solve the labour difficulty. He would not say, to use a rough expression, that they would "die off like rotten sheep," but he believed that the plantations employing them would almost become hospitals. Fifty per cent. of the men would be laid up with fevers and other sicknesses incidental to new arrivals in a tropical climate. There was one difficulty in connection with the subject which had not, he thought, been dwelt upon sufficiently by hon. members on either side of the House, and that was that white men—new arrivals—could not stand rough work in the hotter parts of this country. It took an old hand to stand it, and then it was only in the Western district that he seemed able to thrive. Hon. members must bear in mind that there were different climates in the North, the coast having a climate peculiar to itself, and quite distinct from the dry, healthy, inland climate. He had no doubt that if Europeans were introduced they would try to fulfil their indentures. Planters had now to pay £25 per head for Polynesians, besides £2 license fee, fees to hospitals, and the return passage of the islanders; and to this was to be added the mortality among the labourers, which increased the cost. Then why had the planters not taken advantage of the Act of 1882, which the hon. member for Bundamba said gave every facility, and which he (Mr. Palmer) believed it did, for the introduction of Europeans? If that class of labour was suitable, why was it not adopted? There was only a difference of £1 in the cost under the Act now in force and the Bill before the Committee. Surely that was not a sufficient reason why the Bill should be considered a preferable measure! He thought the difficulty lay in the unalterable conditions of climate. A white man would not thrive in newly opened country in the northern districts. There was another reason why he objected to the Bill. He believed the Agent-General had said that they could introduce any number of immigrants under the bounty system at £10 per head. Then why should they pay £15 to introduce another class distinct from their own nationality? With regard to the regulations which had been spoken of as harassing the sugar industry, he was not in a position to say that those regulations had ruined the recruiting trade. In his opinion some regulations were necessary in order to introduce a little wholesomeness into the manner or system of recruiting labourers, and he did not think the planters themselves were inclined to perpetuate the system to which so many abuses were attributed. He believed they had

every desire to carry out the system honestly and fairly, and he thought the regulations to which he had alluded had not been the means of bringing about the labour difficulty at the present time. In some of his speeches the hon. the Premier had said that the labour difficulty was one of the greatest difficulties the colonies had to contend with, and that he who solved it would deserve well of his country. The hon. gentleman claimed that in that small Bill he had solved the difficulty. He (Mr. Palmer) was quite sure the task was a much easier one than was ever anticipated if that small measure would solve the difficulty; and the hon. gentleman would deserve well of his country if it solved it as far as agricultural labour for the North was concerned. Very strange ideas were prevalent in some places as to the conditions under which a working man had to labour in this country. A gentleman from the Highlands of Scotland once said that he had seven or eight brothers and sisters as big as himself who could go out into the snow and pull up turnips, and he did not see why they should not come out here and hoe sugar-cane. Those were the ideas which seemed prevalent with regard to labour in the tropical parts of Queensland: that anyone who could work in snow-clad countries could also work in the tropics without risking health or life. But he was quite certain, from his experience in the North, that Europeans freshly arrived could not solve the Labour question as far as the planters were concerned. If the immigrants in turn became landholders, they themselves would require labour, and the difficulty would be repeated. If, however, European labour proved sufficient for the wants of the colony he should desire to see no other. It had been asserted that Southern electorates had used the cry of "Coolie labour" during the general election to obtain power, and he said now that the North would probably use the same cry to obtain separation. The separation cry was now rising in the North, though he had no wish to see separation take place. He could not see how the Bill could help the sugar industry in the least.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said he had no doubt it would be admitted on both sides that the Bill was a very important one, and that the decision to which they came would be of vital importance not only to the present but also to the future interests of the colony. They had heard for years that the great want of the colony was labour—that industries which had been started in the past could not be carried on without labour. What was to be the character of that labour it was for that Chamber to decide. A certain class—a very influential class—had said repeatedly that they did not require cheap labour, but reliable labour. But when the Government attempted to meet the aspirations of the planters in the matter they were met with the objection that it was impossible to do so. He thought the present attempt of the Government was the best mode of solving the difficulty—that was, not so much to supply cheap labour as reliable labour. They knew that for election purposes, and possibly for partisan purposes, the opposite side raised the cry that the Government were about to flood the country with cheap labour. But the Government simply took them at their word and wished to supply them with reliable labour. In the old country—in England, Ireland, and Scotland—there were thousands of the labouring classes making a mere pittance, just as much perhaps as would hold body and soul together—two or three getting no more than 4s. a week in some cases. Would those men not be much better in the colony working for 15s., 16s., or 17s., and having comfortable living compared with what they were getting at home? He thought it would supply a

very fair commentary on the strictures passed by the opposite side on the Bill, if he called attention to the fact that, in what was sometimes called the chief sugar-producing district in the colony—the Mackay district—Chinamen and other Asiatics were receiving at the rate of 17s. and 18s. a week, while—he might say in a spirit of revenge—white men were only paid 12s. or perhaps 15s. a week. Did not that supply a very fair commentary upon the utterances of hon. gentlemen on the other side? Did it not seem that the planters, whose interests were so ably and well represented by the hon. member for Mackay, were trying to force the hand of the Government and of the country in the matter. The Government would be not only remiss, but very far behind in their duty if they gave way to the cry made on the Labour question. They were endeavouring to meet the objection raised in the past, and if the Bill was passed that objection would be met most effectually. The hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Ferguson), who generally spoke, like the rest of his countrymen, with long-headedness and good sense—he was surprised at the stand taken by that hon. member. He was very much pleased to hear his speech on the Land Bill, because he considered that the hon. gentleman spoke sincerely; but he could not reconcile the hon. gentleman's utterances on that Bill with his utterances on the Bill now before the Committee. There was gross inconsistency somewhere; and if the hon. gentleman was sincere in his remarks on the Land Bill—which hon. gentlemen on both sides would, he thought, admit—it might fairly be said that he was not sincere on the present question. The hon. member said that if they admitted the class of labour provided for in the Bill it would do the labourers at present in the colony an injury. He (Mr. Campbell) was not able to follow that argument. As the industries of the colony increased, more labour would be required. If 10,000 or 20,000 labourers a year were brought out, and the industries of the colony were capable of absorbing that labour, he could not see why it should bring down wages at all. As one hon. gentleman had said, labour simply followed the law of supply and demand. If he wanted twenty labourers he must have them, of course; and if he was only able to pay 15s. a week while another was able to pay 20s. a week the other party would get them. If they introduced 10,000, 15,000, or 20,000 immigrants a year, it did not matter what their colour was so long as they did the work required of them. The hon. member for Bundamba, he thought, spoke of introducing labourers from England, Ireland, and Scotland; and a great deal was made of that. It was said that the Government were endeavouring to introduce cheap Germans—a cry got up for a certain purpose. Perhaps, if hon. gentlemen sat on opposite sides, those on his (Mr. Campbell's) side would adopt the same tactics; but it could easily be seen how futile were those arguments. No doubt, if the Bill passed, before they went to Germany for immigrants they would go to England, Ireland, and Scotland, where there was an almost inexhaustible supply of labour; but if they could not get the labour they required in those countries they should by all means go to Germany. Some hon. members opposite had spoken of the Germans as being aliens in blood. However that might be, they had certainly so far made excellent colonists. Some members of the Opposition were at the Rosewood a short time ago, and they must have seen there what should induce them to pause before passing that condemnation on German colonists. The hon. member for Burke spoke very pertinently when he said that, if he could see that the introduction

of European labour would solve the Labour question, he would welcome it. If that hon. member had read the present Bill over carefully and considered it without prejudice, he would see that it would effectually solve that question. That hon. member also said that, as far as his experience went—and no doubt it was a large experience—he did not think white men could do the work in the North that blackfellows were required to do, but that they would die off like rotten sheep. He himself had been in the North, though not for very long, and had seen white men engaged in the most laborious work, and still keeping their health so long as they took care of themselves. What could be harder work than mining, felling scrub, or timber-getting? And yet all those avocations were followed by white men in the North. When the hon. member for Burke and others argued in that way, did they not mean to say—"Ten men out of every hundred died in a certain time. It is better that ten blackfellows in a hundred should die than ten white men out of every hundred." It was perfectly useless to tell the Committee that white men could not do the work on sugar plantations in the North, when they were engaged in far more laborious work there at the present time. When the hon. member for Burke said that white men employed in the sugar-fields in the North would die off like rotten sheep, he simply meant that it did not matter how many blackfellows might die. He (Mr. Campbell) took an opposite stand to that.

Mr. PALMER said he had never made use of the expression that white men would die off like rotten sheep. What he said was that they would fall sick, and have to be treated in the plantation hospitals.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he accepted the correction; he certainly thought the hon. member had used the expression. With regard to Europeans coming out under indentures, much more had been made out of that than it deserved. The argument of the hon. member for Mackay and others on that side was that men brought out under indentures would not be here very long before they would abscond from their employment. That simply depended upon the law of supply and demand. If a man was working in one place for 20s. a week, and found that he could get 50s. in another place, no doubt that would be a great temptation to him to break his indentures; but if the supply of labour in the latter place was sufficient, and the ruling rate of wages in both was 20s. a week, such would not be the case. It had been said by the Premier that the man who could solve the labour difficulty would be a benefactor to the country. In his (Mr. Campbell's) opinion, the Premier was likely to be that benefactor; for if the Bill passed in its present shape the planters would get a supply of labour for their plantations, which would not only be full, but—what they desired most of all—reliable, and not so cheap as to lower the current rate of wages in the colony. It had been said by certain Northern members that if the Labour question were pushed to extremes, as Southern members desired it to be, the cry for separation would very likely be raised in the North. They had heard that cry for the last nine or ten years; indeed, ten years ago it was stronger than it was likely to be for the next ten years. But if the Bill was passed that cry would become a dead-letter, and the ground would be cut from under the feet of those who raised it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was sorry for the Premier. It was not often he was sorry for him. He was very often angry with him, but he was extremely sorry for him on the present occasion,

The hon. gentleman had issued a text, but he had not got all his adherents round him while he preached the sermon. The hon. member for Cook knew what the text was, but he did not hear the sermon preached by the Premier. The Premier was a gentleman who could preach any amount of sermons on any particular text, and could twist, and turn, and convert it to his own ends in the most admirable and legal manner. Unfortunately for the hon. gentleman, his learned brother, the hon. member for Cook, had a more straightforward way of going about. No doubt he had heard before coming to the House what the original intention of the Premier was with regard to that text, but since then the Premier had varied his intentions, had passed his firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and come to his seventhly, eighthly, and ninthly, which quite contradicted them. The hon. member for Cook had told the Committee, no doubt in absolute sincerity, that he believed—as many members of the Opposition believed—that it would be as well to relieve the British Islands of their excessive population before going elsewhere to bring out immigrants at the cost of the colony; and that he knew there were men there who were barely existing at a very low rate of wages, who would be only too glad to be brought out under the provisions of the Bill. The hon. member went further and said he did not believe in going further afield, so long as men of British race were desirous of coming to the colony as assisted immigrants. But what did the Premier say? The only action the hon. gentleman had taken was to telegraph to the Agent-General asking him to see what facilities could be given to the inhabitants of Norway—or Sweden, he did not know which—Denmark, and Germany, to come out under the provisions of the Bill. Surely there was a great divergence between the Premier and the hon. member for Cook on that point! There had been no statement, nor any desire shown up to the present time—though no doubt it would come later, when sufficient pressure had been brought to bear on the Premier by the hon. member for Cook—of any intention whatever to bring agricultural labourers from England. The hon. member had said that an attempt was to be made, but he (Mr. Morehead) believed that it had been over and over again denied in that House.

The PREMIER: Oh!

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said "Oh"; and it would be "oh" all over the country very soon. The hon. member for Cook had taken an altogether different line to that taken by the hon. gentleman to whom he offered such an effusive support. He had told them also that the immigrants to be brought out would be a better class, and he had admitted that the effect would be to reduce the wages of the labouring men.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman did not admit that. Well, the hon. member's language was such that it could only convey that meaning to every hon. member. He talked about the law of supply and demand. He (Mr. Morehead) thought the hon. member must admit that the effect of introducing a large number of immigrants, presumed for a certain avocation, would have the effect of throwing those men into competition with other working men in the colony, and, by so doing, reducing wages. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman held that to be a good thing. It would no doubt suit the employer of labour to bring down the rate of wages; it would no doubt suit him to get his labour cheaper. It would suit him (Mr. Morehead) to get men for 20s. a week, when he had to pay 40s. a week

now. But would it benefit the country? What was Great Britain suffering from at the present time? Were not the manufacturers getting richer, while those whom they employed were getting poorer? That was the trouble in Great Britain, and the hon. member would attempt to bring about a similar state of things here on a smaller scale. He (Mr. Morehead) had heard an argument to the effect that, as there was a certain amount of debt on every individual in the colony, the more people they brought here the less that debt would be per head. But let them carry that argument further. If they brought out two or three millions of people the inhabitants of the colony would owe nothing, and if they brought four millions they would be rich. Such an argument would not hold water for a moment; and he was astonished that hon. members on the other side could not see that. They ought to know perfectly well what would be the effect if the Bill were carried—not on the lines contained within the words of the clauses, but on the lines as absolutely laid down by the Premier. What would be the effect? It would be the most damaging and disastrous measure that had ever been passed in Queensland. The Bill, on the face of it, was a very simple measure; there was nothing in it to create much alarm in the minds of the inhabitants of Queensland. But, read between the lines, and with the interpretation put upon it by the Premier, it was a measure that would do enormous harm in Queensland, and, he believed, to the colonies generally. If men were to be brought here under an agreement to work at a lower rate of wages than was current in the colony, then he maintained that disaster must follow on the train of such a proceeding. The Premier said that he was trying by that measure to deal with the difficulties that had arisen in connection with sugar-growing in the North. He (Mr. Morehead) did not believe that the hon. gentleman had that very much at heart—the hon. gentleman might have, but he doubted very much. But it had not been proved in any way that tropical agriculture could be conducted by white labour. It was perfectly well known that it had been attempted in the Sandwich Islands; but they could not be compared in any way with Queensland, as far as the heat to be endured was concerned. Even suppose it had been a success, which he denied, there was no comparison between the climate of the Sandwich Islands and the dense tropical scrubs that existed in Northern Queensland. Yet the hon. gentleman misled people by saying that he knew from his own knowledge that sugar had been successfully cultivated in climates hotter than that of Queensland. It was hardly fair for the Premier, in dealing with such a great question, to get up in his place and make a statement, which he (Mr. Morehead) characterised as absolutely untrue, with regard to the question of black and white labour and sugar-growing. He had not the least doubt that the Premier would carry the Bill through, and that he would be assisted by his friend, the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan). He had, no doubt, instigated the hon. member to bring his amendments forward. The Premier liked to have a stalking-horse; and he (Mr. Morehead) was sure that if the hon. gentleman did not suggest the amendments they were not brought forward without his permission. In the meantime he was glad to hear from the hon. member for Cook—who was evidently not an Englishman or an Irishman; he had a Scotch name but an Irish brogue; he would not like to describe him as a nondescript, because he might be called to order, though he believed "nondescript" was a very admirable term;—he was glad to hear, at any rate, that the

hon. member did not endorse the foreign invasion with which they were threatened at the expense of the State.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the hon. member for Balonne had referred to a letter which had appeared in the *Courier* from a certain gentleman, from Mackay. All he (Mr. Isambert) could say was that that letter was about as illogical as what was advanced as arguments by the Opposition when posing as the champions of the working men. Attempts had been made by hon. members of the Opposition to introduce national animosity into the various arguments in favour of the working men. He (Mr. Isambert) certainly thought those hon. members deserved credit for the dexterity with which they fought shy of the real question at issue. It was only for a moment that a really honest expression on the subject was obtained from them. The hon. member for Mackay had gone round Rosewood in company with him, and, in reply to a remark respecting agricultural labourers from England and the Continent, the hon. gentleman said—"But you see they would not stop. The moment they have a few pounds they settle down on the land." This was the real ground of objection to European labourers, no matter where they came from. Hon. members opposite did not want the labourers to settle on the land. It had been argued that, once they started bringing out immigrants at that great rate, there would be no stopping them; but so far as they had gone the Government had shown great care and caution in regulating the supply of immigrants. Under the former regulations, immigrants were introduced wholesale without regard to their suitability; but instructions had been given to stop sending tradesmen. If he were to be as illogical as hon. members opposite, he could tell things about Scotchmen that would curdle the very blood of Scotchmen. For instance, when he went, a few months ago, from Maryborough to Bundaberg, there were about fifty kanakas aboard the steamer, and two days after landing in Bundaberg he found them already employed on a plantation. They were instructed how to prepare houses for themselves, and they raked the dry earth level with their hands. At the same time he saw about forty or fifty families of new arrivals close to the immigration dépôt. They were nearly all Scotchmen, and a more miserable lot and more unsuitable lot for Bundaberg he never saw in his life. They could not hold a candle to the kanakas who had to level the ground with their hands. With the exception of three or four, they were nearly all stone-masons, monumental masons, carpenters, and cabinet-makers. Several of them had boxes full of models and instruments for plying their trades. The present Government had to convey those poor wretches to the southern districts where they had better opportunities for plying their trades. A better and more decent lot he never saw; it was their very superiority which made them so wretched. The difference between coolie labour and European was this: that when a coolie labourer got work he stayed at it; but the Europeans, as soon as they had a few pounds, took up land and made a home. This was the real objection to them. That the work was very unhealthy was another argument—a very gratuitous argument, which was not borne out by facts. Insurance companies did not make the slightest difference between insuring lives in the North and in the South; they said the North was quite as healthy as any part of Queensland. Europeans could not be treated as some kanakas were treated. He was assured by a gentleman employed on one of the Northern plantations that on one occasion a kanaka went away from one gang to another,

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and as a punishment he was handcuffed and had to work in handcuffs all day. What he (Mr. Isambert) objected to was the attempts made by the Opposition to dethrone labour from its true dignity. Labour was far more dignified than trying to grind poor fellows' bones into dollars.

Mr. LISSNER said he always liked to hear a good speech. He had tried to follow the hon. member for Rosewood, but had not been able to make out half he said. For his own part he did not believe in the Bill; although it was a very simple production, he thought there was a good deal in it which would affect the country seriously if it passed—and he supposed it would pass whether he said anything against it or not. The brave thirty-five would come down on them like an avalanche, and, whatever they thought about it, it would be passed; but he would like to have his name recorded as one that did not go with it. He could not solve the Labour question himself for the different requirements of Queensland; but looking over the few clauses in the Bill he did not think it would affect the question in any shape or form. That was how the Bill looked to him, as an unsophisticated mining representative. They did not want blacks where they were; they wanted respectable working men. As affairs stood now on Charters Towers, they could afford to give £3 a week for eight hours' work. They were a fine, respectable class of people, proud of living at Charters Towers in a free country; but they had a great abhorrence of being rushed by cheap labour that would afterwards—in fact, a great deal sooner than afterwards—come up and compete with them. This Bill seemed to him to be an apology to sugar-planters. The hon. the Premier had said he never hurt the sugar-planters with any of his policy; and, if this were correct, he could not see what they wanted an apology for. That indented labour was not intended to suit the sugar-planters, and gentlemen representing that industry in the House had admitted now that the Bill was of no use to them. As it could only be detrimental to any other class of the working population in Queensland, the sooner they got rid of the Bill the better. A great deal of controversy had arisen during the debate on that Immigration Bill upon the kind of people they were going to get to represent kanakas and coolies, and most hon. gentlemen opposite had been praising the Germans continually, and saying that there were no better men in the world to work anywhere or do anything at all in the colony than the Germans. He was very proud to hear it, as he liked to hear the Germans praised; but if all the praise was to end in their being brought out to represent the coolie and the kanaka as indented labourers, he would rather hear hon. gentlemen blame the Germans, and say they should never be brought here. He would rather in such a case go in with the gentlemen on his own side, and have recourse to the natives of Great Britain—that was, if they liked it. So far they had no certainty that either Laplanders, Norwegians, Danes, or Germans were inclined to come out. He did not know that there was anybody to tell them the tenor of the agreement, or what they were to be indented for. Very probably a great number of Germans would come out if there was a good immigration agent sent home to explain to them in flowery language that in coming to Queensland they would be coming to a beautiful country, full of milk and honey, and soft soap, and after doing a little work on a plantation they would be wealthy men, and might do as they liked. That was the reward held out to them; but he thought they were more likely to be rewarded with the scrub fever, an enlargement of the liver, or other luxuries of that kind. If that was to be their reward, he, as a German, said, leave them

where they were, and cease to fight about nationalities. No doubt the Bill would become law. Every thing brought forward on the other side was law; but so far as he was concerned, as a representative of a large mining district, he hoped it would not become law. He dared say he was as fond of the working classes as anybody in that House, and he did not need to make an electioneering speech about it that evening because when he came before the working men he stood upon facts; he had always been a good employer, and the working man would always give him his support. Before he sat down he would only mention that the different arguments adduced in favour of the Bill had not the slightest weight with him. He intended to vote against it and leave his vote as a record for his youngsters to look at. If that Bill became law and did good—if it supplied the planters with suitable labour, and did not reduce the wages of the working men in the colony at present—then his children might look at his vote on the question, and say their father was a fool.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: So they will!

MR. LISSNER said that so long as he represented a fifty-fifth part in the colony, for the reasons he had given—he did not care how great the majority against him might be—he would vote against that indented Labour Bill.

MR. GRIMES said he was inclined to think that there was a little obstruction in the tactics of the Opposition over the Bill, and he could promise hon. gentlemen that he was not going to play into their hands by making a long speech. There were, however, one or two remarks made by hon. members opposite which he thought it was well to take notice of. It seemed very strange to him that if this Bill was going to work all the evil hon. members said, and was going to reduce the wages of labouring men and bring about so much distress amongst them, that they should oppose it. Was not that the very thing hon. gentlemen opposite wished to bring about? Did they not wish to bring down upon the heads of the present Ministry the indignation of the working men? Did they not wish that at the next election every working man's vote should be turned against the present Ministry? And if they so much wished that to be brought about, the best thing they could do, according to their own arguments, was to quietly let the Bill pass into law. They would find that a very much easier way of carrying out their intention than by obstructing the Bill. He could not understand their action, and he really thought that they must be very doubtful about the working of the Bill. It answered their purpose at the present time to say that the Bill would work very much evil and distress. Yet they were afraid to allow it to become law, lest it should prove otherwise. They had heard a great deal about the indented labourer. The indented agricultural labourer, according to hon. gentlemen opposite, when he came to Queensland was to jump up a mechanic at once. The hon. member for Mackay said they were sure to become blacksmiths and carpenters, and would take the trade away from the mechanics already here. What an absurdity that was! Was an agricultural labourer such an intelligent being that he could jump into the blacksmith's business or the carpenter's business without ever learning it? He could not follow such absurd arguments as those. They were told further that the Bill would reduce the wages of the labourer 25 per cent. If it were to reduce the labourer's wages to such an extent, and bring about such a great amount of distress upon the working men already in the colony, hon. members opposite had better let it pass quietly, and work themselves on to the Treasury benches by that means. What did hon. gentlemen opposite

propose to do if they succeeded in preventing the Bill becoming law? What was their alternative? He was absent from the House when the petition presented by the hon. member for Mackay was read that afternoon; but he had read it since, and he asked what did those petitioners say? They cried out, "Let us introduce coolies!" What would happen if they introduced coolies? They would be introducing labourers at 15s. a month instead of 15s. a week. Hon. members opposite might say that that would be regulated labour, and would not come into competition with the ordinary working man of the colony, and that those men would have to go home when their engagements were up. He would point out that that was not in the regulations. If they turned to the regulations for their introduction, and which would be found in the "Votes and Proceedings" for 1883, at page 437, they would see by clause 72 that—

"Any immigrant—"

That was, a coolie immigrant—

"who fails to apply to the chief protector within twelve months from the date of the certificate furnished to him by a protector under section 69, shall be deemed to have forfeited his right to a return passage, unless he can satisfy the chief protector that his failure to apply within the prescribed time was owing to circumstances beyond his control."

What did the 76th clause of those regulations say?—

"It shall be optional with any immigrant holding a certificate from a protector, under section 69, to make a declaration to the chief protector either in person or in writing within twelve months of the date of such certificate, to the effect that he has elected to stay in the colony, and surrender his rights to a free return passage. The chief protector shall, on receiving such a declaration, and after due inquiry, cause to be paid to the immigrant making the declaration a sum equal to one-half the amount realised by him under section 70, for the return passage of such immigrant."

So that it would be seen that the coolie was encouraged to stay in the colony. He got half his passage money in cash—half of what it would cost him to return to India if he stayed here. That was the alternative scheme, and he would like the working men of the colony to notice that. That was the alternative—to bring coolies into the colony at 15s. a month, and very poor rations, and then after they had served their time allow them to go all over the colony. Hon. members would say that the regulations would prevent them doing so, and prevent them engaging in any other kind of employment; but he asked, what did they learn from the experience of other countries where coolies had been introduced? What had been the effect of the introduction of coolies in those places upon the better class of labour? What did they find in Natal? That place had been referred to during sessions past, and it would be just as well for him to refer to it again. The people there thought they were doing a grand thing for the country by introducing coolie labour, and thought it would not only give employment to a large number of Europeans, but give them better wages. What was the effect? He quoted now from an extract from the *Natal Mercury*:—

"Let anyone who desires to know anything about the facts, ask Mr. Superintendent Alexander as to the number of really unexceptional men who have applied for billets in the force here during the last two months—and also ask how many, night after night, he has to find lodgings for, who otherwise would be roofless? This is not a good prospect for a country asking for immigrants. But why is this so? Coolies doing everything—from clerkships, ticket-collectors, railway men of all kinds, drivers of trolleys, working in business stores, and, in fact, driving the white men out of everything."

That was the effect that alternative scheme of hon. members opposite would have upon Queensland if they had their way. He hoped they would not have their way. He had no fear about the Bill, if it was passed, bringing

down upon us such disasters as had been predicted. The Government were not going to flood the colony; they were not going to bring in more than enough indentured labour, or more than would find employment when they got here. It was for the employers to indent the labour they required, and it was not likely they would engage men for two years unless they had something for them to do. His name had been referred to by the hon. member for Mulgrave, Sir Thomas McLlwraith, who had said that he (Mr. Grimes) would benefit by the introduction of cheap labour. He did not employ cheap labour; the ordinary working men on his plantation got 2s. a week more than those mechanics whom the hon. member himself introduced. The hon. member had referred to him that evening; so he had been told, although he was not in the House at the time. Now, the Darling Downs and Western Land Company, Limited, engaged a number of working men at £40 per annum with rations, 8 lbs. of flour—not a very large quantity—about enough for a coolie—14 lbs. of meat, 2 lbs. sugar, and 4 ozs. of tea. That was the way in which hon. members opposite would treat the labouring class of the colony, and although they were very anxious about the wages of the working man of the colony now, no doubt they would be very ready to lower them if they could possibly do so. What had they seen at Mackay? Was it not strange that the two places where they had attempted to lower the wages of Europeans had been Bundaberg and Mackay? The sugar-growers down south had got the same markets to compete with as the sugar-growers up north. They could not get one fraction more for their sugars than the Mackay planters, and was it not strange that there should be no lowering of wages in the South? Up at Mackay they were offering 10s. a week, but the sugar-growers of the South were very willing to give 15s. a week and board—not rations, but as much as ever the workmen liked to eat, and good food too. It was curious, therefore, to see how hon. members representing the North pushed themselves forward as the friends of the working man, while at the same time such reports were heard from the places from which they hailed. He rose principally to call attention to the alternative scheme of hon. members opposite. If they succeeded in preventing the Bill becoming law, they had no intention of letting things go on as they were. If they ever came into power, the country would have a Coolie Bill passed; the regulations would be re-enacted, and coolies would come to the colony in hordes and flood the labour market. The present Government had no intention of introducing such men; they wanted intelligent working men, and such they would get to come to the country if the Bill before the House became law.

Mr. BLACK said he liked to get hold of an hon. member who was fond of quotations. He always suspected him; he always suspected that he only read that portion of the quotation which suited his purpose, and ignored altogether that which did not quite carry out his views, or the views which he wished to impress on the House and the country. It had not been his intention in a debate such as the present, referring specially to European labour, to have referred in any way, beyond perhaps an occasional mention of them, to the regulations under which it was proposed by the late Government to introduce coolies; but he thought, as the hon. member for Oxley had seen fit to refer to them, and as he believed that the country took more interest in the question than even in the Land question, it was only right that what he was now going to read as the correct version of the Coolie Regulations

should go forth to the country; so that it might understand that it was never the intention of the previous Government to flood the country with hordes of coolies, as the Premier had more than once asserted, any more than to allow them when here to embark in any other occupations than those to which the Polynesians had hitherto been exclusively confined. He would read from the 13th clause of the Regulations, which would give the House an idea under what conditions it would be possible to introduce coolies. The 13th clause said:—

"Every requisition forwarded by the protector to the chief protector shall be accompanied by a report, wherein the protector shall certify, as far as he is able:—

- (1) Whether the applicant is engaged, or about to be engaged, in tropical agriculture;
- (2) Whether the applicant is in a position financially to carry out his engagements;
- (3) Whether he has fulfilled his engagements with any immigrants under previous contracts with him, and whether the employes on his estate are generally well treated;
- (4) Whether the estate of the applicant is healthy, and whether the mortality or sickness among immigrants on it has been excessive or not."

Then, in clause 14:—

"The chief protector may reject any requisition in regard to which the facts contained in the protector's report are considered unsatisfactory to him."

It was quite evident according to that that the system would be carried out in the same way that applications for Polynesians were sent in. It was quite certain that no one would be allowed to introduce a coolie unless he was to be engaged in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture. Paragraph 76, which the hon. member read, was quite correct; but he altogether omitted to read paragraph 79, which stated that—

"Any person other than a person engaged in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture who in any way employs an immigrant shall be liable on conviction to forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding 10s. for every day he employs such immigrant, and in every such case one-half of the fine shall be paid to the informer."

And clause 80:—

"Any person who employs an immigrant who has completed the first or any subsequent period of service, except under a written agreement made in pursuance of these regulations, and approved by the protector, or any person who employs an immigrant in any other way than in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture shall, on conviction, forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding 10s. for every day such immigrant is so employed, and in every such case one-half of the fine shall be paid to the informer."

He should like to ask the hon. member for Oxley, assuming that those regulations had the force of law, how was it possible that the coolie was to get away from his employment in semi-tropical or tropical agriculture, and embark in a different occupation in the colony at present adopted by Europeans. It was impossible. The very same regulations which controlled the employment of Polynesians could be made to control the employment of coolies. The way in which Polynesians were controlled was this:—Clause 10 specified that Polynesians were not to be employed except in tropical agriculture, and he thought the hon. Premier knew full well that he never allowed a man to be recruited from the islands unless he was perfectly satisfied he was to be employed in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture. Clause 12 of the Polynesian Act stated that a penalty of from £5 to £20 was recoverable from anyone otherwise employing a Polynesian, or came in opposition to the spirit of the Act. Then again, clause 3 of the Polynesian Act distinctly stated that all engagements must be made and attested before the Polynesian Inspector. The same thing applied to the coolie as to the kanaka; and it was absurd for any hon. gentleman to say that, once allow coolies into the colony under these regulations, they would spread over the whole

colony, and embark in occupations for which they were never imported. The same regulations that controlled Polynesians could be made to control coolies. The planters never wished to introduce coolies so long as the supply of kanakas was adequate. But the supply of Polynesians was falling off, and the planters were compelled to look outside for labour for their plantations. The hon. Premier gave the country and the planters to understand that he would introduce such a scheme. In his opposition to the Bill, he (Mr. Black) was not in any way opposing the introduction of agricultural labourers, whether they were from England or any part of the Continent. They were good men, and they could find employment for them in the pursuit for which they were adapted. The stand he took was that the Bill intended to introduce men for an occupation for which they were physically unsuited.

The PREMIER: Do not introduce them then.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman said, "Do not introduce them." The Immigration Act of 1882 gave the planter ample opportunity of introducing this description of labour if he thought it was suitable. He could not imagine anything more monstrous to the working people of the colony. The planter had hitherto been prepared to pay every sixpence connected with the labour which he had always considered good, and had never asked the taxpayer to contribute; he had always been prepared to pay £25 for their introduction and £5 for their return; because he thought it was the only labour suitable. If he had thought the labour suggested would have suited his wants he would have had it long ago. The country would have to pay the whole expense of introducing it. It was not because they sat on that side of the House that they felt compelled to oppose the Bill; he opposed it because it did not give the planters that which they were led to believe the Government would give them. He was not going to pose as the special advocate of the working men, but it was a Bill by which cheap indentured European labour—for it must be cheap if it was to take the place of kanaka labour—was brought out at the expense of the working men of the colony, asking them to cut their own throats—for that was what it meant. Every sixpence of the cost was to be paid by the working men of the colony, who were the real taxpayers. It was a monstrous proposition. It was immaterial to him whether the Bill passed or not, but he was certain that the debate which had resulted from the Bill would do an immense amount of good by showing the people what the policy of the Government was on the subject.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down had referred to clauses 79 and 80 of the Coolie Regulations, and he said that similar clauses were in the Polynesian Labourers Act. He quite admitted that; he was aware of those clauses; but he would ask the hon. gentleman what had been the effect of those clauses in the employment of Polynesians. Had those penal clauses prevented Polynesians from being employed in the higher branches of labour? Did not they see them wherever they went on plantations engaged in every kind of employment? They might see them working as carpenters and blacksmiths, and that sort of work. He submitted that they had been unable to keep them to the ordinary work that they said Polynesians were imported for; they would be unable to keep the coolie to that work under similar clauses. The clauses referred to by the hon. member would have no effect whatever in keeping them to that employment; they had been evaded in the Polynesian Labourers Act, and would be evaded in the Coolie Act.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. member for Mackay had asserted that he was fond of quotations when they were facts. He (Mr. Annear) made the assertion the other night that there were plenty of labourers in Polynesia who would come out if recruited in a proper manner. The hon. gentleman asserted that each islander cost the planter £25. He (Mr. Annear) knew that in scores of cases that was not true. In many parts of the colony—Bundaberg, Maryborough, and Brisbane—they saw many instances where half-a-dozen planters were shipowners; and he challenged contradiction in saying that in most cases the islanders did not cost them £10 per head. The hon. member stated that he did not think it was impossible to obtain labourers from the islands. He had a telegram in his hand that he had received, since he last spoke, from a shipowner in Maryborough, stating—

"The trip before last fifty-nine days, 82 recruits; last trip (the vessel came in a fortnight ago), eighty-eight days, and 82 recruits."

Those men were recruited under the new regulations in a proper and legal manner. The islanders were a very sensible class of men. Many gentlemen now residing in Brisbane were well aware that owing to the treatment the islanders had received in the North—Mackay in particular—they would not go to that part of the colony; but that if they were wanted for Bundaberg, Maryborough, or Brisbane, they were ready to go on every occasion. There was no doubt that a great many of the atrocities which had been committed in the islands had not been committed by Queensland ships, but by vessels trading to Fiji and New Caledonia. It was very amusing to see the great interest taken in the working man by hon. members at the present time. He remembered that about eighteen months ago the Colonial Secretary of Malta was a guest on a plantation where he had some 15 men working. These were men engaged on that plantation at 12s. and 13s. a day. Mr. De Cesare asked to be allowed to send out men from Malta, and said he would send out good bricklayers, and splendid carpenters, and other tradesmen. And that gentleman, who wished to introduce artisans to compete with those already in the colony at 2s. a day, was received and entertained by the very gentlemen who were now posing as the champions of the working men. At the last general election, the question, as he understood it, was whether coolies or labourers from Europe should be introduced, and the constituencies decided that they would have labourers from Europe. Ever since he had been in the colony—a period extending over twenty-two years—several ships arrived every year with immigrants, but that had not had the effect of driving out population. Neither would the immigrants brought out under the Bill. If hon. members went to his district they would see many of those men possessing elysian fields and smiling homes, and living in a luxury and affluence that they had never enjoyed in the old country. They were helping to build up this colony. He had had 250 men—Germans, Scandinavians, and Swedes—working for him, and had found them very reliable labourers. His own countrymen used to go to court, but those men never summoned him; they faithfully carried out their agreements. Working men would, he believed, welcome such labourers, and give them the right hand of fellowship, and go on in the peaceful honourable way that they had gone up to the present time. He was very much amused at the speech of the hon. member for Charters Towers. The hon. gentleman affected to represent the working men of his district. But he did not affect that so much the other day, when the ship called the "Heath" came

into Cairns. The hon. gentleman was very much put about when the kanakas on that vessel—who did not know a word of English, nor why they came to the colony—were sent back in a proper and constitutional manner. He (Mr. Annear) approved of the regulations, and would even go further than they did and say that kanakas might do any work on sugar plantations except driving an engine and feeding a boiler. And he would also say that they should not be allowed to plough. They should not in any way interfere with the white men who earned a livelihood on the plantations. There was no doubt that the remark made by the hon. member for Rosewood, when he referred to Scotchmen as a superior class of men, was correct. They were artisans, and would not work on sugar plantations; they would rather have no work at all. He had no fear of the Bill, and would vote for it, knowing as he did from his own experience that the men introduced under its provisions would not in any way reduce the rates of wages paid to labourers and tradesmen already in the colony.

Mr. LISSNER said the hon. member for Maryborough had made a mistake or a misstatement when he said that he (Mr. Lissner) had complained to him about a ship of kanakas. He never had anything to do with a ship at Cairns, or with kanakas either. The hon. gentleman had been misinformed.

Mr. ANNEAR said he did not refer to anything that took place outside, but to a debate in that House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would only ask the hon. member for Rosewood, whose speech he did not perfectly understand—it might be his fault, or it might be the fault of the hon. gentleman—whether the interpretation of his speech by the hon. member for Maryborough—that Scotchmen were too good men to import—was correct? If they could get a better article, even at an increased cost, would it not be better to get that article?

Question—That clause 1 as read stand part of the Bill—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Sheridan, Foxton, Macdonald-Paterson, Foote, Beattie, Grimes, T. Campbell, Bale, Kellett, J. Campbell, White, Jordan, Isambert, Annear, Mellor, Macfarlane, Horwitz, Midgley, Aland, and Stevens.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Norton, Archer, Morehead, McWhannell, Chubb, Donaldson, Ferguson, Palmer, Lissner, Govett, Nelson, Black, and Lator.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 2, as follows:—

“The Governor in Council may direct that persons of any specified age shall not be eligible to be nominated for a passage warrant under the Provisions of the 11th section of the Principal Act; and any such direction shall be published in the *Gazette*, and shall have the force of law.”

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought before they went further—and he thought they were entitled to an answer, though they had been charged with going in for what was very near being obstruction—he would ask the Premier whether he was prepared to accept amendments both in the principal Act and in the Bill to the effect that until the British Islands were exhausted they should not go further afield for immigrants? The hon. member for Oxley might laugh; but he (Mr. Grimes) believed in cheap white labour, no matter where he could get it. Perhaps the people of the colony did not believe in that class of labour, however. He would therefore ask the Premier whether he would accept such amendments as would admit of the British Islands being exhausted before he went further afield for the immigrants he proposed to bring out?

The PREMIER: No, Mr. Fraser.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said “No.” Then he must admit that he had opened a very large field for argument—that he opened up the whole question. He must admit one of two things: either that he was not prepared to attempt to get out from the British Islands the labour that he sought to bring to one of the Imperial colonies, or that in trying to do so he went to foreign countries to obtain that labour which he (Mr. Morehead) maintained, and which the public would maintain, could be got from their own race. If the hon. gentleman was prepared to join issue on the question as to whether the people were to be taxed to bring out foreigners or their own people, the verdict of the country would be unmistakable. He told them just now that he was not prepared even to try the experiment.

The PREMIER: I told you nothing of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman said to-night that he was not prepared to test the British Islands first.

The PREMIER: I told you nothing of the kind.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then was the hon. gentleman prepared to test the British Islands first? Was he silent? Did he shrink from a reply? Then the reply must be in the negative. The hon. gentleman thought he could coerce the Opposition, and force a Bill of that kind on hon. members. His action showed what he intended; and it would show the country that he intended to force on them, at the expense of the State, an alien race, no matter where that alien race might come from. He had distinctly told the Committee that he would not test the British Islands before he tested the North of Europe.

The PREMIER: He has not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman has not done what?

The PREMIER: What you say he has

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman would not answer his question. He would again ask whether the Premier was prepared to test the British Islands under the Bill before he went further afield? The hon. gentleman might yawn. It might be a very tiring question for him to answer, but it was a question to which the people of the colony, through their representatives, demanded an answer. He contended that they should have people from their own country first, and what came afterwards would be a matter for the consideration of the Committee and the country. He again demanded whether their own flesh and blood were to have the first choice of coming out under the provisions of the Bill? The hon. gentleman was still silent—he would not reply.

The PREMIER: When you sit down I will reply.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I will sit down if the hon. gentleman wishes to answer my question.

The PREMIER said that if the hon. gentleman would keep his seat it would greatly facilitate business. He pretended to misunderstand the question which had now been talked about for three nights. Though he at first professed to have no objection to the Bill, he intended to occupy as many nights as possible before he allowed it to pass. As he had already said, the discussion on the other side during the greater part of the evening was merely intended to occupy time, and not addressed to the Bill before the Committee at all. They had been beating the air. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that the Government were making every effort to get agricultural

labourers from England, that those efforts had been unsuccessful, that the labourers could not be got in sufficient numbers to supply the demand; the Government therefore did not propose to limit their endeavours to England—that was to say, if employers in the colony intended to go elsewhere for them. The Government did not propose to bring out a single immigrant under this Bill unless persons in the colony engaged them. If they did so, the Government would bring them out for them, and if they did not those labourers would remain where they were. If sugar-planters held that those men were unfit for the purpose for which they were designed, let them refrain from engaging them; but they must understand that if they did not choose to engage them, they would not get coolies—until they succeeded in displacing, not only the present Government, but the present Parliament. Now that they understood the matter, let them go to work as sensible men of business. What did hon. members want? Deputations headed by some of them came to him outside begging and entreating him, on behalf of the Government, to make arrangements to import immigrants, and when he informed them that he was willing to do all he could for them, that he had a Bill ready and would press it through Parliament as rapidly as possible, the same hon. members or their friends came to the House and met the Bill with obstruction. What did it all mean? Did they come to his office to deceive the Government and the public into believing that they wanted the labour, or were they endeavouring to deceive the Government and the country now into an opposite belief? Hon. members ought to be at least consistent. He proposed to give no further information on the subject. The matter had been thoroughly discussed, and he hoped hon. members on that side would leave the discussion to those hon. members on the other side, who seemed determined to obstruct progress.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was very glad to hear that the Premier intended to crown the edifice by giving no more information. He had given none so far, but had simply held up a bogie. There was a vegetable known as the pumpkin, which children sometimes scooped out, and into which they put a lighted candle and called it a "bogie." That was the kind of bogie the hon. gentleman was holding up to the working men. Perhaps the hon. gentleman was afraid of saying more on the subject, because he had already shown his hand too openly. He (Mr. Morehead) had asked the Premier a direct question, whether he intended to give, at any rate, an equal chance to the inhabitants of the British Islands as to those of the Continent, and the hon. gentleman had refused to answer him. The Premier had told the Committee in as plain words as possible that the Bill must be rammed down the throats of those who were opposed to it by the majority that favoured him, and he assumed that the amendments to be proposed by the hon. member for South Brisbane would go with them. If the Bill was to be forced down the throats of the people, it would have a very bad effect on them; for it would be very soon thrown back again upon the hon. gentleman. The Premier had told them very clearly that he did not intend to take immigrants from the British Islands, and that the Bill was brought in to bring out immigrants from the Continent; and he had also told them, as an attempted excuse, that there were great difficulties in the way of obtaining agricultural labourers from England. But they had been told by an hon. member of the Opposition, not then present, who probably knew more about the agricultural labourers of Great Britain from actual knowledge than the Premier could possibly know from

report, that there would not be the least difficulty in getting out from England the labour which the hon. gentleman affected to seek. What the hon. gentleman really sought was to flood the country with low-waged labour, and low-waged labour obtained from foreign sources. The Premier had taken exception to what he was pleased to term obstruction by hon. members of the Opposition, but it must be remembered that the Bill was one of supreme importance to the whole colony. It only affected the sugar-planters in so far as they were a prominent part of the State. It affected most of all those whom the Opposition were laughed at for describing as the working classes. Hon. members opposite had sneered at them as not having the sympathies of the working classes at heart. The hon. member for Stanley might sneer "hear, hear," but he defied that hon. member to contradict him when he said that during the history of Queensland the working classes had never been so prosperous as during the last four or five years. He would also ask that hon. member to point out one instance where the working man had not been recompensed for any service he had done him; and he wished the hon. member could give the same answer for himself. They were fighting the battle not only of the sugar-planters—although they were largely concerned in the matter as forming a great element in the present and future prosperity of Queensland—but they were fighting the battle of the working man, and of everyone else in the colony when they were opposing the threatened inundation of foreign labour on their shores. It was a pity that the Premier in his ill-temper had declared he would speak no more on the subject, because he was the only man of intelligence on the other side, and it would give the Opposition a chance of attacking them in a way which the hon. gentleman would afterwards regret. He believed the Bill could be amended to meet the wishes of hon. members on both sides, because he did not think that any member wished that any undue weight should be given, under the Bill, to any race outside their own island. He would therefore move a new clause to follow clause 1, as follows:—

That so much of sections 12 and 13 of the principal Act as authorises the engagement of mechanics, labourers, and servants in Europe or the continent of Europe, other than native-born or naturalised British subjects, is hereby repealed.

If that amendment were not carried of course the thing would have to go on—the colony would be flooded with foreign labour. Those hon. members who thought that their first duty was to the British race, would vote for the amendment; those who believed in the alien races would vote for the clause as it stood.

The PREMIER said that clause 2 had been put, and no new clause could now be inserted before it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Premier would be a man of his word, and would not speak again. As a technical objection—an objection which the hon. gentleman himself was fond of speaking about—had been taken to the amendment, he would move that clause 2 be omitted or negatived, with a view of inserting the new clause he had read.

The PREMIER: It cannot be an amendment on this clause.

The CHAIRMAN said that, as clause 2 had been put, the amendment could not be put after clause 1.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, with all due deference to the Chairman's ruling, he would point out that the Chairman intended putting

the amendment had objection not been taken by the Premier. However, he had no objection to the 2nd clause.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he was inclined to ask the hon. the Colonial Secretary a question, as he was now in his place. The hon. member, he was sorry to say, had considered some of his remarks obnoxious, and had left the Chamber, but he was glad now to see him in his usual place.

The PREMIER: Is there any question before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no question before the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then I move you out of the chair, Mr. Fraser. I shall very soon get a question before the Committee, and I shall give my reason for it.

Question put.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: There is no proposition before you, sir. It is the first time I ever saw the Chairman standing up and stating the question before the hon. member who was making the motion had sat down. The Chairman has his privileges, so has every other hon. member.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he intended to go on with his remarks. Of course, the Chairman had not quite recovered from the recent newness of his office, although he believed at some remote period the hon. member had occupied the position of Chairman before. He hoped he would not interfere with the rights of hon. members, as some hon. members might resent it. He would ask the hon. the Premier when the amendments of the hon. member for South Brisbane were to come in? They were not mentioned on the paper as the sequel to any particular clause, and they might come in at any time the hon. member chose. He would like to know from the Premier when he was prepared to consider these amendments, or whether they were to be considered by the Government at all? They contained questions of very great importance—broad questions which would want a great deal of discussion. He would point out, too, that the sheet containing the amendments was a “further corrected proof.” He supposed hon. members knew what the first corrected proof was, and what the original proof was, but he did not know. He was content to deal with the “further corrected proof.” He would like to know when these amendments were to come on.

Question put.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had made the usual obstructive motion, and followed it up by the usual obstructive speech, and it could hardly be expected that the Government would give him much assistance, considering that they were trying to get the Bill through, while the hon. gentleman was trying as plainly as possible to obstruct it. He presumed the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan), if he moved the amendments, would move them where they would naturally come in; that was after the 4th clause, the last clause but the final one containing the title. When the amendments were moved—if they should be moved—he would be prepared to state the views of the Government on the matter.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman, with his usual perversity of intellect and perversity of diction, had stated that he (Mr. Morehead) had tried to obstruct in moving the Chairman out of the chair. The hon. member knew that he himself had compelled him to take that course. He had no desire to move the Chairman

out of the chair, except to show that the hon. member could not coerce him or any other hon. member of the House into silence, because it suited his royal pleasure to attempt to push a clause through before it had been properly discussed.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he was not surprised, because it was so like the hon. gentleman. The hon. the Premier was calling out about obstruction. Did he remember the year before last, when he (Sir T. McIlwraith) brought in an Immigration Bill, and they spent two weeks discussing it on the second reading, after the hon. member had declared that it was nothing but a “re-hash” of the old Act? What obstruction had taken place? He considered a valuable amount of information had been knocked into the Government, though not much had come out of them. The country knew a great deal more about the Bill now than it did before; and they were determined that the country should know more. It did not matter to them whether the hon. member cried obstruction or not—they were talking to the Bill. He had not been absent from the House more than an hour and a half, and up to that time the only obstruction had come from the Government benches, and that was from the eccentric member for Maryborough, who insisted upon reading a report he had made some years ago. And yet now the hon. member, when he got out of temper, commenced to cry “obstruction.” The hon. member did not seem to realise the importance of the Bill. He seemed to think that when he had made up his mind to give them white kanakas they should go down on their knees and thank him, and that the country was safe. They had their own ideas, and they were not going to be put down by the hon. member for Oxley, who whined and regretted the other day that they had a *Hansard*. He thanked God there was such a thing as a *Hansard*, because, although the Premier declined to give them any more information, they would have it before much progress was made with the Bill. There had not been the slightest attempt at obstruction, notwithstanding the complaints of the hon. member. He thought it was a very fair question for his hon. friend to ask what the Government intended to do with regard to the amendments of the hon. member for South Brisbane. Did the Government countenance them? It was not enough for the hon. the Premier to say he would tell them when the proper time came. They wanted to know now, because the clauses to be proposed by the hon. member had a direct bearing on the clause they had now reached.

Question put and negatived.

On clause 3, as follows:—

“The scale of amounts payable by an intending employer in respect of the passage to the colony of labourers or servants, to be engaged by him in the United Kingdom or on the continent of Europe under the provisions of the 12th section of the principal Act, shall be that set forth in Schedule F to this Act, instead of that set forth in Schedule D to the principal Act.”

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member seemed to think that he had no need to give them any information.

The PREMIER: What information do you ask for?

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he supposed they had got to the germ of the Bill in this clause—in the alteration of the schedules. The original Schedule D, in the principal Act, provided that passengers brought out under those indented clauses should pay £2; that was, those whom the hon. gentleman acknowledged should be brought out. Males over twelve years of age should pay £2, and females £1, under Schedule D

of the principal Act. The clause under which it was proposed they should be brought out now provided that males were to pay £1 each, females £1 each, and the children of indented labourers 10s. each. He thought that clause showed a great deal. It showed the class of people among whom the hon. gentleman thought he would be able to find a substitute for kanakas and coolies. The hon. gentleman had been for the last two years of his life running down what he called a system of "slavery"; and he now proposed to get white men in the place of those whom he considered slaves. He could not get them in England, and he could not get them in Germany, until he reduced the very moderate amount which must be paid for their passage from £2 to £1. Could anything be more preposterous? Talk about "pauper immigration"; why there never was anything so degrading to the colony as this. To put forcibly before the House and the country that they could not get in any part of Europe labourers to take the place of the kanakas as indented labourers, until they reduced the passage money to be paid from £2 to £1! The hon. gentleman had caught him up as he thought instead of answering his arguments. He said they could get out free or comparatively free immigrants from home—they could get any number of agricultural labourers from Scotland—if they paid a large amount of their passage-money. Yet the hon. gentleman proposed that they should introduce foreigners on far better terms for them, but far worse terms for the colony. That was the argument he brought forward, and the hon. gentleman picked him up because he admitted that the gentleman sent home to secure immigrants had confessed that he had great difficulty in finding agricultural labourers. He admitted that there was that difficulty, and that they were the poorest class in England; but Mr. Russell had not the slightest difficulty in recruiting as many as he liked from Scotland; and most of them could be got by paying a large portion of their passage money and getting steamship owners to bring them out.

The PREMIER: Yes.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had never anything good unless he had got a sneer behind it. He knew what he meant by his "yes," and his remark to his colleague. He held that the steamship companies were the very people to save the colony a lot of money in this matter. The hon. gentleman knew that, and he was by the Bill simply changing from British steamship companies to German steamship companies; and they proposed to give them the whole of the passage money. He said the British steamship companies were prepared to bring out as many immigrants as they wanted from home, and among them any number of agricultural labourers. He said they ought to take advantage of that, and bring out their immigrants from home. If they were not the class they wanted, and if they wanted a class to take the place of those who were suffering from slavery in the colony—according to the hon. member—if they were to take the place of the kanakas, then in the name of common sense why should not the planters pay for them? The hon. member could not possibly get over that, and this clause at once showed what the hon. member's meaning was. If the indented clauses in the old Act were intended to apply to the bringing out of labourers wholesale for the sugar plantations, no doubt they would have been acted upon; but they were not intended for anything of the sort. The hon. gentleman knew that, but he wanted to apply machinery to make the charge a great

deal less for indented labourers, and at the same time bring out the wives and families of those labourers under the indented clauses. Was ever such a slur cast upon the colony as that? The hon. member proposed that they should say they were compelled to acknowledge that they could not get along with the people they had been bringing here before—that their own countrymen were no good—that they were not subservient enough to the powers that be, and they must have another class of people to take the place of kanakas, not understanding the position. In fact, the Bill was a Bill to introduce white slaves, and not only that, but it proposed that they should be introduced at the expense of the labourers already in the colony. That was the meaning of it. Still the hon. gentleman insisted that he was helping the sugar planters, and then, if they would not allow it to pass, the evil be upon their own heads. It was not the sugar planters whom the Opposition were considering, but the people of the colony who would undoubtedly rise up and condemn the Bill as soon as they learned what the effect of it would be. As soon as they saw those low-waged Germans coming in to supplant the British labourers already in the colony, they would condemn it; and then, no doubt, the hon. gentlemen would cry back, and say the Act would not operate because of the opposition to it; if the hon. gentleman had allowed him to carry out his scheme he would have made the sugar industry a source of wealth to the colony. The hon. gentleman had undertaken a task far too great for his strength. He thought he had to deal only with the sugar-planters, and he found now that he had to deal with men who had the interests of the colony at heart.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had said little that was new. What he had said in his speech he had said many times before, and he (the Premier) had said all he was disposed to say in answer to it. There was one new thing the hon. gentleman had said, however, and that was that he advocated that they should allow shipowners to select their immigrants.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I said nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER said he did not think the hon. gentleman knew what he did say when he got on his feet, very often. The hon. gentleman certainly told them that the very best persons to bring out their immigrants were the shipowners.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Exactly.

The PREMIER: And that they should find them for them.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: No, certainly not.

The PREMIER said that, if the hon. gentleman did not say that, his speech had no meaning. He certainly understood him to say that. He was quite aware that shipowners would fill as many ships as they allowed them to fill, and call the immigrants agricultural labourers, if they got £10 per head for bringing them out; and he was also quite aware that as soon as they came here it would be found that they were not agricultural labourers at all. They had had quite enough of that last year, and they had had quite enough of it twenty years ago, when the same thing was done. They had had quite enough of allowing shipowners to fill their ships and select their immigrants for them; and that was the only new thing which the hon. gentleman had advanced.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member tried to gain every point he could by misrepresenting what he said. He had

never said that they should for one moment allow shipowners to select their immigrants for them. The hon. member knew, or should know, if he had read the correspondence between himself and the shipowners, that all they contracted to do, was to bring out the immigrants provided by the Government. They gave the Government the same power for selecting the immigrants as they had themselves in the selection of men for their own ships; and for the hon. gentleman to take up a quibble, and say that he meant that the shipowners should select the immigrants, was perfectly absurd. Whoever dreamed of allowing shipowners to select immigrants? They had never themselves offered to do such a thing. Their offer was clear and distinct:—"We will give you exactly the same power of selecting the immigrants as you have at the present time. What we will do is to advertise the wants of the colony, and let them be known throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; and when we have got the immigrants together, you can select whom you like." Could there be a better system of selection than that? The whole of the work was actually done for the Government, and the steamship company were at the sole risk of having brought together indented immigrants, with the chance of their being rejected. The Government, in fact, had the whole power. Did the hon. gentleman dream for a moment that that power would be increased if the Bill passed, or rather that the Government would not have a great deal less control over the immigrants in bringing them here? Did he not know perfectly well that the Government had never had any supervision over German immigrants? The men who had come out here had been nominated, and there actually had been no supervision. If the hon. gentleman would read the reports on the carriage of German immigrants across to London, he would see that there was not the slightest knowledge of their professions, business, calling, or antecedents, except that they had been nominated and landed in London. It was then an act of charity to send them out here, or send them back to their own country. Anyone could understand, without having particular cases put before the Committee, how the supervision was a great deal more loose in Germany than it was in England. All the Government officers and staff were in England. They could not pretend to have such a big staff or such complete arrangements in Germany, because there the officers would have to be Germans themselves, and there would be no means of transacting business except through interpreters. With our own people it was different. The people themselves were the check. A shipload of English, Scotch, or Irish could come out here, and the public check was most valuable, for it could be seen by anyone what they were; but what check would there be over a shipload of foreigners? They might be anything. So far from that being an argument in favour of the hon. gentleman, it was the strongest argument against him. He would be putting steamship companies in operation who would crowd their ships with the scum of the German seaport towns, just as in the old days the ships were crowded with the scum of the English seaport towns. The thing had been done before, and the colony suffered for it, and he warned the Government against its repetition. The Government had a good staff of officers in England, who had, during the past four years, been able to fill their ships with good and useful immigrants; but the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government wished now to go back to the old times and the old system because he wanted to please some of his supporters who sat behind him, who had not had the courage to come forward and advocate their own countrymen's cause.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he had listened with interest to the various speakers during the debate, and perhaps it would only be retaliation if he were to inflict a little speech upon the committee in return. He had not spoken on the subject since the Bill was first placed before the House, and he should not now speak upon it at any length, but what he would say would be brief, and it would be all he would have to say upon the measure while it was passing through committee. A remark made by the hon. member for Balonne was one which, he thought, that hon. gentleman ought to act upon in debating the subject. The hon. member made use of some such sentiment as that it was the duty of the House in legislating for the colony to have regard to the desires, interests, and rights of the people already here. He understood the hon. member to make use of some such expression quite early in the debate, and he agreed with him in that view of the case. But when the hon. gentleman intimated his intention of proposing an amendment on the measure, such as he had already read, he (Mr. Midgley) thought he was departing from the spirit of that idea or sentiment; in fact, the Assembly would be going from one extreme—which perhaps the measure might lead them into—to another extreme. He could not agree with the amendment about to be proposed by the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It is withdrawn.

Mr. MIDGLEY: Was there no intention to reintroduce it?

Mr. MOREHEAD: No.

Mr. MIDGLEY: However, he might say what he was going to say, which bore on the subject. He thought that the German inhabitants of the colony, who were already here, according to their professions, had done as much to open out and establish the country as any of its other inhabitants, and they had a perfect right—a proportionate right—to say what the future inhabitants of the colony and the future social state of the colony should be. Therefore, as one who tried to be in love with fair play, he could have no sympathy with such a sentiment as that contained in the amendment of the hon. member for Balonne. Now, during the general election, amongst the few questions on which he pledged himself was the one with regard to the introduction of coolies, and after the speeches which he made on the subject, and the pronounced opinions he gave utterance to, he could never be a party to the introduction of coolies to supply the wants of the sugar planters. He thought, however, that in the measure proposed by the Government, as it became more and more sifted, there was to be found an element of unfairness and danger—he meant in this respect: They had been told that night that the difficulty of obtaining agricultural labourers in the British Isles was a very great one—that was, the difficulty of obtaining labourers at a reasonable rate of wages. The inducements and attractions of other countries being so many and so great, the difficulty of obtaining such labourers to come to this country were almost insurmountable. Supposing it should be found, as time went on, that that difficulty, which he believed to be an exaggerated one and not to really exist in fact; but supposing it should turn out to be a difficulty, and supposing it should be proved, in the course of events, that those who wanted labour in Queensland could get their labour cheaper, to their mind, and costing them less in every way, from the continent of Europe than they could get it from the British Islands, whatever might be the intentions of the Government, it would be found that the effect would be that the large majority of the immigrants to this colony would be Germans, whether

they wished it or not. Now, he thought that perhaps the Premier, in giving utterance to that view of the case—if he might say it without offence or presumption—went a little too far. Surely the one element of cheapness—that the planters would be able to get their labour cheaper from Europe than Great Britain—ought not to be an overwhelming consideration in deciding what the future population of Queensland should be. He could not be a party to any legislation which would have the effect of shutting out the people of the country from which he came. He could not, as an Englishman, be a party to that—and really it was a pleasure to get the name of Englishmen mentioned now. What with Scotchmen, Irishmen, and Germans—

Mr. MOREHEAD : And possibly natives.

Mr. MIDGLEY : Yes; possibly natives, although he did not object to them so much; but it was difficult for the poor Englishman to get a bit of self-assertion in anywhere. He really considered that one reason why national affairs had been so serious was that there were no Englishmen in the last Ministry; and there were no Englishmen in the present Government except one, and he was not present; he was far away. He believed in Englishmen; and he believed that there were any number of them to be got in the agricultural parts of England if fair and reasonable inducements were held out to them to come to Queensland as agricultural labourers; and they must have them, as he thought they were entitled to have them. Whether they got Germans or Scotchmen, they held to his mind a secondary and inferior position, and it only needed a little more organisation of Englishmen to give them a better chance. They would have to form some English-Hibernian society to stand a better show. He believed in national sentiment. It was—

"A rich rough gem, deny it who can;
The heart of a true-born Englishman."

He would not like to see an Englishman shut out by a Scotchman, or an Irishman, or a Welshman, or anyone else. There was one matter which, if he could make himself as clear upon it as some hon. members had done, would perhaps have some force. Supposing immigration were conducted on the lines that where they could get it cheapest there they should get it—nominations would be chiefly for those immigrants who could be got cheapest. There was nothing in the Act to prevent it. If agricultural labourers were wanted and could be had cheaper in Germany than in England, they would be obtained from Germany. Those men who wished to indent those labourers were not to be restricted by the measure as to where they got immigrants from. That was one of the chief features in it. If they could get them cheaper on the continent of Europe than from the islands of Great Britain, they could get them from the continent of Europe. Supposing the amendments of the junior member for South Brisbane were carried with regard to land-orders, and immigration was conducted in that way, those men would all obtain land orders, and all the advantages and privileges the Bill conferred upon them. He must confess he was puzzled and perplexed with the Northern Labour question. He could be no party in giving the planter coolies, under the pledges he had given to his constituents. Anyone treating the Labour question lightly, and treating the difficulties of the planters lightly, did not really enter into the seriousness and importance of the matter to the colony. Perhaps it might be asked, what did he expect that the Government would do? He quite confessed that he was disappointed with regard to the Bill, and he might reasonably be asked,

what did he suppose the Government would do with regard to the question? He had an idea of this kind: that the Government, recognising the difficulty, would have gone into the British labour market and have said, "There is a certain industry in Queensland, of a peculiar character, conducted in the tropics, commenced under peculiar circumstances with regard to labour—a kind of labour to which the colonists of Queensland are taking strong and determined exception, and we want you to go out and do this work;" stating what kind of work it was, what the remuneration would be, and what prospects there would be of advancement when they had passed a portion of time in that employment. He expected they would have gone into the British labour market and placed the matter before the agriculturists in that way, and that the Government, recognising the exceptional nature of the industry which had been fostered and encouraged, perhaps, by exceptional legislation, would have extended to it some degree of special protection, and have pledged themselves, so far as a Government could, that the men entering into an agreement with those planters, should be rigidly—so long as they were fairly treated—required to discharge their duties to the planters. That was his idea of the solution of the question; whether it would have solved it or not he was not prepared to say. He deprecated, as a Queenslander, knowing something about the difficulties of sugar-planters, and the tremendous way in which the price of sugar had been coming down for the last two years, anything being done to cause them any needless embarrassment; and while giving Germans every portion of credit and right with every other inhabitant of the colony, he deprecated any spirit or idea that they were going to introduce large numbers—to the exclusion of others—of any one nationality.

Mr. GRIMES said he should like to ask whether the hon. member for Fassifern was the only one who had a desire to see his own countrymen introduced. The Bill, he understood, was one to enable employers of labour to go abroad and indent labour. He took it that if any Englishmen desired to see his own countrymen in Queensland, he would get his agent to send him some Englishmen; and if a German wished to get his own countrymen out, he would send to his agent to send him Germans. He thought that the hon. gentleman was assuming a good deal to think that he was the only one who had that feeling for his fellow-countrymen. He was an Englishman, and he should be very glad to see Englishmen brought out; and if he were indenting labour he should indent Englishmen. The Germans were all very well and very good in their places, but he should indent a large proportion of English as well as Germans. He thought every Englishman should have the same desire in his heart, so that the matter would regulate itself. They were not all going to be employers who would introduce Germans.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman was now realising what it was to have a *Hansard*. Thank goodness they had a *Hansard*. They had had long orations from him which wearied the House, but when he found that his arguments could be resisted successfully he had very little to say. He talked about Germans, and said he wanted to indent Englishmen—that he did not want to indent all Germans. If the hon. gentleman wanted them for his plantation, why in the name of common sense did he not apply for them as they had been applied for before? Why should the colony generally be called upon to pay for labour to enable him to grow sugar? That was the great question. The hon. gentle-

man seemed to consider that they should find him labour either from England, Germany, or somewhere else. They had to maintain a general system of importation for the whole colony, and if any man wanted labour brought out wholesale for any industry, let him pay for it himself, the same as he had had to do hitherto.

The PREMIER said he wondered when the hon. gentleman found out it was wrong for the country to bring out indentured labourers? When did he make that discovery? It was only two years ago since he carried a Bill providing for it, and took advantage of it himself—when did he discover that it was wicked? He (the Premier) pointed out on the second reading of the Bill the difficulty that was felt under the present system. There was no provision for bringing out the wives and families of the labourers as they desired to do. Those labourers would be people who would settle themselves upon the land, with their wives and families. The present Act was defective in that respect. Schedule D, which was proposed to be amended, really dealt only with nominated passengers, who might be of all ages and of both sexes. The schedule was perfectly right for that, but when it came to be looked into it was found that, as applied to married labourers, it was defective. The Bill, therefore, was brought in to correct that mistake, in order that they might be able to bring out men who were married. As to the way in which it would work, as he said before, the Bill was brought in on the assumption that the persons who said they wanted to get labour really did want to get labour, and that if they took advantage of the provisions of the Act they would get men fit to work on their agricultural estates; not that they would go and engage pickpockets or loafers about the streets, or the scum of the great cities, to come out, in which case the employers would be no better off although they had taken the trouble to appoint people in England to make the necessary arrangements. They assumed that the persons who said they wanted labour were honest and earnest, and really did want it, but could not get it, and that was the reason the Government were assisting to bring the men here. That was the foundation of all their arguments. They did not want simply to fill up ships with a certain number of passengers, and they would not allow shipowners to load their ships with passengers simply to get their passage money. The Government were relying upon the honesty and good faith of those persons who told them that they wanted labour, and he believed they were right in trusting them—in believing them to be honest persons. If they found that they were not, then their advantages under the Bill would soon cease.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman thought he had made a great point in fathering on his (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith's) shoulders the indentured system. The hon. gentleman asked when he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had arisen to the knowledge of the fact that the colony ought not to be put to the expense of introducing indentured labour, as he had embodied that system in a Bill passed three years ago. He did put it into the Act of 1882. But the hon. gentlemen took the greatest care to go back to every Immigration Act passed since the commencement of the colony, and point out that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had no credit for it, because it was in every Act before that, and that the system he adopted there had always existed. The hon. gentleman thought it was a nasty thing, that immigration clause, and tried to father him with it, but he would refer the hon. gentleman to his own words, where he said that he (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) had only adopted a system that was already in force in previous Acts. But he would point out

that the indentured system in the Act of 1882 was quite different from that contained in the Bill before the Committee. The former was one of the finest adjuncts to immigration that they could possibly have. When it was passed it was a most difficult thing to get immigrants of any kind to come to the colony. Men were brought out at the maximum payment of £2; and in order to secure the best class of labour that could be obtained it was decided to allow men to indent labour for any special trade. The reason for that was this: a man had, say, a boiling-down establishment, or was a leather-maker, or a bootmaker by machinery, or something of that sort; that man knew exactly what kind of labour he wanted, and it might be a long time, in the ordinary course of things, before the Government would bring out a ship of that particular class of labour; and they saw no reason why such a person should not get the same privilege as others. They therefore allowed him to indent the labour he required. But the Bill before the Committee proposed a very different thing. The Government put their hand down on black labour at once. The sugar-planters had been employing coloured labour, and getting the men at their own expense, but the Government said, "We will not allow these men to come; we will tell you what we will do; we know that you cannot carry on your industry at a profit unless you have a class of labour that you can coerce; we will find you that labour." Thus the Government joined with men who acknowledged that they could not make their industry pay without cheap labour, and said they would find that labour—that was, that the people would contribute to the profits of the sugar-growers out of their own pockets. He had said before three or four times, and would repeat it again because he knew he had knocked it into the heads of some of the followers of the hon. gentleman—and if hon. members did not understand it, the people would soon comprehend its meaning—that the system by which cheap labour was to be given to the sugar-planters would be the fulcrum by which wages would be lowered in every department of the colony. That would be the logical inevitable result. He thought it was the wish of the Government that that should be the result. Low wages had never done good for any country. They would not do good for this; men would go away, and the colony would lose the results of immigration up to the present time. And if they could not hold out the inducement of good wages, very few immigrants would come here from the old country. There was not a single report received from the old country at the present time which did not put before them clearly and plainly that, with the prestige the colony had gained already and their prospects in the future, they could look forward for a large immigration at the expense of the immigrants themselves. And now they were asked to go back to the dark ages, and pay the passages, not of their own countrymen—the hon. the Premier said they would not get them, but that was because the Government did not want them—but of another class of men who, they thought, would submit to conditions that their own countrymen would not submit to—men to take the place of the kanakas and coolies who had worked in the sugar plantations before. That was a system the country did not want, and when the people come to understand it the hon. gentleman would be the first to turn round and say, "We never meant it." The hon. gentleman had tried to frighten the sugar-planters by telling them that if they did not help to pass the Bill, or if they put any impediment in the way of its passing, then the blame would be on their own heads,

He (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith) thought the Bill was one of the worst measures that could be passed by the Committee. If there was the slightest chance of putting it in force—he believed that should it pass an attempt would be made to put it into operation—it would be so disastrous to the colony that the people would rise up against the Government, and the hon. gentleman would not find himself in the place that he was in now. Looking at the Bill in the interest of the whole colony, and not from the point of view of the sugar-planters, he repudiated it as one of the worst measures the Government could try to force upon the country.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had put his views very plainly before the House, and through *Hansard* before the country, and he did himself an injustice when he thought he had not done so. He had put them very plainly in his previous speeches, and had been answered quite as plainly from that side of the House. On every occasion on which he had repeated them he had been answered, and he (the Premier) did not think it necessary again to reiterate the answer that had been given to his argument. The Government were quite prepared for the consequences of the Bill—for the calamity that it was said would overtake them. The hon. gentleman contended that the country would be so indignant with the Government for introducing labourers into the colony that it would fly to hon. members opposite, and invite them to bring in as many coolies as they could get. He did not think so, but they would see who was right. He could not, of course, be quite certain that he was right; but he thought so, and no doubt the hon. gentleman also thought he was right. He would take advantage of that occasion to again call the attention of the hon. gentleman to his own inconsistencies. He said he disapproved of this Bill, but approved of the indenture system under the Act of 1882, on the ground that there might be special industries requiring special labour, that there were not amongst the passengers sent out by the Agent-General a sufficient number to enable them to carry on those particular industries, and that it was, therefore, quite fair that those persons should have a voice in the selection of immigrants, so that there should be a sufficient number of the class they required. That was exactly the argument used by the Government in support of the Bill. They recognised the fact that agriculture was an industry, a very important industry in the colony, that it required special labour, competent labour, and that it happened—not accidentally, but continually—that amongst the passengers sent out there was not a sufficient number of competent agricultural labourers. The reasons urged by the hon. gentleman in favour of indented labour for other occupations justified that system being applied to agriculture, because agriculture was a very important industry. Indeed he was disposed to think that it was worthy of even more encouragement than any other industry, for there was more room for it, and its spread would do more good than the spread of any other industry that could be named.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

"Every agreement for the employment of a labourer or servant made under the provisions of the thirteenth section of the principal Act shall contain a stipulation that the employer shall provide sufficient and proper accommodation for such labourer or servant and his family during the term of the agreement."

Mr. BLACK said he wished to point out that the Premier had stated that one of the chief reasons why the Bill should be passed was that it provided for married couples and children

being introduced under the indenture clause which the Act of 1882 did not. But it was just as well that the country should understand finally that the Bill was introduced to provide labour which was to take the place of the Polynesians now engaged in tropical agriculture. When they looked at the provisions of the measure, they found that every employer of labour, not merely in the tropical parts of the colony, was invited to go to the cheapest markets of Great Britain or Europe and get the very cheapest labour he could for the industry in which he was engaged. He wished to point out that it was not very likely that the planter who required a very large amount of labour to do his work was going to saddle himself with a large number of women and children on his estate. He considered that it would be the height of cruelty, holding the views he did on the subject, and knowing how unfit the northern tropical lands of the colony were for European labourers of any sort to do the hard work which had hitherto been done by coloured men—it would be an act of the grossest inhumanity to introduce a number of women and children to take the place of coloured labour. He supposed that was his final protest on the matter, and he wished to draw attention to the fact that, though a great deal had been said about indented agricultural labourers, there was nothing whatever in the Bill about them. The agricultural labourer was not once referred to in the Bill. It simply allowed every employer, on the measure becoming law, to go to the cheapest labour market in any part of the world, with the exception of Asia, and bring out the very cheapest available class of labour he could get; and it was to be brought out at the expense of the country. The Bill was simply to provide cheap European labour.

Mr. KELLETT said that all he could say was that the Bill was an experiment about to be tried. It had been fairly stated, and it was well known to the country that the majority of the constituencies were entirely against coolies being brought to Queensland. That having been distinctly decided at the general election—as was acknowledged by the leader of the Opposition—the Premier wished to try the experiment of bringing out some other class of labour. It had been said on the other side that the sugar industry was harassed in every possible way; but instead of harassing the planters, the Government tried to assist them in the best way they could, and he was inclined to believe that the experiment would work satisfactorily. Exception was taken to the Bill just now by the leader of the Opposition, on the ground that he did not believe in paying for bringing out immigrants for a certain industry. He (Mr. Kellett) remembered that the hon. gentleman's great Transcontinental Bill provided for the payment of half the passage money of navvies, who were men engaged in a particular class of labour. Part of that scheme was to provide cheap white labour to assist the contractors who were to take the construction of the railway in hand. The first time he heard the question of cheap white labour was at a meeting held in the Chamber of Commerce when the Transcontinental Bill was being discussed. At the meeting, Mr. Kimber, a friend of the leader of the Opposition, who was agent for the syndicate, told the people that—and it appeared in the public Press—that the wages in the colony were too high, and that they would have to import cheap labour to build the railway. That was the first time he heard of cheap white labour. The other side were now trying to make capital out of that cry; they said the Government were trying to flood the country with cheap labour, and that the result would be to reduce the wages paid in the colony. But the constituencies knew all about that; and

if forty more speeches were made on the subject they were not likely to be talked over. They knew very well that if some scheme was not brought in to assist the sugar-planters the industry must go to the wall; and the talk indulged in by members on the other side was simply waste of time. They knew very well that, the moment the other side changed places and occupied the Ministerial benches, one of their first measures would be a new Coolie Bill, and that was why they returned such a decided majority to prevent the passing of such a Bill for a long time to come. He believed the present Bill would be a very useful one. It distinctly stated that men could be indentured from the United Kingdom as well as from other countries; it only went a little further than previous legislation on the same subject by reducing the cost of passage to £1, and allowing the wives and children of indentured labourers to come out, which, he believed, was a good addition. He was satisfied that far more people would be indentured from the United Kingdom than from the Continent. A few German employers might indent for their own countrymen, but the majority would certainly send to England, Ireland, or Scotland for their labourers. The measure was a step in the right direction; it was trying to do away with the necessity, said on the other side to exist, for employing coolies on sugar plantations. As long as he remained a member of the House, he should raise his voice decidedly against the introduction of coolies, and he believed that the constituencies were so thoroughly opposed to them, as a body, that they would not allow coolies to be brought into Queensland at all.

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member for Mackay had discovered that there was nothing said in the Bill about agricultural labourers. He (Mr. Grimes) had read the Bill carefully through, and had failed to discover in it anything about cheap labour.

Mr. STEVENSON: What does the Bill mean, then?

Mr. BLACK said he was quite prepared to accept the challenge of the hon. member (Mr. Kellett), and leave the question to the decision of the constituencies at some future time. He had not the least hesitation in saying that the time was not far distant when the electorates would decide that coloured labour under strict regulations was far better than cheap white labour without any regulations at all—cheap white labour that was going to be brought out at the expense of the working men, and which was to take away their one inducement for coming to the colony—namely, to get the highest ruling rate of wages, which had always been a high one. If the Bill had been introduced by the Opposition, it would have been considered one of the most scandalous measures ever brought in by capitalists for their own benefit. If the Bill was to do any good at all, it would be for the special benefit of the capitalists. Looking round the Committee he could see that there were more employers of labour on the Opposition side—more gentlemen who had spent thousands and thousands in developing the colony and finding employment for working men at a high rate of wages—than on the Ministerial side. It was those hon. members who professed to represent the working men who were forcing upon Queensland the most suicidal labour policy that had ever been introduced into any of the Australian Colonies.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked when they were to expect the amendments of the hon. member (Mr. Jordan)? Were they to die stillborn, or were they to come after the clause now under discussion?

Mr. JORDAN: After this clause.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then we shall have a very pleasant evening.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Mr. JORDAN said that, as the hour was now late, he was afraid he should not be able to indulge the hon. member for Balonne by going into the amendments that had been printed. Perhaps the best thing to do would be to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: Move the 1st clause.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does the hon. gentleman think for a moment that we are going to accept the amendments? If there is going to be any discussion on the matter, adjourn. If they are to be withdrawn, let it be done at once.

The PREMIER: I suggest that the 1st clause should be put, and then I will move the Chairman out of the chair.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does the hon. gentleman consider this obstruction?

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It is the closest approach to obstruction we have seen this evening. The only real obstruction hitherto has been from the hon. member for Maryborough, and now comes the hon. member for South Brisbane. Can he tell us how long he is likely to keep us going? It is needless for hon. members to talk about obstruction on this side when they do not know how to manage the business of their own side.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I am sorry—

The PREMIER: There is no motion before the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then I will move the Chairman out of the chair.

The PREMIER: Of course that can be done.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not propose to do that unless he was compelled. Unless the Government intended to support the amendments of the hon. member for South Brisbane, why did they fool him on? If they intended to oppose them they had strength enough to throw them out. It would be far better for the Premier to tell the Committee at once what he intended to do. It was the Premier who was now the obstructionist, and not the Opposition.

Mr. JORDAN moved that the following new clause be the 5th clause of the Bill:—

The Agent-General shall issue to each person approved by him, who has not previously resided in any of the Australasian Colonies, and who emigrates from Europe direct to Queensland, paying the full cost of passage of himself or any other person being a member of his family and approved by the Agent-General, a land-order warrant in the form of Schedule G hereto.

A counterpart of every warrant so issued, indorsed by the person to whom it is issued, shall be forwarded by the Agent-General to the Minister.

For the purposes of this section, the term "member of his family" shall include a wife, child, grandchild, father, mother, brother, brother's wife, sister, sister's husband, wife's sister, and wife's brother.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the latter portion of the clause required a little explanation. It had been suggested to him that the term "cousin-german" might be introduced. That was a borrowed joke, but it was a very good one. The clause reminded him of the "sisters, and the cousins, and the aunts" in the comic opera "Pinafore," but as there was none of the comic element about the hon. member for South Brisbane he could not have taken it from that; a service of song, such as the "Oiled Feather," was more in his line. However, he thought they ought to have some explanation from the hon. member as to the necessity for the clause.

The PREMIER said he understood that the hon. member for South Brisbane wished to give his reasons at length for introducing the clause; and as it was rather late to begin now, he would move that the Chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had not promised to explain what stand the Government would take with regard to the clause. Had such a course been taken by the Opposition, the hon. gentleman would have said that the Opposition were obstructing hours ago. The hon. member for South Brisbane was doing exactly what the Premier did when he (Sir T. McIlwraith) tried to pass an Immigration Bill in 1882. He brought forward the same clauses; they were the same length, the same number, and he believed they were exactly the same clauses as the hon. member for South Brisbane had brought forward now. The hon. gentleman did not really show any aptitude for getting through the Government business.

The PREMIER said he was very much obliged to the hon. gentleman for saying he had no aptitude for conducting the Government business; but he did not intend to take any lessons from the hon. gentleman on that point. He thought it would be courteous to allow the hon. member for South Brisbane to give his reasons before the Government expressed their opinion on the clauses.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that was really a very extraordinary statement. The latest proposed amendment was dated the 25th August, and now it was the 9th September. Between those two dates could not the Government have arrived at some opinion with regard to those amendments, which were very important. He thought it was the duty of the Government to state what their intentions were—whether they intended to oppose or support the clause. There was no doubt that the hon. member for South Brisbane was terribly in earnest in the cause of immigration; he had taken great interest in it, and whether he was right or wrong he had taken an honest and patriotic view of the question. He (Mr. Morehead) thought, therefore, it would be scant courtesy to the hon. gentleman if the Premier did not tell the Committee what the intentions of the Government were. The amendments were lucid enough; they did not require any reconsideration, and there was no halting in the matter on the part of the hon. member for South Brisbane; he had given the country his policy at any rate. Why did not the Government do the same? It was no use their attempting to obstruct business in that way just because they were afraid to say whether they agreed or differed with a gentleman who generally voted with them on divisions.

Mr. FOOTE said he had no doubt the amendments brought by the hon. member for South Brisbane were good in themselves; and he thought that the Government ought to state what course they intended to take with regard to them. If that were known, it might save the hon. member the trouble of making a speech. He (Mr. Foote) should like to see the Bill finished that night. He could assure the Committee that the hon. member for South Brisbane would not have his support for the amendments; and from communications he had had from other members on that side, he was inclined to think the hon. member would not get their support either. He was sorry that the further consideration of the Bill was likely to be postponed on account of the amendments; because they were too long to introduce into a Bill like that, which was very simple in itself. He had a perfect horror of

land-orders. Years ago he had an opportunity of seeing how they were abused; and he knew that they had failed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, that after what had fallen from one of the most substantial supporters of the Government, he hoped the Premier would reconsider the Bill. He was sure the hon. gentleman was only too anxious to go on with the business, and he thought that between then and 11 o'clock—by which time the hon. members for Ipswich were always so punctual in their absence—the Bill could be finished. If the hon. member for South Brisbane would content himself with speaking briefly, the Bill could be polished off in about ten minutes.

Mr. JORDAN said he might as well say what he had to say. The object of the clause was that £30 land-orders should be given to those who paid their own passages in full, and £20 orders to those indentured passengers who stayed their full time with their employers. The first of these proposals was submitted by the present Premier in 1882; but there was no intention now of introducing the old transferable land-order system. The hon. member for Bundamba had expressed his disapproval of land-orders; but those were transferable, and it was well known that they were very much abused. He was glad the hon. member had expressed such an opinion, because it gave him (Mr. Jordan) an opportunity of showing how, under the system proposed in the clauses before the Committee, there could be no abuse of the system. The old system was abused because the agricultural reserves under the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1860 were worthless for agricultural purposes. During the first year that land-order system was in operation, between 5,000 and 6,000 persons paid their own passages and came to this colony. That was a fact which could not be gainsaid. The greater number of those persons were *bona fide* farmers, bringing capital with them, and intending to settle on the land; but the agricultural reserves set apart for their use were utterly worthless. The consequence was that, instead of occupying the land with their land-orders, as they intended to do, they sold their orders. The market was glutted with them, and they were bought up by speculators and large landed proprietors to add to their vast estates at a mere nominal price. He did not think the land-order system proposed in these clauses could be abused in that way, because the system would be entirely different. The land-orders would simply be a remission of rent to the persons named in the land-order warrant issued by the Agent-General in London to those who paid their own passages to the colony. Their object was simply this—that they wished to introduce capital into the colony, and to bring a large number of persons from Great Britain—for those were the people who would take advantage of this system. Very few people would come from Germany or the other countries of Europe which had been named; they would be their own countrymen who would pay their passages in full. It was said that under the new Land Bill, which he supposed would become law before very long, they could get a very large number of persons to settle on the land—natives of the colony, or persons already settled here—but when they came to consider that the Land Bill threw open something like 100,000,000 acres for close settlement, it was almost absurd to talk about hundreds. It was said that thousands would come from the other colonies to settle on the land, but he thought that was very doubtful, because in New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand, they were passing

Land Bills which, in some respects, would be more attractive from their own point of view than our own. But there were hundreds of thousands of people in England, Ireland, and Scotland who were intending immigrants, waiting to go somewhere, and who intended to go to the United States of America. The Imperial immigration returns to the end of June, 1884, had just been published; they showed that immigration was going on from Great Britain at the rate of 331,000 a year, and out of that, 224,000 were going to the United States. Last year the immigration was much larger, and for the last four or five years there had been a perfect exodus of the farming class from our own country, a large proportion of them going to America. He had a letter in his hand from Sir Charles Nicholson, who, hon. members would remember, was the President of the first Legislative Council, and took a great interest in the affairs of the colony. He had taken a great interest in the question of immigration, and during the time that the land-order system was in operation he did a great deal to assist in making it a success. He wrote as follows:—

"Farmers find themselves unable to compete with American growers of wheat and dairy produce, and are abandoning their farms in every direction. A friend of mine, Mr. T. Kenble, formerly Sheriff of Essex, tells me that first-class land within thirty miles of London, and which for the last quarter of a century was let at the low rent of 25s. an acre, has been thrown upon his hands, the highest offer he could obtain from an incoming tenant being 12s. an acre. Another gentleman, Mr. Abel Smith, one of the largest landholders of Herts, has sixteen farms on his hands, and is, I am informed, unable to find tenants at any rent. You have the same story in every direction—farmers giving up farms which they and their families have occupied for centuries. There will be a large exodus of some of the best types of English yeomen to be found in Britain. Great numbers, I hear, are preparing to start for New Zealand, but I hear of none going to the Australian colonies."

Now, he thought that was very much to be lamented. Here was a perfect exodus of farmers paying their own passages—persons of capital, persons of energy and enterprise and farming experience—going away to constitute the wealth and power of a foreign nation. They had the Land Bill throwing open 100,000,000 or 200,000,000 acres of land for agricultural and grazing farms, and it would be the easiest thing in the world to attract those people to this colony. This was the nick of time, and they had an opportunity now which, he believed, would never occur again. A Land Bill might be as good as ever they could make it; it might be as attractive as was free selection before survey in New South Wales twenty years ago, in 1861, under Sir John Robertson's Bill; it might be as attractive as our own Land Act of 1868, which offered a freehold of 10,000 acres at 5s. an acre with ten years to pay it in; but though that Act of 1868 was expected to attract hundreds of thousands of people it had been unsuccessful from Great Britain—it had not done so. The New South Wales Act, containing the principle of free selection before survey—introduced by Sir John Robertson with the avowed object of attracting people from the other side of the globe with capital and farming experience—was utterly unsuccessful, in spite of the fact that the most extraordinary means were made use of to develop that system, and to make it known throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. Two gentlemen—the ablest men he supposed the colonies at that time could produce—perhaps two of the ablest men these colonies had ever produced as effective public speakers—Mr. Parkes, now Sir Henry Parkes, and Mr. Dalley, were sent home as immigration commissioners. They had £1,200 a year each, and *carte blanche* as to expenses, and those two gentlemen lectured throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain, for

a year or more, visiting all the centres of population and proclaiming free selection before survey, and the power which it gave to every farmer who chose to come out, paying his own passage, to go through the length and breadth of New South Wales, selecting the choicest spots in the colony; any water frontage, any beautiful spot in any of the great runs throughout that colony. Well, multitudes heard those addresses on immigration, but they did not send out one single shipload. Their mission was entirely unsuccessful; and yet, at the same time, the Queensland land-order system of immigration was successful, although there was only one person employed, and he was tied down by all kinds of restrictive regulations, and limited to a maximum expenditure of £200 a year. During the first year, between five and six thousand persons came into this colony, paying their own passages in full. He had said enough to enlighten the hon. member for Balonne as to the intention of the clause, and as to the idea which he had that they must have some special attraction if they wished to bring capital into the colony, and a large number of the farming class from Great Britain. A strong objection had been raised by the opposite side to the Bill, because it was asserted that the intention was to flood the colony with German labour, or with low-class labour from Norway or Sweden. He did not think that would be low-class labour, from his point of view; nor was it intended to bring low-class immigrants into the colony. He had never said a word about low-class labour for the sugar-planters. What he did say, some time ago, before he had the honour of a seat in that House, was that he thought they could get a large number of agricultural labourers at 15s. a week with the addition of their rations. He did not believe that the Government had any intention of bringing low-class labour into the colony. He believed that they would get such a large and regular supply of well selected labourers from Great Britain, even if they did not go to Germany at all—

Mr. MOREHEAD called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. member for Mulgrave introduced, some time ago, a scheme for bringing capital into the colony and settling people upon the land. That scheme was a grand scheme in its way. It was a scheme for building railways by companies, at the expense of those companies, and without a shilling in money being paid by the colony towards their cost; but at the cost of the wholesale alienation of the public estate. Eleven million acres were to be given to one company for building one great line of railway to be the great artery of the system, and from which branch lines were to be built in every direction on the same principle; the railways, when constructed, to belong to the company and not to the colony. That scheme for introducing capital and settling the land was rejected by the country, and he thought it was wisely rejected, because it would have brought into existence a great overshadowing power that would have been dangerous to the most important interests of the State. It would have led to the aggregation of large estates in a most objectionable form. The present Premier propounded a scheme very much more popular than that was, and it was well received by the public generally. It was a scheme of immigration calculated to bring employers and labourers into the colony—labour and capital. They might very often go for their politics into the streets like the celebrated painter Apelles, who

used to hide himself behind his own pictures in order that he might hear the comments made upon them by people passing in the street. He happened to be passing over the river in one of the ferry boats the other day, and there were two working men in the boat with him. One of them was an intelligent man, and a fine type of his class, who had come out in one of the ships he (Mr. Jordan) had sent out more than twenty years ago. Speaking of immigration, he said that they ought not to bring a very large number of labourers into the colony unless they had some such system as existed a great many years ago when he came out, and when a large number of employers of labour were coming out as well as the labourers themselves. Much amusement had been indulged in at the expense of the Premier, because in one of his electioneering addresses at the Town Hall he said that this colony could absorb 40,000 immigrants a year. It was attempted to pour ridicule upon that statement; but those who attempted to do so had not the candour to point out that the Premier did not talk about 40,000 "labourers." The Premier distinctly pointed out that a large number would come out under such clauses as he had proposed in 1882—clauses almost identical with these now being discussed. It was the hon. gentleman's idea that a large number of employers, and a considerable proportion of labourers along with them, should be brought out. If they could attract a very considerable number of those people who were now going to the United States of America, because they could get the land there for nothing—and they knew they could, because they had got between 5,000 and 6,000 under the system twenty years ago, then during the first year, of 1862—40,000 immigrants on the system the Premier proposed would not be too many. They had got 34,000 immigrants last year, if they could trust the returns of the Registrar-General; and they were all labourers. That was the policy of the late Government—an immigration exclusively of labourers. They got a middle class—a farming class—introduced by the land order system; but the Conservative policy was to bring out only the labouring class. The policy of the Premier was to bring out employers and labourers together; if 40,000 were brought out under the system to which he referred, and came in the proportion they did twenty years ago, 16,000 would pay their own passages in full, and 16,000 would have their passages paid, and there would be 8,000 assisted. That would have been the exact proportion in the way in which the immigrants had come out from 1861 to 1866, and that was in spite of the fact that the agricultural reserves proclaimed were worthless, and that vexatious restrictions were constantly sent home to the Agent-General. In spite of that, 12,000 paid their passages in full, and brought into the colony a million of money. Now, if those 40,000 people already spoken of came out in one year, and brought capital to the colony in the same proportion in which it was brought between the years 1861 and 1863, they would bring £30,000 in each ship. That was estimated to be about the amount brought by each of the vessels that came out during the first three years under the land-order system; but that was not maintained, because the agricultural reserves were worthless. The bulk of the people who came out were English farmers, who, when they found the land was worthless, abandoned it, and sold their land-orders. If these reserves had been selected, as the land would be under this Bill, matters would have been very different. At that time there was no such system as that proposed to be enacted, or anything like it; there were no grazing or agricultural areas such as they should

have. If they had had those inducements, the average of £30,000 by each ship would have been fully maintained, and exceeded. Under the former system the first ships, it was estimated, brought £30,000 each on the average; ninety-three came in all, bringing in 36,000 persons; and if they received 40,000 immigrants in the year, as suggested by the Premier, it would require 103 ships to bring those people out; and if each ship maintained the average of £30,000 they would have the immense amount of £3,090,000 coming into the country annually. That money would be in the pockets of English farmers—not Germans and not Scandinavians, but our own countrymen, such as the hon. member for Fassifern would like to see here. He (Mr. Jordan) was an Englishman, and most thoroughly believed in them. He believed in Australians too, especially such specimens as they had before them in the person of the hon. member for Balonne. He was a great believer in Englishmen and an admirer of their pluck, energy, and indomitable perseverance; we wanted them and their money. They had no adequate scheme at present in the new Land Bill for inducing people to come here, but once pass into law the proposed scheme of immigration in connection with this system for creating grazing and agricultural areas and there would be large and rapid demands from the very best and most desirable class of men in Great Britain. Would anyone deny that if four ships a month came out with £30,000 in the pockets of the people, that everyone in the colony would not derive a great advantage? They would all feel the advantage of such a system. It had been objected that it would be unfair to those already in the colony to give land-orders to those who came from the other side of the globe, but he would only point out in reply that those who resided in the colony might get their land at 1½d. or 3d. an acre, and he would like to know what more they wanted than that? The surplus population on the other side of the globe had been saving their money for years to go to the United States, but they wanted those people here with their money, and they offered them £30 worth of land-orders. That would do no harm. If they could get the colony peopled in a short space of time, and get with the people who came here £3,000,000 annually, he did not think such a system would injure the colony very much. He was not going to keep the Committee very much longer, but he would have another opportunity of speaking on the question, and he would then be able to read to the House the opinion of the Premier upon the improbability—he might almost say impossibility—of the land-order system being abused. They called it the land-order system, although it was different to the old system; but he adhered to the old words because their meaning was well known, and understood by a great number of persons in Great Britain. That system was said to have been the most extraordinary success ever known, and, for that additional reason, headhered to the old title. These orders were simply a remission of rent in favour of those whose name was on the warrant issued by the Agent-General in Great Britain. He would not detain the Committee any further.

Question put.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had been under the impression that the hon. member for South Brisbane was to finish the debate, and that the Bill would be gone through that night; but instead of that it appeared that they were to have the hon. member's land-order system dangling over their heads for two or three nights. He objected to the Chairman being moved out of the chair. It was simply making a fool of business.

Question put and passed, and the resumption of the Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said that the order of business to-morrow would be, first Supply, when the Colonial Treasurer would make his Financial Statement; and the business would then follow in the same order as arranged for to-day.

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