

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1884

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 19 November, 1884.

Question.—Petition.—Members Expenses Bill—third reading.—Formal Motions.—Question without Notice.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. MELLOR asked the Minister for Works—

1. When will the plans of the Burrum and Bundaberg railway be laid on the table?

2. When will tenders be called for the first section?

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

1. On the 25th instant.

2. The working plans are in hand, but it is not considered they will be sufficiently advanced to enable tenders to be invited in less than four months.

PETITION.

Mr. JESSOP presented a petition from certain residents in and around Dalby, praying for the construction of a line of railway from Dalby to the Bunya Mountains, and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. JESSOP, the petition was received.

MEMBERS EXPENSES BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith), this 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.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By Mr. BLACK—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a return of immigrants introduced at the various ports of the colony from 1st January to 30th October, 1884—

1. Per British-India steamers,

2. Per immigrant ships.

That there be laid upon the table of the House—

1. Return showing number of arrivals at and departures from the colony by sea from 1st January to 30th October, 1884.

2. Return showing the number of births and deaths registered in the colony from 1st January to 30th October, 1884.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

The Hon. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I wish to ask the hon. Minister for Works, or the Minister whose department it concerns, whether the Government intend to have maps laid upon the table of the House showing the railways already constructed, the railways that are already authorised but not constructed, and the railways proposed to be constructed under the new Loan Bill. It is essential, for members to understand the scheme of the Government, that such maps should be laid upon the table. Not only should that be done, but lithographs should be distributed to members, and generally throughout the colony; and the sooner it is done the better. A thorough discussion on the Loan Estimates cannot take place without such maps.

The PREMIER said: The Government have no objection to have a map laid upon the table giving the required information, so far as it can be given. Of course there are one or two lines which will be uncertain; for instance, the line to the Gulf of Carpentaria. So far as the information can be given, maps will be prepared.

The Hon. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I do not ask anything uncertain; a straight line between two places will be sufficient. It is the custom in the other colonies. Take the case of the Loan Bill before the Victorian Parliament at the present time. There is a map accompanying the Loan Estimates; not simply a map laid upon the table of the House, but a lithographed map which hon. members can take away and study, or send to their friends; so that people throughout the colony can understand exactly what the Government proposals are. That map shows the railways constructed, the railways already authorised but not constructed, and the railways proposed. The sooner such a map is laid upon the table of this House and distributed amongst hon. members, the sooner we shall be able to discuss the Bill.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) moved that the sum of £3,300 be voted for the Agent-General. The words "provided in schedule" appeared on the estimate, but they ought not to be there; it was a printer's error. There was an increase down for the indent clerk. That increase was promised by his (the Colonial Secretary's) predecessor about two years ago; and ought to have been voted for the present year and the previous year, and, although he was not quite sure, also for the year before. Although the approval of the Government had been intimated to the Agent-General, the increase had never been formally voted. He concurred in the proposed increase. There was also an item for fees to the Board of Advice in London, and that was the only change apparent in the estimate. With respect to the board, hon. gentlemen were aware that three gentlemen had been appointed to act as a board of advice to the Agent-General in conducting the business transactions of the office. The names of those gentlemen were Mr. Elder, Mr. Hemmant, and Mr. Fife, and he believed the business would be conducted in a more satisfactory manner than heretofore.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the subject of a board of advice to the Agent-General in London was not a new one. It had often been before the House and as often been condemned. The reason for that was that it took the responsibility off the shoulders of the Agent-General. He did not believe in the system and never did. He believed they ought to have a good Agent-General, and make him responsible for the whole work. It was useless to get over the difficulty by saying the board would simply be a board of advice, because the Agent-General could shelter himself behind them in the discharge of any disagreeable duty by saying he was advised by the board. The responsibility must lie somewhere, and he argued that whilst that board would simply have the effect of taking responsibility off the shoulders of the Agent-General, it would not put it on the shoulders of the board. As to getting a board of advice for the amount of £200, that was absurd; and as to the constitution of the board he thought very little indeed of it. He did not think the right class of men had been appointed, and he did not believe in business men being chosen. There was plenty of business capacity in the office already, as they had got the Agent-General and the Secretary. They did not want more business experience, and if they did there were plenty of means of getting it. The board ought to have been professional men who would have advised in any case outside the mere business work of the office. They should have been legal or professional men, and not men interested in the questions brought before them. But he objected to the principle altogether, and it had been condemned by both sides of the House for the reason he had stated, that it took the responsibility from the shoulders of the Agent-General, and did not settle it upon anyone else.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not agree with the hon. gentleman that the system had been condemned, for his recollection was that it had been all the other way; but that was a matter of no consequence. He did not think the Board of Advice lessened the responsibility of the Agent-General, but gave him more information upon subjects he could not be expected to be familiar with. The duties had changed very much during the last few years, and the Agent-General now acted more as a diplomatic agent than merely as business agent for the colony. It was quite possible for a man to be able to perform the present duties of the office without being in possession of business qualifications; but it was desirable that the Agent-General should have assistance on that point. The fact of the existence of the board did not lessen the responsibility of the Agent-General in any way. He would be just as much responsible to the Government as he ever was, and the Government were themselves responsible for everything that took place in the office.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said if anything was wanted to condemn the system it was the admission of the Colonial Secretary, that the Agent-General acted more as a diplomatic agent than as an agent for the colony. The board were to receive £200 between them; but surely that was ridiculous. Were they to give their business capacity and time and consideration for an amount of £66 13s. 4d. each per annum? He did not think they were likely to get that out of them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They have accepted the position.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Yes; for a different purpose. There were very few merchants in London who would not accept the position simply to know what the Agent-General was doing; and instead of their acting in the

interests of the colony they would be privileged individuals acting for themselves, and in a position to know the whole of the Queensland Government's business.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he must confess he did not agree with the hon. gentleman. He thought the Agent-General in London required the assistance and advice of men who had a knowledge of mercantile usage and other general matters which came under the consideration of the London Office. He considered that the Agent-General was decidedly strengthened by the advice and assistance of men conversant with business matters. The experience of the past showed that the London Office had been rather conspicuous by the absence of business capacity, and he did not think that the experience of the other colonies in any way justified them in saying that a board of advice would be unsatisfactory. He thought their experience told them that the Agent-General, who doubtless had duties more of a diplomatic character to attend to at the present time than those of an ordinary agent, would be relieved, supported, and strengthened by having a board to consult with, the members of which had had a large amount of experience. He admitted that the present Secretary in the London Office was a great acquisition, and discharged his duties most satisfactorily and ably, and in every respect displayed his business capacity; but seeing that the Agent-General's was not a permanent office, but had been filled from time to time, and that his duty was so constituted that he had to perform diplomatic functions, it would be advisable that there should be a body of gentlemen of position in the financial and commercial world, to aid him with their advice in the numerous commercial transactions which the colony entered upon. The experiment was worth trying, and he believed it would prove advantageous to the colony in many respects.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what the Government had done in regard to the appointment of the board of advice, and what instructions had been sent to the Agent-General as to the way in which the business of the office was to be conducted? Had board meetings to be held; was the Agent-General to preside, and were minutes of the proceedings to be kept? In what way were they to know in the colony about the operations of the Board of Advice? What steps had the Government taken to communicate to the House the working of the board?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had heard from the Agent-General that the board had held one meeting, and that it had been arranged to meet fortnightly to consider mercantile matters. No particular instructions had been given to the Agent-General. It was considered that the Agent-General would find out the most convenient way of communicating, from time to time, with the colony on the subject; but no definite instructions had been given as to the keeping of minutes, or anything of that sort.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he wished to know whether instructions had been given to the Agent-General to communicate the operations of the board to the Government. He understood that all that had been done was simply to give an intimation to the Agent-General that a board had been appointed; but had the members of the board been informed as to what their duties were, or what was expected from them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the board had been appointed by the Governor in Council, and intimation had been given to the Agent-General to that effect. He did not remember the exact wording of the letter, but

was to the effect that the board were to advise him on all matters connected with the making of contracts for the Public Service in London. A letter was of course written to each member of the board informing him of his appointment. All that, he thought, should be taken without saying. The Agent-General and the board were allowed to arrange their times of meeting; and, as he had said, he had heard that they had held one meeting, and had arranged to meet fortnightly. The Agent-General added that the system would be found to work extremely satisfactorily.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman perfectly misconstrued what he wanted. He did not want details as to the day of their meeting, or anything of that sort. He wished to know what instructions were given to the board as to their duties. The Committee now learnt for the first time that their duties were to advise the Agent-General as to any contracts in London for the Public Service. Had the hon. gentleman got those instructions here?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The matter was very important. It was a very small matter indeed to advise with regard to contracts; but it was still more open to the objection he had taken as to the responsibility of the Agent-General. Had any instructions been given to the Agent-General as to the information about the working of the board being forwarded regularly to the colony?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think any such instructions had been given; he could not remember any. He took it, as a matter of course, that that information would be given whether instructions were sent or not.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, unless the Colonial Secretary gave instructions to the Agent-General that minutes of the meetings of the board were to be regularly forwarded, it might be taken for granted that they would not be forwarded; he was perfectly satisfied of that. Anyway, he should look with great care for the next despatches from the Agent-General to see if he had forwarded them. The colony ought to know exactly the matters that were put before the board for their consideration and their discussion thereon.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he quite agreed that it was necessary that should be done. He would ascertain for certain whether instructions had been given; and if not, he would see that they were given at once.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, perhaps, to save further trouble, the Premier would inform them at an early date whether instructions had been given. With reference to immigration, it was a considerable time since they had any information about the immigrants that were wanted. He would like the Premier to state, in as few words as possible, the actual position of the Government with regard to immigration at the present time, who the contractors were, the number of immigrants they were to bring, how many they had engaged to land monthly, and whether by sailing ship or steam ship? No doubt he had all the information at hand.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that no fresh contract had been entered into since those mentioned in the returns laid on the table of the House.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What are they?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not remember exactly. There was the contract with Gray, Dawes, and Company to bring out immigrants by the British-India steamers, besides other contracts. At present immigrants were being landed at the rate of about 12,000 a year. Instructions had been sent to the Agent-General to carefully limit the selection to farm labourers and single women, and not to allow so many tradesmen with large families to come. It had been difficult, during the last two or three months, to ascertain exactly what definite instructions to give on the subject, because the extraordinary seasons lately had prevented men getting employment in many parts of the colony; while at the same time there had been a large demand for labour. That was very embarrassing and perplexing to the Government. They had been watching very carefully, and up to the present there had been no difficulty whatever in finding employment for all the immigrants who had landed. The complaints also had been very few indeed. The Government were watching carefully from week to week, but were not prepared to stop immigration at the present time. It was necessary to keep up the flow, taking care that it was not excessive. The Agent-General had asked for definite instructions as to what he was to do for next year, but it was quite impossible to foresee now what immigration would be required for next year. Very soon, perhaps, it would be possible to do so. The hon. gentleman had asked if there was any contract for sailing ships. There was none now.

In answer to Mr. NORTON,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was not considered necessary to make any special provision for the case of any member of the board contracting with the Government. It was assumed that they were honourable men.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked whether, in the opinion of the hon. member, it would be a fraud if any member of the board took a contract under the Government?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he thought it would be a highly improper thing for any member of the board to have anything to do with the consideration of a contract in which he himself was interested; though he was not prepared to say that the acceptance of a contract should be an absolute disqualification. He was not aware that any one of them was a contractor. He held the strongest opinion himself as to the impropriety of any man acting on both sides of a bargain.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he considered it should be an absolute disqualification for a man to have a contract with the Government, and transact any business whatever with the Government. It would lead to jobbery of the worst kind. It would be very easy for a member of the board to retire while his contract was under discussion. It should be insisted upon that they should have no business with the Queensland Government, either by contract or otherwise.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that if they laid down a hard-and-fast rule of that kind it would deprive the Government of the services of some of the best men available. It would deprive them, for instance, of the services of anyone who happened to be a director of the Queensland National Bank in London, or of any other bank with which the Government had business. The number of persons qualified for the position was not so unlimited that they could lay down a hard-and-fast rule of that kind. The Government desired to have persons who knew something of Queensland, and were also

acquainted with business affairs in London, and whose advice would therefore be likely to be valuable.

Mr. NORTON said there was evidence in the House that one of the gentlemen named had been in the habit of taking contracts from the Government. He thought members of the board ought not, under any circumstances, to be allowed to take contracts for the Government whose Agent-General they were advising.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the matter should not be left undecided. He thought the members of the board should have no business, directly or indirectly, with the Queensland Government, and that should be distinctly understood by them before they undertook the office. In no other way could they get men to act honestly and discharge their duty to the satisfaction of the colony. The choice was not a good one, in his opinion, because the Government had picked two men at least—Mr. Hemmant and Mr. Fife—who would most undoubtedly be connected with the mercantile arrangements of the Queensland Government. One of them formerly was a very large contractor, and had contracted for almost all the soft goods required by the Queensland Government. He had claimed as a citizen of Queensland the right of tendering for anything, whether he was asked to tender or not, and it was granted to him. No Englishman would have made such a claim as that. It would certainly be an anomalous position for a man to occupy—to sit on the board and decide on contracts, some of which were his own; even if he retired while those particular contracts were being considered. Mr. Fife was in pretty much the same position, and, even if he had never been a Government contractor, the very nature of his business made it likely that he would be. He had no objection to the appointments at all, provided those gentlemen understood that they were not to have any business, directly or indirectly, with the Queensland Government.

Mr. BLACK asked if the Agent-General was bound to follow the advice given by the board?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, certainly not. He is responsible for what he does.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the fact of its being necessary to ask such a question showed the necessity that the Agent-General should put before the Government every question submitted to the board, with their advice thereon; otherwise they should never know what the board actually did.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the Colonial Secretary should give a distinct answer as to whether the members of the board were to be allowed to have contracts with the Queensland Government or not. He thought the hon. gentleman himself must see that it was improper. They should distinctly understand whether the Government were willing to allow those gentlemen to have contracts under the Government, but that they would not be allowed to decide upon their own contracts.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was not prepared, as he had said before, to make it an absolute condition. He did not know any member of the board who was likely to be affected in that way, with the exception of Mr. Elder, who was a director of the Queensland National Bank. He did not know another it was likely to affect, and he was not prepared to say absolutely that it should be a disqualification.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew that Mr. Hemmant had been a contractor under the Government of Queensland, and was likely to be one again, unless it was made a disqualifi-

cation for a member of the Board of Advice to be a contractor to the Government. He said it would be a very improper thing to allow that gentleman or any other member of the Board of Advice to be a contractor, and to give advice to the Agent-General in regard to the Public Service of this colony.

Mr. BLACK said he did not know any of the gentlemen's names, and he could not understand how any gentlemen of the high business capacity which the Colonial Treasurer said was necessary for that appointment could be found to a certain extent to waste their time for 25s. a week, which was what the fees amounted to. For that sum they had found merchants, who were supposed to be in the highest positions in London, willing to sacrifice their time for the benefit of the colony, and only in mercantile transactions; they were not going to give advice in anything else. If the mercantile capacity was so wanting in the London Office, they should need to get a much higher standard. They offered only the wages of an ordinary labouring man, and yet they expected to get patriotism together with high mercantile ability. It seemed to him that corruption would be found in the Board of Advice before long, and if it were possible to trace the contracts under that system they should be able to find out those who were interested in it. He was very much afraid the Board of Advice would not turn out to be so very immaculate as it was expected they would.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood the Minister in charge of the Estimates had intimated that he was not prepared to say whether it should not be a disqualification that a member of the Board of Advice should be a contractor to the Queensland Government himself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that under those circumstances he would move that the amount of £200 be omitted. He believed, himself, it would be a scandal to the colony if they had a board of advice with liberty to become contractors when they liked; he believed it should be intimated to them that they were appointed on the good faith that they would not become contractors to the Government; and not only that, but they should not be connected, either indirectly or directly, with the business of the colony.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said he thought the opinion expressed on the Opposition side had excellent foundation. He quite agreed with the leader of the Opposition, that it would be a very dangerous power to place in the hands of the Board of Advice—that they should sit on the board and vote money which in reality might be voted for themselves. If the members of the board were not debarred from being contractors to the colony, he certainly agreed with the leader of the Opposition that the item of £200 should be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the hon. gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, moved the omission of the item, and to abolish the Board of Advice in London altogether; and the reason he gave was this—that he (the Colonial Secretary) was not prepared to say at the present time that it should be an absolute disqualification for a member of the Board of Advice that he had some contract with the Government of the colony. The object of the hon. gentleman was plain enough: he was striking at Mr. Hemmant; he thought that Mr. Hemmant's firm might possibly be contractors to the Government, and he did not want Mr. Hemmant to be on the Board of Advice. The object of the amendment was plain

enough. Now, he thought this would be very often found: it was desirable to get on the board men who were acquainted with Queensland, acquainted with the business affairs of the colony, men of good standing in London—men of honourable character; and they might be persons who, in some way or other, might accidentally or occasionally have some connection with a contract with this Government. The proposition of the hon. gentleman was to disqualify, as possible members of the Board of Advice any persons who were engaged in mercantile pursuits connected with Queensland just because they might become contractors in the colony. What was the use of a mercantile board of advice in London if it was not composed of mercantile men? He did not know. If the hon. gentleman meant that they should not be concerned in any contract made by the Agent-General, he entirely agreed with him. He did not know of any circumstances in which contracts were made by the Agent-General in which any Queensland merchant would be likely to be concerned, but there might be a man who was likely to be a member of the Board of Advice, who was himself a Queensland merchant, and who might have his firm here making a contract to supply £50 worth of goods in a year. That man would be a Government contractor, and according to the hon. gentleman's definition he would be disqualified. That would disqualify the very best men, and probably it would have the effect the hon. gentleman desired, no doubt. The hon. member did not want a board of advice, and therefore he moved to strike out the sum. The hon. gentleman might give, as the reason for striking it out, that he disapproved of the Board of Advice or a particular person being on it; but his argument certainly failed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought it was unworthy of the position of the Premier to say his motive was to strike at Mr. Hemmant. In the name of common sense, what did he care about Mr. Hemmant? What did it matter to him? He was speaking in the interests of the colony in urging that no member of the board ought to be a Government contractor; and the sole contention of the Colonial Secretary in reply was, that under certain circumstances members of the board might be allowed to be Government contractors. It seemed as if that was the only way in which he could get Mr. Hemmant appointed on the board. The reason was preposterous. It was nothing to him (Sir T. McIlwraith) whether Mr. Hemmant was on the board or not. Appoint him by all means, but while he was there let him understand most clearly—as also Mr. Fife and Mr. Elder—that he was to be in no way concerned, directly or indirectly, as a contractor with the Queensland Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had endeavoured to draw a distinction between contracts let in London and contracts let here. How did it disqualify a man from giving advice to the Agent-General in London because his partner, or agent, or somebody in this colony, had made a contract to supply £50 worth of goods for the Public Service of Queensland? He held in his hand the Executive minute on which the Board of Advice to the Agent-General was appointed, and the duties of the board would be seen by the following extract:—

"Ministers recommend that William Hemmant, Esq., Alexander Lang Elder, Esq., and George Robert Fife, Esq., be appointed a Board of Advice to consult with and advise the Agent-General upon the following matters:—

"1. The invitation and acceptance of tenders for the conveyance of emigrants to the colony;

"2. The invitation and acceptance of tenders for the supply of railway material and such other supplies as may from time to time be required for the Public Service in Queensland; and

"3. Such other matters as may from time to time be required of them by the Agent-General."

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the fanciful objection of the hon. gentleman did not apply to the argument he had used. There was no difference between the two cases. If a man's partner or firm contracted with the Government in Brisbane, it should disqualify him from sitting on the board just the same as if the contract had been made in London. It ought distinctly to be understood by the Board of Advice that they should have no connection as contractors, directly or indirectly, with the Queensland Government. If it happened by accident that a member's firm in another part of the world had, unknown to him, entered into a contract with the Government, that might be remedied by his resignation or by a suitable explanation; but that did not militate against the general principle he had laid down. Since the discussion began the Colonial Secretary had completely changed his ground. At first the hon. gentleman said plainly that no honourable man would sit on the board if he was in any way concerned in a Government contract, and now he argued that he could, under certain circumstances.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had distinguished between things that differed. It was highly objectionable that a member of the board in London should be concerned in making contracts with the Agent-General whom he had to advise. To that extent he went with the hon. member. But he did not go with him in his contention that a person should be disqualified from sitting on the board because his firm had made a small contract with the Government in Brisbane. Take the case of Mr. Fife. It would be very hard that he should be disqualified because the Government contracted with his firm here for £100 worth of spirits; and it would be still harder to disqualify Mr. Elder because the Queensland Government had dealings with the bank of which he was an English director. His contention was, and had been throughout, that a man should not be put in a position where his interest and his duty conflicted; and that certainly was not the case in the instances to which he was referring.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was useless arguing if they were both agreed. The hon. gentleman said he agreed with him so far as the impropriety of transactions in London was concerned, and which, of course, would be known to the board.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY; Yes, I do.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then the hon. gentleman went on to draw a distinction in favour of transactions in Brisbane by a member's firm. Coming to the case in point, it might happen that transactions in Brisbane might have a very close connection with the Board of Advice in London. From the correspondence, he found that Mr. Hemmant, the Acting Agent-General, actually recommended that a great part of the contract work done in London should be transferred to Brisbane. If that were done it would not be a proper thing that intending contractors should have the slightest connection with the Board of Advice; because it would be on the advice of that board that the Government would contract, or otherwise, in the colony, and their firms would be interested in that advice. The hon. gentleman had after all, drawn a distinction without a difference. His object in moving the amendment was to affirm the principle to which the Colonial Secretary now agreed—namely, that, so far as the

home business was concerned, no member of the board should be directly or indirectly connected with any contract with the Queensland Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I fully agree with the hon. gentleman there.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, distinctly on that understanding, and with the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw the amendment. But the responsibility of establishing a board of that kind—with which he thoroughly disagreed—should have been left to Parliament.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not changed on the subject, but had all along drawn a distinction between two things which were entirely different.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he held that the hon. gentleman had, since the beginning of the discussion, changed his mind; and very properly so.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £7,590 be voted for Immigration. There was an apparent increase of two clerks; but as a matter of fact there was not an increase to the staff of the office at all. He had found an officer who was called the "record clerk," who was previously paid out of contingencies, and there was an accountant who was also paid out of contingencies. The only difference was that those two clerks were now put on the Estimates instead of being paid out of contingencies. Some changes had been made in the office, and he would therefore move that £7,565 be voted, thereby reducing the original estimate by £25. The salary of the Chief Clerk was voted last year at £300; he received £75 from the Polynesian Fund, and £50 from another source; so that his actual salary was £425. The salary proposed on the Estimates for the present year was £425. That was an increase to his salary of £50. But that officer no longer held the office, and it was proposed to fill it up by a clerk, at a salary of £400; so that he should only ask for £400, which would place that officer in the same position as the chief clerk in the Polynesian branch. He might take that opportunity of saying that he had found that the Polynesian and European branches were all mixed up and the organisation was in a most unsatisfactory condition. The clerks had a great deal more than they could do; and the Chief Clerk, who had charge of both branches, could not attend to them, especially with the additional labour required by the Act passed last session. The present Chief Clerk was a gentleman of large mercantile experience, and he found it as much as he could do to look after the Polynesian branch by working long after office-hours. There was one clerk who kept all the accounts—a very responsible position, and a very deserving officer—and he did not think £230 was too much for him. It was desirable that the office should be reorganised on a satisfactory basis, and he had received the advice of the officers of the department. Now, he believed both branches were in a satisfactory condition.

Mr. NORTON said he understood the Colonial Secretary to say that the Chief Clerk had nothing to do with the Polynesian immigration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing whatever.

Mr. NORTON said he received the same salary as was received before by the gentleman holding both offices.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he understood that there was a chief clerk appointed to the Polynesian branch.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Colonial Secretary had told them that there was an apparent increase. He thought it was a real increase. The Colonial Secretary had taken the salaries of the second clerk and accountant from contingencies; but the amount asked for contingencies was not diminished.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is an apparent increase in their number.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a real increase in the amount. There were eighteen officers this year to sixteen last year. He was justified in saying that the clerk in the Polynesian branch would have little to do.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that at the present time that officer had a great deal to do, more than any man could do in ordinary working hours.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that hon. members on the cross-benches ought to complain that they could not hear hon. members lower down in the Committee. They could hear the leader of the Opposition well enough, but no one else. They could not hear the explanation about the Chief Clerk. That gentleman was down for the present year at £425, and last year at £300. After deducting the £75 received from the Pacific Island Fund, there seemed to be an increase of £50.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was sorry he had not spoken loudly enough. The Chief Clerk in that department had been receiving £300 as Chief Clerk in the Immigration Office, £75 from the Pacific Island Fund, and an additional £50 from another source as secretary of the Medical Board. That gave him a total income of £425. As hon. members were aware, that gentleman no longer held that office. Since the Estimates had been prepared changes had taken place—for reasons he need not refer to then—and the intention expressed in the Estimates no longer held good. What was proposed now was to appoint a chief clerk at a salary of £400; and therefore he asked that that sum might be voted; but it was a different scheme to what was proposed before.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked who was that new officer?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was proposed to appoint the gentleman who was at present Chief Clerk in the office of the Curator of Intestate Estates—Mr. Brennan.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Another sop to the Auditor-General!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was informed that he was a very competent officer, and he made very careful inquiries of the different officers under whom he had served. He was anxious to get the most competent person he could, and, having made inquiries, he had come to the conclusion that it would be a most desirable appointment to make. He only spoke from information he had received.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman might think he had sufficient information; but the fact was, he had been again imposed upon by the "barnacle" family. He was to receive £425.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; £400.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Government looked well after their friends. Three years and a-half ago that clerk was receiving £150. Who was the second clerk that was proposed to be appointed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Imrie.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Who took Mr. Horrocks' place while he was under suspension?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the work was done by the clerks in the department under the general supervision of Mr. Gray, the Under Colonial Secretary, and with the assistance of Mr. Woodward, the Chief Clerk of the Polynesian branch.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the gentleman who was to have the Chief Clerk's place received £200 last year.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He got £350 as a matter of fact.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the rise was the most extraordinary one that had ever been given in the service. Just consider the length of time Mr. Horrocks had occupied his position. He had been getting a salary of £375, and now Mr. Brennan was to get an increased salary of £400 a year, simply because he was a son-in-law of the Auditor-General.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said Mr. Horrocks' salary was £425 a year, as he had already pointed out, because, in addition to the £375 salary, he received £50 as clerk to the Medical Board. The hon. gentleman had been pleased to give certain reasons for the appointment of Mr. Brennan. The matter had been under consideration for some time, and he (the Colonial Secretary) had been making inquiries to know where he could get hold of a thoroughly competent man. He did not care who he was, but it had been represented to him that Mr. Brennan would make a very good chief clerk. He had been appointed, but, if he did not turn out well, he (the Colonial Secretary) would be very glad to get rid of him again. The office was one that required a thoroughly competent man, and he believed Mr. Brennan would answer the requirements. At present he received £350 a year, and the new office was worth £400. Mr. Brennan was the best man he could get for £400 a year, after trying amongst all the public officers who were receiving under that amount, and who would be willing to accept the position. He must correct the hon. gentleman in his statement as to what Mr. Brennan had been receiving. He was appointed twelve years ago to the Public Service, and in 1879 he received £275 a year. That was five years ago, so that he (the Colonial Secretary) did not think the gentleman had got on so very rapidly after all.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What salary did he receive the year before?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: £250 a year, but he was promoted to £275 in 1879.

Mr. MIDGLEY said there was another feature of the question. The gentleman who occupied the position before received £75 a year out of the Pacific Island Immigration Fund. That class of work would now be taken from him.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is taken from him.

Mr. MIDGLEY said that for that reason the salary should be reduced instead of being increased. He would like also to mention that he believed the Government regulation that men in the Government offices were to work from 9 till 4, with no time for lunch, was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. He knew himself that men who were pretty high up in the Civil Service wholly ignored the rule, and he had predicted that when the old system was reverted to. As a matter of fact, those large salaries were paid for work which only lasted from 9 to 4, minus an hour for lunch—exactly six hours.

1884—4 w

Mr. FOOTE said the present was the time to redress grievances. He had not a great deal to say about the vote now before the Committee, but he had got hold of a little matter which, to his mind, was scarcely the thing. It appeared to be a pamphlet upon European immigration, and was headed, "Queensland: a country for European labour." He considered that the matters set forth in the pamphlet were somewhat misleading, and his object in speaking now was to call the attention of the Government to the matter. The pamphlet referred to indentured labour, and in the 3rd paragraph it said by the Act the employer can—

"Engage each man for a period of two years. The planter will give the sum of £20 per year to every labourer, and will also find him in food in accordance with the scale of rations mentioned in the schedule. The wages will be paid monthly, less one-half during the first year."

Of course, every indentured labourer had a right, if he made an agreement, to stand by it, and the party empowering an agent to indent labour should set forth in the agreement the terms upon which the labourer was engaged. But the pamphlet went on to say, "as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the labourer, the half of the wages retained during the first year will be forfeited in case of the agreement being broken." That appeared to him to be what he would call a hard contract. A man coming to the colony might have to work his first twelve months for £10 and his rations. Supposing that during the year the contractor became insolvent or died, or anything else occurred to prevent the man getting his wages, he would still be under the bond. He (Mr. Foote) pointed that out merely to show that in his opinion it was contrary to the spirit of all agreements that ought to be made between employer and employé. Since he had been in the colony he had never seen a clause in an agreement by which the labourer was bound in that way. The pamphlet said:—

"During the second year of the term the sum of £10 of the wages, which has been left unpaid during the first year, will be held in the hands of the employer until the expiration of term of agreement, so that during this second year the immigrant receives all due for that time."

The contract did not say that the wages were to be paid monthly, or quarterly, or half-yearly; or whether the immigrant was to work the whole period before he got his £10. The next thing he would like to call attention to was the hours of labour:—

"The hours of labour will be twelve during the month that cane-crushing is being carried on, and ten during the rest of the year. As a general rule it may be said that the crushing season embraces five or six months."

Then with regard to absence through sickness, it was said:—

"If any labourer is absent from work under the plea of sickness, his wages will not be paid during such time; also, 9d. per day may be charged for rations at the option of the employer, so as to guard against imposture. If, owing to wet weather, no work can be done, rations will be allowed, but no wages will be paid for hours not at work. Upon an average there are very few days so wet but what some kind of work can be found for the labourers."

Then it was stated that the holidays allowed would be Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday. He presumed that that provision was taken from some Act two centuries old; at any rate, it was not from any modern Act.

Mr. BROOKES: Jamaica.

Mr. FOOTE: Perhaps so. After that it was stated that—

"A cooking-house, with oven and boiler large enough for the requirements of the number of the party, will be found by the planters. Wood and water, for cooking purposes, will be carted when wanted, provided water be not otherwise at hand."

The pamphlet then went on to tell intending immigrants about the mildness of the climate, and to say, in fact, that it was so mild that they scarcely wanted houses to live in; or at all events, the houses required were of such a character that they need not be very careful about them :—

"The mild nature of the climate does not necessitate such substantial buildings as are common in European countries. The houses usual on plantations and farms are made of wood and roofed with galvanised iron. To every sixteen men, one such house measuring 16 feet x 16 feet, and having a double row of bunks (as on ship-board), will be allotted. To married couples a house 22 feet x 10 feet, divided into rooms with fireplace in one place or else an outside cooling shelter."

That was to say, if there was no fireplace they would have to make one outside. He thought there was nothing more calculated to produce disease than having a lot of men huddled up together in the manner there described. Let them just imagine sixteen men in a building with a galvanised iron roof, cooped up just as they would be on board ship. It would not be a matter of surprise if any disease broke out in such a place. He almost regretted taking up so much time over a matter of that sort; but he thought it was one that ought to be brought up. Whatever the House might do to bring people to the colony, he certainly hoped it would be done in good faith, or without any intention to deceive, or that such hard-and-fast agreements were made that, during the period of their servitude, people would feel that it was something like imprisonment. Then, as to cart-drivers, the pamphlet said—

"The driver will have to rise at first sound of morning-bell, and groom and feed his own horse. The feed is usually cane-tops and maize, which are chaffed and ground by the machinery of the mill. When the mill is not working, then each horse-driver may be required to chaff and grind sufficient food for the horse he drives."

It appeared, therefore, that a man who drove a horse would have to work a couple of hours more a day than others. The pamphlet then went on to describe that the people would have to work at sugar-boiling and other things, and stated that "night-work and overtime would often be required from all working at the mill." The other day the House discussed the question of men travelling stock and working on Sunday; but there was a paragraph in the pamphlet stating that—

"To such as attend to the boilers a certain amount of Sunday labour will be necessitated, as this is the only day on which the tubes and flues are cool enough to be cleaned out."

The next paragraph he would call attention to was, he considered, very misleading—

"*Wages ruling in the Colony.*—One of the main objects of this pamphlet is to clearly point out to the intending immigrant that the rate of wages now offered to him during his two years of indenture is below the rate now paid to men in the colony. Labour is always in demand in a new country, and so wages are high, generally speaking."

This was the part he wished to mark—

"Ordinary farm laborers get from 15s. to 22s. 6d. per week in the northern half of the colony; and 12s. to 20s. per week in the southern half"—

He did not think any employer of labour would bear out the statement that men in the southern part of the colony could be got for 12s. a week, or even for 20s.

Mr. BLACK: Read the rest of it—read to the end.

Mr. FOOTE:

"but during wheat harvest in the South, considerably higher wages rule."

How long did the wheat harvest last? It did not absorb the greater part of the labour. That part, in his estimation, was misleading. He employed

a good deal of labour, but he never came across any labour of that sort. He was paying now for farm labourers as high as 25s. a week.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Do you find them too?

Mr. FOOTE said they found themselves. He did not do the ration business; he paid them, and let them get what they liked best. He did not say he paid all of them that. The pamphlet went on :—

"The sugar manufacture is an industry that employs a larger number of hands than any other agricultural occupation whatever, and the manufacturers have to compete with countries possessing an unlimited supply of cheap coloured labour; it cannot be carried on and pay for unskilled work the high rate of wages now ruling in the colony. Hitherto the planters have employed South Sea Islanders, who were paid £6 per year, with clothes and rations. The present Government of Queensland have now stopped this source of labour."

That was news to him. He understood the Government had stopped kidnapping, and put down some very serious abuses, but he was under the impression that ships were still arriving at the Northern ports with kanakas. It was not long ago that he noticed the arrival of one at Maryborough, and this week one had arrived at Mackay.

"The present Government of Queensland have now stopped this source of labour, but they say to the planters—'If you will pay us £2 per man we will bring out, in Government chartered ships, agricultural labourers from Europe, who, in consideration that they get their passage out to this colony free of expense, will be entitled to work at a less rate of wages,'—

And so on. He quite agreed—

Mr. BLACK: Go on, read it all.

Mr. FOOTE:

"entitled to work at a less rate of wage than is customary at the time being for, say, the limited term of two years; but we want you to get decent men who, after their term of indenture is worked out, will be likely to settle permanently in the colony, preferably as farmers on their own bit of land.' The planters are quite willing to try this experiment, hence this movement and this pamphlet."

That was quite right so far as the intention of the thing might go. What was a man to do in the way of settlement if he worked for £20 a year? The part he objected to was that a planter should be allowed to hold half the first year's wages as a guarantee for the carrying out of the agreement. The next part to which he would refer was somewhat amusing. The writer, referring to the European coming to this country, said—

"He comes to a country where he can, without expense, get naturalised as an Australian. He then has a vote in returning a member to the Parliamentary Assembly, no qualification being required other than a six months' residence in the district. Parliament is elected every five years, and already the Germans are so numerous in the colony that their vote is courted by politicians; in fact, they largely contributed towards placing the present Government into power. All laws are made by the Parliament elected by the votes of Queensland residents. The Governor is the representative of the Queen of England, but takes no active part in framing the laws."

That, of course, would give the readers a great idea of liberty. The pamphlet, of course, had been sent home in the interests of the sugar-planters of Mackay. It went on—

"All kinds of fruits grow well in the colony, according to the locality chosen. In colder districts, such as Stanthorpe and Toowoomba, apples, pears, peaches, plums, strawberries, and other European fruits thrive well; and in the Northern and tropical districts, oranges, lemons, mangoes, pine-apples, bananas, and a host of other fruits can be easily grown."

The thing was perfectly true, but what connection had Stanthorpe with Mackay or Mackay with Stanthorpe? Of course the readers of the pamphlet would have in their mind the fruits to

which they were accustomed, and possibly they would not be accustomed to the tropical fruits. In that sense it would be misleading. He should have taken the whole document as the production of an immigration agent. It might have been written by the hon. member for South Brisbane to charm people; but he did not believe the hon. member could do anything but make a fair representation of facts. His object in alluding to the pamphlet was to draw the attention of the Government to it; and he hoped, though they were very liberal with reference to immigration, they would not foster anything of that sort.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had seen the pamphlet, which was sent officially to him by the Mackay sugar-planters. In a previous letter which was sent to him, it was mentioned that in order that no misunderstanding might arise in regard to the nature of the agreement to be made in all its aspects, a copy of the pamphlet would be supplied to every labourer before signing, and a promise was made to forward him a copy of the pamphlet when it had been received from the author. He did not know who the author was, but the pamphlet he got was the one to which the hon. gentleman had referred. He thought the planters had much better revise their scheme. If that pamphlet represented the matured ideas of the Planters' Association in Mackay or of the planters' associations generally in the colony, it seemed to him they were illustrating the old proverb—"Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad." Now, the hon. member for Mulgrave had spoken about "white slaves," and used the expression "Coolie-Germans." He thought the draft of that pamphlet must have been in his possession when he used it; for its intention was to convert white labourers into absolute slaves, treated no better than the slaves were treated in the West Indies, and housed no better. The accommodation proposed to be given to white men was not fit for any human being. It was worse accommodation than was given to the kanakas at the present time; and that was the proposition that was deliberately sent to the Government as the proposition of the planters, and with the request that the Government would facilitate their efforts in introducing white labourers on those terms. Why, to introduce men and put them to sleep in those places would be to introduce them to certain death! He might say that he could scarcely believe when he read it that such a scheme could be seriously proposed. As to the liberality of the terms and the wages offered he had little to say. He never before heard of a man being asked to engage himself on condition that when it rained his wages were stopped. He never had heard of such conditions in engaging a man by the year—that when his work was stopped by rain his wages were stopped, and when he was sick, not only were his wages to be stopped, but half his wages when he was well. He could assure them that if those were the terms on which the Government were expected to assist immigration from Europe, he for one would have nothing to do with it. He would not assist to bring any man from any country to be housed and treated in the way it was proposed to treat those men. He took that opportunity to say so, and at once; if that was what the planters talked about giving the experiment a fair trial it showed they had lost their heads. The pamphlet also contained a most extraordinary statement. A more strong self-condemnation could not be made by any body of men. The planters said the Government had stopped the source of labour from the South Sea Islands. A stronger condemnation of the system that had been going on could not have been written. It meant that the whole system was nothing but a system of kidnapping. If stopping

kidnapping stopped the supply of labour, what stronger condemnation of the system could be written than that? As to the statement they had put into the mouth of the Government, the Government would express their own views. They had expressed them before, and they declined to take them from anyone. He had read the pamphlet with regret, and would write a formal reply to the Planters' Association to the same effect as the speech which he had just made.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. the Colonial Secretary had told them that he must have read that pamphlet before he spoke on the Immigration Act Amendment Act of 1884. Well, he did not know that the pamphlet was issued, and he never saw it until it was in the hands of the hon. member for Bundanba. He would take the opportunity before very long to read it, and to know what the Colonial Secretary had been talking about, but, so far as he could see, the hon. gentleman had talked against his own Bill which was passed a few months ago. They would have a little more discussion about the matter soon. He believed, himself, that the true fruit of the tree planted by the hon. member—the Premier of the colony—was the pamphlet, and what it was he did not know, but he would take the earliest chance of ascertaining if there was a copy to be got in the House. The first copy he saw was in the hands of the hon. member for Bundanba, though he had seen something like it in a Mackay paper about a fortnight ago. He should like to see the pamphlet.

Mr. BROOKES: Yes; you had better see it.

Mr. GRIMES said he should like to know what the hon. member for Mackay knew about the matter. It was strange there was only one copy of the pamphlet, and that that was given to a member on the Government side, and that the hon. member representing Mackay had no copy. It came from Mackay; it was published by the Mackay Planters' and Farmers' Association, and he knew the hon. gentleman (Mr. Black) was identified with that.

Mr. BROOKES: He is ashamed of it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Did the hon. member for Oxley get one?

Mr. GRIMES: No; I did not. I should very much like to have one or two soon.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad the hon. member for Bundanba had referred to that matter. He held a copy of the pamphlet in his hand. It was sent to him; and, although to a certain extent agreeing with a great deal that was in the pamphlet, he was certainly not going to hold himself responsible for it or endorse its contents. The pamphlet was the outcome of the Government policy.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. BLACK said he would repeat that the pamphlet was the outcome of the Government policy—that the cheap European labourers were to be brought out here to do the work of the kanakas in the canefields at the expense of the Government, and also at the expense of the working men already in the country. If there was any fault that anyone could find with that pamphlet it was its extreme sincerity. Every word that the hon. member for Bundanba had read in connection with it—all that could be said about it in describing the colony, the work and the wages—simply meant: "Here is a plain straightforward statement of facts. We tell you before you like to engage; we do not wish to mislead you; we are trying to afford to pay the rates put down here. We tell you what kind of work it is, and if, under

those conditions, you are willing to come and accept work, you certainly will not be able to say anything has been misrepresented." The Colonial Secretary, seeing the difficulty he had got into through his labour policy, turned round now and said that if the planters expected the Government to assist them in that scheme they would be mistaken. He (Mr. Black) knew that all along. He knew the hon. gentleman was not sincere—knew the difficulty he was drifting into; and now the hon. gentleman was afraid to face the storm of indignation that his policy had raised throughout the country. As a statesman, would it not have been far better for the Colonial Secretary to say that he had looked at the pamphlet, and that he objected, for instance, to the size of the house proposed. The planters would naturally say that they would increase the size of the house. Then the hon. gentleman might say to the planters that the proposal to stop wages when absent through bad weather or sickness was somewhat unfair. No doubt the planters would also promise to reconsider that. But because of those small details the hon. gentleman said he would have nothing to do with the scheme; he would not assist them to bring out that labour.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not on such terms as those.

Mr. BLACK: Why did not the hon. gentleman say on what terms he would bring it out? Why should he throw the onus of such a gigantic scheme on the planters—a scheme which involved the immigration of 5,000 or 6,000 labourers a year? As to the stoppage of wages for wet weather or sickness, it was customary, he believed, in all industries; all over the colony, among mechanics, shearers, and all sorts of labour, that system would be found to prevail; and as to retaining the first half-year's wages, there was nothing unusual in that. In many yearly contracts it was distinctly specified that wages were to be paid at the end of the term of service; whereas, in the present case, only one-half the first year's wages was to be retained as a guarantee of the labourer's good faith; and the men would know the condition before they engaged. A clause of that kind would compel men to fulfil their agreements, and that was far better than bringing them before the local bench for breach of agreement, and, perhaps, putting them in gaol. Whatever the success or otherwise of the scheme might be, the planters had no intention of compelling those men to work against their will. If men chose to engage on those terms, well and good; but if they broke their agreements they would be allowed to go, unless the case was a very glaring one; and their places would be filled by a fresh supply. As to the rate of remuneration, the planters had put down the sum they considered they could afford to pay. He was not saying that £20 a year was enough. If the planters could not get men at £20, they would have to pay £25; and if not at £25, they might be asked to give £30; but at present they were assured that large numbers of men would come out for £20 a year. It was well known that numbers went from the Continent to the United States and worked for two years for nothing, in order to get away from their own country. However, that was a matter for adjustment, and the planters had no intention of deceiving people at home. For the Colonial Secretary to stand up and say he would refuse to carry out a scheme which he himself had promulgated was a disgraceful position for the Premier of any colony to place himself in. As to the rate of wages, he would give the Committee an instance of the rate of wages which had lately been offered for work on a plantation near Brisbane. An able-

bodied man came out with his wife, three boys, aged respectively sixteen, fourteen, and thirteen, and two younger children. The man had been accustomed all his life to farming, and was just the sort of man who, with his family, should be able to do good service on a plantation. The man was offered 7s. a week, and his three boys were to get 6s. a week each. The wife and younger children were to get nothing. There were to be free rations for the four males, and house accommodation was to be provided, which, although not particularly specified, he assumed would be reasonably good. When not at work from any cause a deduction was to be made from the wages. That was considered a fair rate of wages to pay to a European in Brisbane—to a man on the spot, whose suitability for the work could be seen by the employer. The wages offered by planters in the North were better than those which he was prepared to prove had been offered in Brisbane—but not accepted. As to the hours of labour—twelve during the crushing season, and ten at other times—that was customary in every agricultural country in the world. There was nothing harsh in that. Besides, was it not better to put it plainly in the pamphlet, so that the intending immigrant might know what the hours were, instead of bringing them out on a misunderstanding and have them object afterwards? With regard to wages not being paid during sickness, he was not prepared to say that that was a good clause. For himself, he should rather be inclined, if satisfied that a man was honestly sick, to pay him his wages. So far he agreed with the hon. member for Bundamba. The pamphlet said the employer "may" charge 9d. per day for rations. It did not say he "will" do so. It was merely put there to meet the cases of labourers feigning sickness. The hon. gentleman also referred to the holidays as something extraordinary—"Sunday, Christmas Day, and Good Friday." He did not know what other day the hon. gentleman would like to insert, unless it was Separation Day, which was a day that was not held in very great esteem in the North, although the next Separation Day would be, and then there would be an additional day added to the list of holidays. As he had already said, there must be some mistake in reference to the dimensions of the houses; 16 feet by 16 feet was undoubtedly too small for sixteen men. That was an error; but a mistake of that sort was no reason why the head of the Government should abandon the whole scheme. The Colonial Secretary stated that it was not the intention of the Government to interfere in any way with the rate of wages that was to be paid. The planters would like nothing better than for the Government to take the matter into their own hands and absolve the planters from the difficulty. There was also the question about horse-drivers, and what they had to do; they had to work twelve hours in crop-time.

Mr. FOOTE: They will have to get up two hours earlier to feed the horses.

Mr. BLACK said the pamphlet did not say so, and he, knowing the working of a plantation, knew perfectly well that they did not do it. They had to work twelve hours a day in crop-time, and ten hours at other times. He did not see anything very strange in getting up to feed horses; but that was the description of labour that was to be brought to take the place of kankaas.

Mr. FOOTE said he would explain to the hon. member. He knew what the working of horses was, and he knew that if horses had to work in the field they had to be fed a couple of hours before. Anyone who knew anything about working horses knew that.

Mr. BLACK said it was not a matter of very great consequence whether it was horses or asses.

Mr. FOOTE said he was a good judge of asses.

Mr. BLACK said that was the class of animal with which the hon. gentleman had most to do. Then there was night-work and overtime. He had not the slightest doubt that those men would only be too glad to be paid for overtime. There was nothing wrong with regard to the rate of wages ruling in the colony. The wages in the South were not better than those offered to European immigrants. The only objection anyone could find to the pamphlet was its extreme sincerity. The hon. member for South Brisbane had told him he approved of the pamphlet, with the exception of the rate of wages, and some of the minor details. A leader appeared, to his astonishment, in one of the leading Brisbane papers—the *Telegraph*—undoubtedly approving of the pamphlet, and in very much the same language as the hon. member for South Brisbane had referred to it, to him, and he came to the conclusion at once that that leader emanated from the hon. gentleman. There was no necessity to go into every detail of the pamphlet now that the Colonial Secretary had stated that he would have none of it, and the planters would know what to do. In common fairness to an industry which was of great value to the colony, the hon. gentleman should tell the Committee what he was going to do. The planters having failed, according to the Colonial Secretary, in organising a scheme which met with the approbation of the Government, it was only fair that the Government should explain what they would do as an alternative. The reference to the South Sea Island trade was undoubtedly not true; but he was not answerable for all the sentiments contained in that pamphlet. The Government were anxious to stop it; but that they had actually stopped it was untrue. They had imposed so many difficulties and regulations that, by indirect means, they were stopping it, and he had not the slightest doubt that at the end of a twelvemonth the South Sea Islands, as a field for labour, would have virtually ceased to exist. It was the intention of the Government to stop it as gradually as they possibly could. The whole argument was this: that for the last eighteen years a certain description of labour had been used with beneficial results to the colony, and for certain reasons, political ones chiefly, that labour had become unpopular; and the Government, wishing to meet the views of those who had put them in power, had attempted to frame a scheme of cheap European labour. The Government had not made use of that word "cheap"; but to take the place of coloured labour it must necessarily be cheap, especially in the present condition of the industry; they would have to bring out cheap European labour to compete with the labouring people in the colony at present, which would be a more unpopular measure than the Polynesian labour was. The Government had brought in Loan Estimates amounting to £10,000,000 for works which, if carried out would create such a demand for labour in the colony, that it was quite impossible that such a system could succeed. Hence another difficulty had crept in; the Government would be in competition with the manufacturing industries of the colony, and the rate of wages would undoubtedly rise to such a rate that the planters would be unable to get European labour to do the work they wanted, as the men would always be inclined to go to the more congenial and better paid work. Seeing that Polynesian labour

had brought the colony into disrepute, it would be better to do away with it altogether and allow Indian coolies to come in. It was merely a change of nationality. The regulations could be exactly the same. The Indian Government had assented to those regulations for ensuring the colony against abuse, and they had their own Government to see that they were properly treated whilst here.

Mr. JORDAN said he took exception to the remarks made by the hon. member for Bundamba when he desired to connect him (Mr. Jordan) with the idea of paying men 7s. 6d. a week. He thought it was most unfair, inasmuch as he had never said anything in the House, in the colony, or in Great Britain, that could fairly be interpreted in that way. He had always believed that labouring men should receive fair wages; and some time ago when he was a candidate for South Brisbane—being strongly opposed to black labour, as he had always been—he suggested that the planters of Mackay and the North might be able to get valuable European labour at the rate of 15s. a week, with the addition of rations. It was an unfair thing to try and identify him with the proposal—which was most unfair and unreasonable—of obtaining men at 7s. 6d. a week. He had been ridiculed by the papers for making such a proposal as 15s. a week; but, now, it was gravely proposed by the planters that they should hire their labour at £20 a year—about 7s. 6d. a week—which was just half of what he had proposed. The hon. member for Mackay said that he (Mr. Jordan) had intimated to him that he approved of the pamphlet. He had said this much: that the pamphlet was well written, and calculated to attract labourers from Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, but he added immediately that the wages were very much too low. They ought to have offered 15s. a week. If the planters of Mackay would offer 15s. a week and rations, and give proper house accommodation, not such as was spoken of in the pamphlet, he was convinced they would be able to get a very large number of valuable labourers from England, as well as from the more northern parts of Europe. He believed if that were done—if the labourers were paid fair wages and fairly treated, the planters would find that they were better off than they were now. There was no doubt in his mind that black labour in Queensland was doomed, and he rejoiced that he had lived to see the day when it was likely that black labour would be doomed. He believed the planters would be better off in the course of a few years with white labour and fair wages than they could ever possibly be with coolies or kanakas.

Mr. FOOTE said he was sorry he had connected the hon. member for South Brisbane with the pamphlet; but he need not have done so, because he had connected himself with it. It appeared the hon. member had a previous knowledge of it. The hon. member said he had a conversation with the hon. member for Mackay, but he could not have noticed what he (Mr. Foote) had said of him at the time. He had referred to a certain paragraph which showed what would grow in Queensland—what fruits could be produced at Toowoomba, Stanthorpe, and other places; but he did not associate the hon. gentleman's name with the paragraph, or connect his name with the wages that were mentioned. He merely said that if such a glowing account had been given by an immigration agent such as the hon. member had once been, he should not have been surprised at it.

Mr. BROOKES said there was a remarkable feature about the pamphlet. There was no date to it. It certainly referred to a recently passed Act, but there was no date on the outside or

inside. As representing the planters, really he could not see what was contemplated by it. If it was intended to promote their own interests, he wanted to know why they should begin by writing the two dreadful paragraphs setting forth what their labourers were to expect, and then continuing with a paragraph relating to the ruling wages in the colony, showing that a labourer could do better anywhere in the colony rather than with the planters. They added to that by describing the climate of Queensland, and made out that some parts of the colony were more desirable than others to live in. But planters would be planters as long as the sun rose and set. There was one thing characteristic of them all over the world, and that was—everything for themselves and nothing for anybody else. They really did not take anybody else into account; but he had said that so often that perhaps it would be thought he was simply making the remark without being able to give any proof of it. In the recent additions to the Library, there was a book relating the experiences of an Assam planter, which gave an account of the trials and difficulties which the tea-planters there had had with the coolies. He (Mr. Brookes) only wished all the people in the colony could just understand the difficulties which were likely to arise with coolies. The planters themselves did not know of half the difficulties. They were like so many boys—the planters of Mackay. Grown and bearded men they might be, but they were like silly and inexperienced fools. There was a letter which appeared in the *London Times*, a late copy of which had been sent to him; and if he could get an opportunity before the House rose he would read a few extracts from it as going to prove what he had said. It showed clearly that the planters of Jamaica were just like the planters of Mackay. The planters at the former place fancied Jamaica was made for them, and the planters of Mackay thought Queensland was made for them. There was not an atom of difference between the two, and they showed the most marked selfishness throughout all their transactions. With regard to the letter in the *London Times*, to which he had referred before the adjournment for tea, he had not been able to get it; but he had in his hand another letter, also in the *Times*, written by the same gentleman, the Rev. Henry Clarke, Rector of Westmoreland, Jamaica, who had been living for forty years in the principal sugar district of Jamaica. He (Mr. Brookes) did not wish to be tedious, but he was desirous of giving a full answer to some statements made by the hon. member for Mackay, with which they were so familiar, about the importance of the sugar industry to Queensland, and the desirability of the Legislature taking care that it was properly protected and fostered. In the description of Jamaica, which he was about to read, he saw a description of Mackay; for it was Mackay that was kicking up all the disturbance. It was Mackay that claimed separation—not the North; and it was Mackay, and Mackay only, of which he spoke, when the other day he made a disagreeable remark to the effect that the planters had neither money nor brains, and that, though they had initiated the separation movement, they would not be able to carry it out. Mr. Clarke said:—

"It should be borne in mind that since emancipation, almost as much as before, the sugar business has been in the hands of the West India body in London, and nobody in Jamaica has had any interest in it, except as their agents or dependants, and their influence at the Colonial Office has always enabled them to regulate legislation in their own favour."

The part to which he would invite the close attention of hon. members was this:—

"During the last fifty years they have been constantly receiving vast sums out of the public revenue of the

island to import coolies for their private and exclusive use under the name of immigrants, but who are really slaves; and, in the face of this fact, their present outcry against bounty-fed sugar seems to me rather inconsistent.

"Taxation has been removed from their estates and their imports, and placed chiefly on the food and raiment of the negroes, whose wages average less than one shilling a day, which is not enough to provide for the man himself, much less for his wife and family.

"The sugar estates, as hitherto managed, have been a hindrance to the progress of the emancipated people in wealth as well as morals. As a rule, they are centres of vice and poverty. The overseers have a salary of £150 or £200 a year, but as they are liable to dismissal without any notice, it is dangerous for a man of family to hold the position.

"The question now is not whether sugar production is to cease in Jamaica, for that will never be so long as negroes are left in it; but whether it is to be produced for the benefit of the producers, or for that of the West Indian proprietors in England; and I have no doubt that when the labourers are allowed to reap the fruits of their own labours the production of sugar will soon be larger than ever it was under slavery, the competition of bounty-fed beet-root notwithstanding."

He closed the letter by saying—

"If the existing sugar works were converted into central factories, with the same kind of management and machinery as are used in beet-root factories, the negroes growing the canes on their own account and selling them to the factories, Jamaica would hold her own against all the world."

That was a true description of Mackay at the present moment. He did not believe there was a solvent planter in Mackay; they all existed on the breath of the banks. The hon. member for Mackay, by whom the claims of the sugar-planters had been urged *ad nauseam*, had not scrupled to repeat an argument that the hon. member might depend would never be accepted by the House or the colony. He seemed to fancy that because the gross value of the sugar hitherto produced had been large, therefore they were to look upon the planters with respect, without regard to the way in which they had obtained their labour. They were to forget altogether that the kanaka labour system had been an atrocious and disgraceful system from the beginning—a scandal to Queensland, and consequently to the British name, and a disgrace to all Australia. He (Mr. Brookes) saw in the pamphlet a complaint that the Government had stopped the South Sea Island labour; but he would remind the House that all that had been done in reference to the South Sea Island labour had been to stop the iniquity of it. He was almost going to say that had he been the Premier he would have taken further steps; but perhaps if he had the responsibility of the Premier he would have done exactly what had been done. But it was a trade of such a kind that if they cut off the iniquities of it, the immoralities, the drunkenness, the lawlessness, the rapine, the ravishing of women, the abduction of little children, there would be no trade left. When the hon. member for Mackay, and other gentlemen like him, spoke of the South Sea Island labour as necessary to the prosperity of the sugar industry, they in so many words condemned it, and put it out of any court where justice and equity prevailed. Coming to the pamphlet, the mere details of the way in which the people were to be treated when they came into the unhappy custody of the sugar-planters were enough to disgust every right-minded man. The wages were to be £20 a year—7s. 6d. a week, or something like that—and as half of that was to be kept by a bankrupt planter for twelve months, it did not at all follow that the labourer would ever get it. Then no European labourer, even the Spaniard, accustomed to the poorest of diet, or the Neapolitan, who lived on the smell of an oil-rag, would be contented with the meagre scale of diet. There was no salt or pepper to be supplied; the labourer no doubt would have to provide himself

with those necessaries out of his 7s. 6d. a week—or what was really 3s. 9d. a week. Then as to the hours of labour. They were to be twelve hours during the crushing months and ten hours during the rest of the year, but there was no mention in the paragraph as to the time allowed for meals. He hoped that the subject would be dealt with by an hon. member in the Committee who was a sugar-planter, and who knew exactly the best way to treat his labourers. He knew very well what that hon. gentleman's feelings were as to the manner in which it was proposed to treat those labourers. The paragraph on "Absence through sickness" was atrocious; it was worse even than the condemned system of coolie labour in Trinidad or Jamaica, or even the Mauritius. The labourer, in case of sickness, was to lose even his 3s. 9d. a week. And suppose it came on to rain, where was he to go? Into a place 16 feet by 16 feet, containing sixteen bunks, with a 3-foot passage—a galvanised iron Dutch oven. There was no hospital, no provision for medicine, no solicitude for them in any way. Why, the planters treated their horses and bullocks with more consideration than they proposed to treat those men! Married couples were to be provided with "a house 22 feet by 10 feet, divided into two rooms, with fireplace in one, or else an outside cooking shelter." It was a disguised slavery; and yet, forsooth, with a forgetfulness born of selfishness, the hon. member for Mackay would blame the Government for overlooking the rights of the poor working man, and would look at the planters as being the real friends of the poor working man. And the hon. member blamed the Government for that. Well, he really must leave him to settle that and answer that conundrum, for it was a great conundrum; but this he might say—it was not in the power of any Government to provide the sugar-planters or anybody else with such labour. No Government had it in its power to supply any industry with that class of labour at wages lower than those of the ordinary working men. He had always been given to understand—there were legal gentlemen in the Committee who could correct him if he was wrong—he had always understood that under and above all statute law there was the common law, the right of justice. To an unfortunate man to whom £20 a year was offered in some of the impoverished parts of the Continent it might seem a small fortune, but if such men came here in thousands and landed at Mackay and were handed over to the tender mercies of those planters, and found that the contracts they had signed on the Continent were such contracts as would not be made by anyone already in the colony, they might break those contracts, and no just magistrate would condemn them for doing so. The voice of the people would uphold them in breaking their contracts and leaving such employment. Let not a single sugar-planter for one moment suppose they had any retreat like that; they had none at all. It came down to a plain matter of figures—arithmetic, common sense—that if the sugar industry could not stand on its own merits and pay reasonable wages—such wages as they could get men to work for—then the industry must perish, and all the money it had made would be as mere dust in the balance. It would go for nothing. Every shilling had been made by injustice, fraud, and wrong; and it was time they put an end to it. But the preposterousness and folly of issuing the pamphlet was out of all question. The hon. member for Mackay had called it a proof of their sincerity. It was not a proof of their sincerity; it was a proof of their verdancy and greenness to publish all that, and then to show that immigrants could earn three times as much wages in other parts of the colony. It had

shown, also, that there were none so blind as those who would not see; and the man who injured his own self-interest the most was the most selfish man. He would take upon himself, on behalf of the colony—he was speaking for the working man—to denounce all that. He would tell the planters they were no better than anybody else, and not half as good as a great many people in the colony. They had got their labour under false pretences, lived on credit, got land too cheap, bought their machinery on credit, and he did not believe a single ton of sugar ever made in the colony had even paid its expenses. It was time that rotten system fell through, and he maintained—and he had always maintained—the secret of success of an industry was high wages—good wages. Thirty-five years ago in the United States a man wanted a dollar a day and good rations, and unless the rations were of the best kind the man left his situation. Were the rations here good? They were far better fed in the Benevolent Asylum at Dunwich than the planters proposed to feed them, and far better housed too. He would again say that the pamphlet was condemnatory only of the planters, who were certainly not wise in their generation; but they were very wise in leaving out the date. It might have been issued twenty years ago, and it could not fix them to anything. But as an exhibition of the will and spirit of the planters it was invaluable; and the effect of it would be to arouse throughout the whole colony a stronger feeling of aversion to the sugar system as carried on as yet, and to all those engaged in it.

Mr. BLACK said that as considerable reference had been made to that pamphlet, and as only certain portions, according to the feelings of hon. gentlemen who had spoken on the subject, had been referred to in the Committee, he thought it was only fair that the pamphlet, which had been a matter of considerable discussion that evening, and which was very likely to be a source of still further discussion, should be read, especially as it appeared there were only a limited number of copies here; so that hon. gentlemen might know what they were talking about. Certainly, from the speech of the last hon. member, that did not appear to be the case. It was headed—"Queensland as a field for European immigrants. The Government of the British colony of Queensland."

Mr. MIDGLEY said he rose to a point of order. They were not debating that pamphlet, but they were debating the item of Immigration in the Estimates. If the hon. member was going to read the whole of that pamphlet he should have another terribly long speech to make on the subject. He thought it was not the subject before the Committee.

Mr. ARCHER: What is the point of order?

Mr. MIDGLEY: That that subject is not the subject of debate.

The CHAIRMAN said the subject before the Committee was the Immigration vote, and that pamphlet, he understood, dealt with immigration. The hon. member was in order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Will the hon. member only read the material points?

Mr. BLACK said the whole of the pamphlet was material—he thought it very material indeed, especially as the Colonial Secretary had expressed his intention to write up to the Planters' Association and tell them he would do nothing to assist them in carrying out the scheme, which he himself had suggested as a solution of the labour difficulty of the North.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would correct the hon. gentleman. He had

stated that he should inform the planters, in answer to their letter sending him the pamphlet, that the Government were not prepared to assist in the introduction of labourers on the terms stated in that pamphlet.

Mr. BLACK said it was then very important that the colony and the Committee should understand what those terms really were to which the Colonial Secretary had taken exception, and whether he (Mr. Black) was not justified in asking that the Colonial Secretary, in refusing to act on the terms and conditions set forth there, should not fairly be asked to state on what terms and conditions he was prepared to give relief.

"QUEENSLAND AS A FIELD FOR EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS."

"The Government of the British Colony of Queensland, in Australia, being desirous of introducing agricultural immigrants who will eventually settle down on small farms of their own, have lately passed an Immigration Act by which any employer can, under indenture, introduce any number of European agricultural labourers, provided he pays a sum of £2 per person. The immigrant will, however, have to pay £1 for a ship-board kit of utensils required on the voyage.

"The sugar-cane farmers and manufacturers of the colony, being desirous of taking advantage of this Act to obtain labourers to work their plantations, have caused, through the Mackay Planters' and Farmers' Association, this pamphlet to be written, in order that every labourer may, by perusing it previous to his entering into any engagement, fully understand the sort of labour he is hired to do, the conditions of his indenture, the nature of the climate, the ruling rate of wages in the colony to those not under indenture, and what advantages there are in the colony to induce the labourer, after the term of his agreement expires, to settle down as a farmer upon his own land.

"It is allowed by the Act that the employer can engage each man for a term of two (2) years. The planters will give the sum of twenty pounds (£20) per year to every labourer so agreeing, and also find him in food in accordance with the scale of rations noted below. These wages will be paid monthly, less the one-half during the first year, which will be retained in the employer's hands until the expiration of the second year of agreement, as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the labourer, and which sum is to be forfeited if through any cause the agreement is broken. The wages will commence from date of arrival at plantation. The term of agreement to be also counted from date of arrival at plantation.

"During the second year of the term the sum of ten pounds of the wages, which has been left unpaid during the first year, will be held in the hands of the employer until the expiration of term of agreement, so that during this second year the immigrant receives all due for that time.

"*Rations.*—Rations will be served out once a week, according to the following scale per adult, viz.:—8 lbs. wheaten flour; 12 lbs. beef, fresh or salt; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tea; 2 lbs. sugar.

"*Cook.*—It shall be optional with the immigrants to elect one of their own number to act as cook, in which case the employer will pay his wages, but should there not be one amongst them willing to perform the work the amount of one man's wages will be allowed to the immigrants to enable them to provide a cook elsewhere.

"*Hours of Labour.*—The hours of labour will be twelve (12) during the months that cane-crushing is being carried on, and ten (10) hours during the rest of the year. As a general rule it may be said that the crushing season embraces five to six months.

"*Absence through Sickness.*—If any labourer is absent from work under the plea of sickness, his wages will not be paid during such time; also ninepence (9d.) per day may be charged for rations at the option of the employer, so as to guard against imposture. If, owing to wet weather, no work can be done, rations will be allowed, but no wages will be paid for hours not at work. Upon an average there are very few days so wet but what some kind of work can be found for the labourer.

"*Holidays.*—The holidays allowed will be Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday.

"*Cook House.*—A cooking-house with oven and boiler large enough for the requirements of the number of the party will be found by the planters.

"*Fuel and Water.*—Wood and water for cooking purposes will be carted when wanted, provided water be not otherwise at hand.

"*Houses.*—The mild nature of the climate does not necessitate such substantial buildings as are common in European countries. The houses usual on plantations

and farms are made of wood and roofed with galvanised iron. To every sixteen (16) men one such house measuring 16 feet by 16 feet, and having a double row of bunks (as on shipboard) will be allotted. To married couples a house 22 feet by 10 feet, divided into two rooms with fireplace in one or else an outside cooking shelter.

"Work to be Done."

"The kind of work required to be done by the labourer upon a sugar plantation is very changeable and varied. One day a man may be doing one thing, and the next, quite a different job.

"*Cart Drivers.*—There is driving a horse and cart, of which ten (10) to a hundred (100) are used on each plantation, according to its size. The carts are chiefly used for carting wood to the furnaces, and cane to the mill. This work is perhaps the lightest of any duty that will be assigned to the labourer, and youths of from fifteen (15) years up can do it as well as anyone. But the driver will have to rise at first sound of morning bell, and groom and feed his own horse. The feed is usually cane-tops and maize, which are chaffed and ground by the machinery of the mill. When the mill is not working then each horse-driver may be required to chaff and grind sufficient food for the horses he drives.

"*Ploughman.*—The ploughman has three (3) horses under his care, and as required uses them for cultivating, harrowing, rolling, carting wood or cane, or any work ordered by the overseer. He has also to groom and feed his own team, and to oil and take care of their harness.

"*Field Work.*—Some of the work required by those labourers not employed with horses, will be the following:—To plant cane cuttings, to hand-hoe and pull out weeds, to cut ditches and lay stone or other drains, to make and repair the roads on the estate, to use pick and shovel as required, to grub up or fell and saw and split up trees into firewood, or posts, to cut down scrub or jungle, to burn and clear or split up the same, to trash (that is to remove the dead lower leaves from the cane as it grows tall), to cut down the cane, to carry to and load up the carts with cane or wood, etc., and any work which the field overseer orders to be done.

"*Mill Work.*—In and about the mill, the labourers' work includes the carrying of cane, as discharged from the cart, to the rollers to be crushed; also to spread the megass or crushed cane to dry for fuel, to fire up the boilers, to attend to the clearing, evaporating, and boiling of the juice; to work among and in the sugar and molasses vats; to clean out all vats, tanks, pipes, floors, machinery, etc., as ordered by the mill overseer.

"Night work and overtime will often be required from all working at the mill, and to such as attend to the boilers a certain amount of Sunday labour will be necessitated, as this is the only day upon which the tubes and flues are cool enough to be cleaned out.

"*Skill Acquired is Equal to a New Trade Learned.*—At many of these occupations skill will soon be acquired by the labourer, in some branch of work which he likes best, or which best suits his ability. This skill can in future years be of great use; in fact, it is like learning a new trade suitable for the colony's wants. For instance, wood-splitting, tree-grubbing, and scrub-clearing will always be required in the colony; a man skilful in such work need not be afraid to travel over any part of Queensland, for he can always get such jobs either on contract or at good wages. Ploughing is also a trade commanding constant work in all the coast and agricultural districts, and a trade for which there is bound to be an ever-increasing demand, as the land gets more and more settled upon. The active and observant man has also the chance of rising to be field overseer or mill manager. Contract work for all field operations is likely to be largely adopted in future years on plantations; so that a body of men whose indentures had expired could, through being conversant with the work, take such jobs at prices remunerative to themselves, and fair to the planters.

"In the mill operations there are many arts, which, if attention is taken to acquire, would be certain to command good wages in future years. There is the clarification of the juice (a most important point); the evaporating of the same in open or steam pans; the working of the filters; the drying by steam-driven centrifugals; the engine-driving and furnace-firing; and lastly but not least, the actual sugar-granulating, and the mill management. All of these are, as it were, a special trade, in so far that the man who has taken the trouble to acquire the particular skill in one or more of them can be sure of re-employment every season in the same mill probably, or, as the fame of good workmen soon spreads among the employers, in some other of the many mills in the country, at an advanced rate of wages.

"*No Prejudice against European Foreigners.*—Foreigners will find that their nationality will be no bar to their obtaining work in Queensland. They will just

as soon be chosen by any employer as if they were English, Scotch, Irish, or Australians. People here have laid aside national prejudices against Europeans of other countries than their own when they left the old land.

"Wages Ruling in the Colony."—One of the main objects of this pamphlet is to clearly point out to the intending immigrant that the rate of wages now offered to him during his two (2) years of indenture is below the rate now paid to men in the colony. Labour is always in demand in a new country, and so wages are high, generally speaking. Ordinary farm labourers get from fifteen shillings (15s.) to twenty-two shillings and sixpence (22s. 6d.) per week, in the northern half of the colony; and twelve shillings (12s.) to twenty shillings (20s.) per week, in the southern half, but during wheat harvest in the South considerably higher rates rule.

"The sugar manufacture is an industry that employs a larger number of hands than any other agricultural occupation whatever, and the manufacturers have to compete with countries possessing an unlimited supply of cheap coloured labour, it cannot be carried on and pay for unskilled work the high rate of wages now ruling in the colony. Hitherto the planters have employed South Sea Islanders, who were paid six pounds (£6) per year, with clothes and rations. The present Government of Queensland have now stopped this source of labour; but they say to the planter:—If you will pay us two pounds (£2) per man, we will bring out, in Government chartered ships, agricultural labourers from Europe, who, in consideration that they get their passage out to this colony free of expense, will be entitled to work at a less rate of wage than is customary at the time being, for—say the limited term of two years; but we want you to get decent men, who, after their term of indenture is worked out, will be likely to settle permanently in the colony, preferably as farmers on their own bit of land." The planters are quite willing to try this experiment, hence this movement and this pamphlet.

"The new comer must look to the following advantages which he will reap:

"1. He is brought, free of expense to himself, to a vigorous and progressive colony.

"2. He learns, during his two years of indenture, colonial ways and customs, and has an opportunity of learning the English language, and in the instances pointed out previously, he also learns a trade suitable to the country's wants.

"3. He comes to a country where he can without expense get naturalised as an Australian. He then has a vote in returning a member to the Parliamentary Assembly; no qualification being required other than a six months' residence in the district. Parliament is elected every five years, and already the Germans are so numerous in the colony that their vote is courted by politicians; in fact, they largely contributed towards placing the present Government into power. All laws are made by the Parliament elected by the votes of Queensland residents. The Governor is the representative of the Queen of England, but takes no active part in framing the laws.

"German Farmers."—There are a large number of German farmers settled in the colony; more particularly in the southern districts. They have proved themselves to be worthy of being classed among the most successful of colonists, and their comfortable homes are to be seen dotted up and down our river banks. Such plodding industry and sobriety as the German shows is bound in the long run to reap success in a free country like Australia. The vine grows well in many parts of Queensland, and the chief winegrowers are Germans. The writer of this pamphlet has visited many of the vineyards, and always found comfort and plenty, even affluence as the result of culture of the grape. There is no serious disease of the vine at present in the colony; and in a hot climate like Australia the demand for light wine drinks will always be enormous. Wine is, too, an exportable product, and the German labourer could not have a better object in view than to ultimately become a grape grower. How he will be able to select a farm for himself will be shown presently.

"Our German farmers cultivate maize, wheat, arrow-root, bananas, and sugar-cane, from each and all of which a comfortable living is to be made. The supply of eggs, butter, poultry, and milk, is not half equal to the demand of the local towns, but what is supplied is largely the product of German farmers.

"All kinds of fruit grows well in the colony, according to the locality chosen. In colder districts such as Stanthorpe, and Toowoomba, apples, pears, peaches, plums, strawberries, and other European fruits thrive well; and in the Northern and tropical districts, oranges, lemons, mangoes, pine-apples, bananas, and a host of other fruits can be easily grown. European potatoes and vegetables give heavy crops in the colder localities, and do fairly well in hotter parts if grown

during the winter months. Sweet potatoes (a kind of yam) are the great stand-by of the farmer; the crop never fails, is easy of cultivation, yields enormously, and is good food for all farm animals, and mankind as well. They are daily on the farmer's dinner-table, and are largely used on all plantations. Pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers grow rampantly, with hardly any cultivation. Tomatoes are as weeds in the profusion of their growth, and lucerne yields constant and heavy crops of hay. So much for what the farmer can grow, when he gets a farm for himself. There is no exaggeration in these statements.

"Many of the capitalists who have invested money in sugar plantations and machinery would prefer to separate to a great extent the agricultural part of their business from the manufacturing, by leasing their land to suitable men to cultivate, and purchasing the cane from them delivered at the mills. Such a scheme it is at present impossible to carry out, as such a man would now be quite unable to obtain labour for his farm, either in sufficient numbers or at a sufficiently low rate to make the industry remunerative. In view of a large influx of intelligent European labourers this plan will undoubtedly soon be extensively entered upon. The idea is to let the plantations in small areas at a very nominal rent to time-expired labourers, who will have to grow, cultivate, cut, and deliver the sugar cane at the mill, the proprietor paying them so much per ton weight of canes. This is to a considerable extent now practised among farmers who are lucky enough to own a farm near to a mill, the mill-owner buying the cane on the field, or delivered at the mill, as per agreement. This is one of the simplest and most profitable modes of farming, for the market is at the farmer's very door, there is no hawking of produce round the nearest town before a purchaser can be found. Many German farmers are engaged in this work. In some districts farmers erect their own mills and the juice only is transported to the refinery or mill.

"Where Land is to be found."—There are thousands and thousands of acres of scrub lands still unoccupied in the colony. In the southern districts and around Mackay, every acre is now taken up, but further north there is abundant land to be got for the looking for.

"Homestead Clauses."—The process of obtaining land, briefly stated, is this: From time to time the Government proclaim certain districts open to selection as homestead areas. That means that any man or unmarried woman, over eighteen years old, can go there and put in an application for 160 acres, or less, but not more, with the application he deposits at the local Land Office one year's rent of the land and survey fees, which are not much. If two or more apply for the same piece of land upon the same day, then the land officer causes them to draw lots for it, otherwise the man who first lodged his application gets the land. The rent charged by the Government is only 6d. per acre per year for five years. Then the land becomes the property of the selector, provided he has fulfilled the following conditions, viz.:—Effectuated improvements to the value of 10s. per acre, and has lived continuously on the land for the whole of the five (5) years. This latter point is imperative. This is the most liberal land law upon the face of the earth; for half-a-crown an acre, payable over five years, the most fertile land is given away. The immigrant wishing to take advantage of this homestead clause will require some little capital in order to travel and find his land, to start his farm with tools, house, and fencing, and to live while no returns are coming in. It is a wise course to spend a year or two as a servant so as to learn experience in the colony's wages, and to carefully save up all wages, at the same time as he can keep his eyes open as to the most suitable locality in which to make his future home, and the best method of going about it.

"Climate."—The climate of Queensland is hot during the six summer months, that is, from October to March, but beautifully mild and genial during the six winter months, April to September. Spring and autumn may hardly be said to exist as separate seasons, for they are merged into summer and winter. In the winter of the south, and particularly of the interior, sharp biting frosts occur, and cold westerly winds blow, but snow never falls. In the sugar-growing districts of the tropical portion of the colony the excessive heat is fortunately tempered by the trade winds, but among the cane-fields or in sheltered valleys the heat is at times very oppressive. The clothing required is consequently light and inexpensive; trousers, shirt, broad-brimmed hat and boots, being all that are required; at night a blanket is not needed for six months in the year. The rainy season is in the months of February, March, and April; excessive and heavy rains then fall, but the number of days on which it is too wet to work is astonishingly small; the porous nature of the scrub soils, and much of the land under cane enable operations to

be resumed after heavy rain, when anyone unacquainted with the fact would consider that no work could be undertaken for days. Thus the labourer will in reality lose but few days' wages through wet weather.

"*Generally a Healthy Climate.*—The general health on all plantations is good; deaths seldom occur. The only illness that need be particularly mentioned is the colonial fever and ague. This is a low, depressing fever which is prevalent on all new lands when first occupied, and particularly so in scrub-covered localities; as cultivation extends, even as the scrub is cleared away from the immediate surrounding of the dwelling, so does this fever rapidly disappear, and then the normal state of the district is healthy. This fever is not a violent, virulent one like the yellow fever of tropical America. Proper medical treatment easily masters it as long as the patient is able to take care of himself. It is where this care cannot be taken that it is so rife, as among railway navvies, pioneers of scrub plantations, early selectors, and such whose occupations cause them to sleep in tents in fever-haunted lands, and where food is necessarily of an unchangeable nature. The same cause, exposure and poor food, and also the drinking of too much water during hot weather, often brings on disease and dysentery."

That was that terrible pamphlet, and he maintained that it was a straightforward, honest pamphlet. There was nothing misleading in it; it was not like those immigration lecturers who went home and drew glowing accounts of the colony without giving any of its disadvantages. But it honestly set before intending immigrants a fairly drawn picture of what they might expect when they came here; so that they would not come out under the impression that they were going to receive a higher rate of wages than they were likely to receive. He saw nothing in it to cause the indignation that had been expressed by the Colonial Secretary on the subject that evening. He was not prepared to accept any responsibility in connection with the pamphlet, and, as for the remark of the last speaker, who said it was Mackay that had done all that, he could assure him that he was mistaken. The intention to take advantage of the Act existed in other parts of the colony as well as Mackay. The Mackay planters had undoubtedly arranged to introduce 800 men, and in that way facilitate the introduction of European labour, but the movement was in no way confined to Mackay. The Burdekin, Johnstone, and Herbert River planters were getting labourers, but getting them independently of the Mackay Planters' Association. The association had done nothing unfair, for the first thing they did was to send a copy of the pamphlet to the Colonial Secretary, before sending it home to be translated into foreign languages, hoping that he would point out any part of the scheme that did not meet his approbation; but instead of criticising it, how had it been met by the Colonial Secretary? He had intimated that he had read the pamphlet, and that the planters were going surely and slowly to their destruction through their own stupidity. That was the way they had been treated by the Colonial Secretary? He had given the House to understand that he would bring down a scheme of immigration which would give relief to the sugar-planter, but he (Mr. Black) asked the Committee candidly whether that pledge had been carried out. An Immigration Act had been passed by which the planters were told that if they wished to continue their operations they must do it by means of European labour; and, although not believing in it, they had endeavoured to meet the Colonial Secretary and the Government in the matter; but they were told that night since the pamphlet had been introduced, and rightly introduced, by the member for Bundamba, that on the terms mentioned the Colonial Secretary would have nothing to do with the scheme. Now, he (Mr. Black) asked the Colonial Secretary what he intended to do. It was becoming a serious

matter—very much more serious than the people in the southern part of the colony imagined. Whether everyone at Mackay was an idiot, and whether the planters were bankrupt—as the junior member for North Brisbane had said—was immaterial. He might be right, and he might be very far indeed from the mark, but that was utterly irrelevant to the question. There was one question he wanted answered. The Government had promised to give relief and they had failed, and the small measure of relief they proposed to give was simply burking the question. If hon. gentlemen endorsed the views of the hon. junior member for North Brisbane when he said, "Let the sugar industry perish; the planters have neither money nor brains to carry on their work"—if they endorsed that, then let the industry perish; but do not strangle it in a quiet way, and let not the Government try to lead the country to believe that they were doing all they could to assist the planters when they were doing the very opposite. On that account he was justified in reading the pamphlet, which he maintained was a fair one and not exaggerated; and he was justified in asking the Colonial Secretary what steps he intended to take to give the relief which was imperatively necessary.

Mr. GRIMES said he was very glad that the political representative of the Mackay Planters' Association was so pleased with the production of the planters that he had availed himself of his privileges and read the pamphlet through so that it might appear in *Hansard*. Perhaps if he had not done so a little more time would have been occupied in discussing the question and bringing it to public notice. He was glad the hon. member had read the pamphlet, because it spoke for itself. It was known that when a farmer tethered his horse and gave him too much rope the horse sometimes wound it round his legs and fell. Well, he thought the representative of the Planters' Association had made the planters fall by means of their own tether. It might be depended upon that, now the public knew the contents of the pamphlet, there were intelligent Germans enough in the colony who would not allow their fellow-countrymen to work under agreements the nature of which had been set forth so clearly. He was sure the pamphlet would work harm to the planters of the North, and it would work harm to the sugar industry. He believed a very suitable class of labourers might have been obtained from Germany if a fair rate of wages had been offered, and if there had been any inclination on the part of the planters to have offered them proper accommodation; but fancy sixteen individuals huddled together in a building 16 feet by 16 feet in a tropical climate! That was enough to prevent German immigrants coming out here. He did not think they could bear being stifled any more than other immigrants, but he was sure that they would have been willing to work for a lower rate of wages than the ordinary labourer if they were treated fairly. Now, the planters of the North stated in the pamphlet that they were desirous, and the sugar-cane planters of the colony were desirous, of taking advantage of the Act to obtain labourers, and for that reason the pamphlet had been written. He most decidedly, as a sugar-planter and farmer of the South, objected to that statement. He objected to the "three tailors in Tooley street" speaking in that way on behalf of the planters of Queensland. He knew that among the planters of the southern districts of the Logan, Albert, Oxley, Coomera and Nerang, there was no desire to engage labour at such a low rate of wages as that set forth in the pamphlet. He was sure that if the hon. member for Logan was present he would support that statement. They as

planters in the South repudiated any connection at all with the Mackay Planters' Association. Why, the wages were most absurd, and were actually lower than those paid to kanakas! The Germans coming out under such a system as the one proposed would be worse off than coolies, for the real wages they would get would be 3s. 9d. a week, and the remainder was held to the end of the term, and was only payable on good behaviour. The kanaka cost the planter more than that. In the first place, he got 2s. 6d. a week, and cost £16 more for his introduction than the German would cost. He saw by the Mackay papers that the Planters' Association declared that those immigrants could be brought into the colony at a cost of £3 10s. per head. They actually proposed, therefore, to give the German immigrant for his first year's work less per week than what the kanaka cost at the present time. It must be borne in mind, too, that the ration which it was proposed to give was far less than that supplied to the kanaka. The ration was to be 8 lbs. of flour, 12 lbs. of meat, 2 lbs. of sugar, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of tea. That was the old Government ration; but it was never supposed that a working man could live on it. It might do for a shepherd, who had nothing to do but lounge about his flock, and, perhaps, get other food by the use of his gun. His (Mr. Grimes's) experience of working men was that they each wanted about 16 lbs. of flour, and from 18 lbs. to 20 lbs. of meat for a week, with the other things. Besides that the cooking was carefully done by a European cook—generally the overseer's wife—and yet with that it took the quantity he had mentioned. The ration allowed under the regulations for a kanaka was something better than that fixed for the German immigrant. The kanaka got 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of flour, 7 lbs. of meat, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of sugar, and 21 lbs. of potatoes per week, besides 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. of tobacco, 2 ozs. of salt, and 4 ozs. of soup per diem. He repeated, therefore, that the ration given to the kanaka was far more liberal than that which the planters were going to dole out to the Germans. He supposed the planters hoped to get Germans, but he thought they would be very much mistaken. He would point out that besides all that, the kanaka was supplied with clothing. He got one hat, four flannel shirts, three pairs of trousers, and a pair of blankets. His cost was 2s. 6d. per week, besides 2s. to bring him, and the planters proposed to give the German immigrants 3s. 9d. a week for the first year. He said it was monstrous, and he repeated that he was pleased that the pamphlet was going to be published in *Hansard*, to show what the planters in the North were willing to give as an inducement to Germans to come out to Queensland. Hon. members on the other side had repeatedly posed as the working man's friend; but if they were not careful the hon. member for Mackay would spoil their broth if he was allowed to mix with them. They would have to turn him out of their company, and repudiate such an attempt to bring down the price of labour. He was confident that the planters would have to deal a little more liberally with immigrants if they wished them to give satisfaction. He presumed that that £10 was to be kept back to the end of the second year to make the men reliable. It had often been said that European labour was not reliable; but he did not think the plan of keeping men out of £10 until the end of their second year's work would make them reliable; rather it would have a contrary effect. No agreement would keep an able-bodied German working for 3s. 9d. per week in Queensland, when he found what the rate of wages was. He might be kept to his agreement, and he might go out into the field; but a working man was something

like a horse, which could be taken to water but could not be made to drink; a man might be taken out into the field, but he could not be made to work, unless the planters adopted the measures they took with kanakas; and they would not dare to do that with Germans. If any attempt was made to inflict the kind of usage which the kanakas often received in the North, the planters would find that there would be disorder in the camp. He would just refer for a moment to the hours of labour. According to the pamphlet they were to be ten hours ordinarily, and twelve at crushing time; but it was also said that night-work and overtime were often required from those working in the mill. There was, however, no word about payment for the overtime. If there had been any idea of giving such payment, it would certainly have been put in the pamphlet as an inducement to the Germans to come. He presumed, therefore, that they would be expected to work twelve hours constantly in the crushing season, and very often overtime besides, all for the same wage. The planters required their labourers to work up till 11 or 12, or even after midnight; and he observed that Sunday was put down as a holiday, which they might not often get, if there was anything to be done at the mill. He trusted the working men of the colony would read the pamphlet carefully, and he was sure their conclusions would not be at all favourable to the planters of the North who had issued it.

Mr. ARCHER said he thought that those hon. members, who had treated the pamphlet as an ultimatum issued by the planters of Mackay, had taken a very unfair view of it. The planters had drawn up a pamphlet, in some respects as fair a statement of the case as was possible—a description of the climate, the chances of success of a man who came here, and the work he would have to go through; those things were as well explained as he had ever seen them. The pamphlet was drawn up, and a copy sent to the Colonial Secretary for his remarks; but everyone seemed to speak as if it were a production by which the planters were going to stand or fall. That was a most unjust deduction to draw; it had simply been sent down to the Colonial Secretary for his comments on the matter. He himself had not yet seen the pamphlet; he did not know where hon. gentlemen had got them, but seeing that the planters knew he was no enemy of theirs, he thought that if it had been drawn up for distribution he would have received a copy. He believed it was simply drawn up for the purpose of asking the Colonial Secretary in what respects he agreed or disagreed with it, so that the planters might ascertain on what terms they might ultimately hire men from home. He was not going to endorse the pamphlet altogether. Several faults had been pointed out, and some of them were real great faults—the paragraph about the housing, for example. Those were all things which he hoped the Colonial Secretary would point out; and the matter might then be arranged so that the pamphlet should be the groundwork of an exceedingly good scheme for introducing labour. He did not think the Colonial Secretary had done himself justice in the manner in which he had discussed the matter. He had made a claptrap speech, which he (Mr. Archer) was astonished to hear from a gentleman of his standing. He had said that to carry out the proposals of the pamphlet would be as bad as slavery.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: So it would.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the hon. gentleman knew what slavery meant. It did not mean a

state entered into by engagement; it meant that a man might be the property of another, that he might be bought and sold, and that anything belonging to him was the property of his master. It was simply claptrap to apply the term "slavery" to an agreement voluntarily entered into, which was to last two years; which was to bring a man out without a penny of expense to himself; which was to give him the prospect of acquiring land of his own and become a prosperous settler. That was what was called slavery by the leader of the House, simply for the sake of getting a cheer from the gentleman behind him. The hon. gentleman had got into the habit of speaking in the House without making words correspond to facts. If, instead of talking rabidly about slavery, the hon. gentleman would point out where he differed from the planters, he might do some service to the country. He would not detain the Committee longer except to notice some remarks that fell from the hon. member for Oxley. That hon. gentleman stated that a man required from 15 to 16 lbs. of flour and 20 lbs. of meat a week. He (Mr. Archer) had had a good deal of experience in the matter, and he knew that the hardest worked bushman—the man engaged at splitting and fencing—only got 8 lbs. of flour and 14 lbs. of beef. That was 2 lbs. more beef than was mentioned in the pamphlet; the other articles were exactly the same. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the man who did splitting and fencing had as hard work as any on a sugar plantation; so that the gentlemen down south must have much more voracious appetites than those in the North. He was quite sure the hon. Minister for Lands had never given a man 15 lbs. of flour and 20 lbs. of beef as rations. Anyone who had been in the habit of employing labour in the bush would be satisfied that the hon. member for Oxley was perfectly wrong. If anything he had said should lead to a mutual agreement being made between the Colonial Secretary and the planters, he believed that the Act which had been passed might perhaps—though it was very doubtful—be of some advantage to the country yet.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not risen to reply to the lecture which the hon. member had been good enough to read to him. They knew exactly what the leader of the Opposition meant just as well as the hon. member knew what he (the Colonial Secretary) meant when he spoke about slavery. He rose to refer to the suggestion that the proposal was merely of a tentative character. That idea had never been conveyed to him by the planters. They first wrote, asking certain questions as to the facilities the Government would give with respect to the introduction of European labour, and they added, "that in order that no misunderstanding may arise as to the nature of the agreement to be made in all its aspects, a pamphlet is being printed, a copy of which will be supplied to every labourer before signing. We shall at once forward you a copy of the pamphlet when received." Then, on Monday last, he received a letter, in which they stated—"We take this opportunity to forward to you at the same time copies of the pamphlet referred to in our letter to you of the 20th ultimo." He first saw the pamphlet published in a Mackay newspaper. He saw a full copy of it printed before he received that letter. He believed it had been the subject of leading articles in this colony before the pamphlet was sent to him. He did not look at it in any way as of a tentative character, though he should be glad to think it was only tentative, and that the planters were prepared to modify it.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that up to the present time he had not had the pleasure of

seeing the pamphlet, and on account of the noise made when the hon. member (Mr. Foote) was reading extracts from it he could not hear them; so he was glad to hear the hon. member for Mackay read the whole pamphlet. It was not so terrible after all. No hon. member could agree with the whole pamphlet, and he did not. In some respects the pamphlet was, however, a good one. It was very descriptive, and its going home to an agricultural district in the old country would, he believed, go a long way to bring out agricultural labourers to work in this colony. If the hon. member for Mackay could induce his constituents up there, and especially the sugar-planters, to rearrange matters so that the people coming out here should have fair accommodation, working hours, and proper room; if they could arrange so that they were paid full pay during the first year—because he held they had no right to lower the wages of the community—if they could arrange to give them their full wages, to pay them during wet weather, which he did not think would be a great burden or tax upon the sugar-planters; and if they could also arrange to pay them while they were sick; if they could do all that, he did not think they had any right as legislators to interfere with the amount of wages they could employ those men for. £20 had been mentioned in the pamphlet as the amount of salary proposed to be given to them, but the hon. member for Mackay stated if they could not get them for £20 they would give £25, and if they could not get them for £25 they would give them £30, plainly showing that they meant to give just what they could get the men for. Now there were hon. members here, who, when they came to the colony first, had worked for £20 to £30 a year and rations. They might have had better rations than it was proposed now to give, and he did not think the proposed rations were sufficient. He thought the terms might be amended so far as the wages were concerned. He thought the planters had a perfect right to make the very best bargain they could, either with Continental or English labour. £20 was certainly a very low sum, but they must remember that the Government were bringing out those labourers free, and they were putting them in a position equal to what they held in the old country, where very few agricultural labourers had more than £20 a year and rations. He did not advocate that they should employ them for £20; he did not think it was a sufficient salary; but he said, they, as legislators, should leave the planters to make the best bargains they could, so far as wages were concerned. But he thought they had a perfect right to see the men were properly housed, properly fed, and properly lodged. If those things were looked to the employes who were brought out would not be placed in the position, either of servitude or slavery. He did not think it was either; it was certainly hard work, and the pamphlet told them they would be required to work hard. It mentioned all the things they had to work at, such as fencing, splitting, etc.; so no one would come out here under false pretences. Then let them look at the experience the men were gaining in the two years; it was only two years' hard work, and he did not object to men working hard when they first came out. It made them all the better masters when they got land for themselves, and all the better agriculturists through going through a process of hard work. He had to work hard himself during the first year he was here for a very low salary. He was determined that he should be successful, and to a certain extent he thought he had been; and many members were in the same position. Therefore, he thought on the whole a little bit too much had been made of that pamphlet that night. He

thought it had been written with the very best intention; and while he could not agree as to those details, he perfectly agreed with it as to its being a pamphlet well suited for the purpose it was written for, namely—to bring out people from the old country, and to place them in a better position here than they had been in at home. Believing as he did that the pamphlet was not so very bad as it was depicted, he had spoken. He had not intended to speak, as he thought it was only a waste of time, but so much had been made of the matter that he could not resist the temptation to do so.

Mr. BROOKES said he would like to say a few words in regard to the remarks which had fallen from the hon. member for Ipswich, who thought it would be a perfectly safe thing to allow planters, or any other class, to make their own terms as to wages. Now, that was touching upon an important principle of political economy. It was the bulk of their aversion to coolies, Chinamen, or kanakas, and he thought the hon. member would not fail to see it. He would point out that the object of every Queensland was to uphold the rate of wages—not for money consideration, but in order that they might uphold and raise, if possible, the standard of living so as to maintain the civilisation to which they were accustomed. That was a very important matter indeed in a new colony; and his objection to the planters' plan was that they did not care about the country, but only cared about themselves. If they could get men to work for nothing it would suit them; but it did not suit the colony. The hon. member must know that if he had a place of business in a flourishing district, he would like the planters to employ families; he would like to supply a number of luxuries to the men, and dresses and all the various things which went to make up the wants of a family. Now, his contention had always been that that effort to reduce the rate of wages could only close every store in Queensland. He was not speaking so much in the interest of storekeepers, though that was a very important point, but because he looked upon the morality of the colony as of the chiefest importance. He wished to see the standard of living in the colony maintained, or, if possible, raised; to see labourers able to send their children to school nicely clothed; and to see a certain quantity of good literature in their houses; and many other things of that kind, which could only be got by high wages. No person could be a friend of the labouring class who tried to ascertain the point at which they could just live, and save nothing. There could be nothing saved out of 3s. 9d. a week; and in the proposed rations there was no tobacco, no salt, no pepper, and no clothes. From what he knew of the state of the labouring people in Europe, they were as well off where they were—in the poorest countries in Europe—as they would be working for the terms offered them by the Queensland sugar-planters. While it was dangerous for any class to seek to get labour at a lower rate than would comply with those indispensable conditions of our daily life, it was absolutely impossible for any Government to sanction such a thing. But a continuous stream of slander had been directed against the Government. Some hon. members were never tired of saying that all this was in consequence of certain suggestions and arrangements made by the Government. He denied that entirely. The Government had never promised to get cheap labour for the planters. The intention of the Government, so far as he understood it, was to give Mackay and the northern sugar districts a continuous supply of labour. One of the principles of the Land Bill that had just passed through the House

was, that when men had worked on a sugar plantation for two, three, or more years, and had accumulated a little money, they should go on to land of their own; and that a fresh supply of labour would then be ready to fill their vacant places. That was a good scheme, and a nation might be built up in the Southern Hemisphere on such a principle. But how could they make a nation worth anything on the plan of giving a man 3s. 9d. a week, and making his master indebted to him for the balance at the end of twelve months, or even two years for certain causes? The pamphlet was entitled to anything but praise—although it would injure nobody but the planter. He trusted the hon. member for Ipswich would thoroughly understand him. He was no more a believer in the “horny-handed” man than he was in the gentleman with soft hands. But he believed in the general welfare; and the general welfare was largely based on the welfare of the labouring classes. It was the “wages fund” which kept even the highest classes going; doctors, lawyers, every class in the community, depended on the “wages fund,” and it behoved them to be very careful how they reduced that fund. That was the pecuniary aspect of the question; but the planters had never seen the Labour question in its true light. They looked upon the labourer—and he had heard the term used in that Chamber—as a piece of machinery—a term which he from his soul abhorred. A labourer was an intelligent man who would learn his rights and stand up for them. They were men who would not be satisfied to work for planters from boyhood to manhood, and from manhood to old age, and then to finish off at Dunwich. If the planters intended to continue their existence in Queensland, they would have to pay such wages to a man as would enable him, if economical, sober, and industrious, to leave their service at the end of one or two years, and work a little selection on his own account.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he fully appreciated the lecture he had received from the hon. member. He yielded to no man in his desire to see the working man receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work; but he maintained that the State had nothing to do with the regulation of wages. Labour would always find its proper rate of pay, and where it was in demand wages would rise. In his own district, owing to that very reason, wages had risen 50 or 60 per cent. during the last twenty years. As he had said before, he was not in favour of £20 a year, and should be glad if the men got £30 or £50; but what he contended was, that the State had no right to interfere as to the amount of wages a planter or anybody else should give to his employes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was always a gratification to a public man to see the principles he had fought for during many years acknowledged as right. More especially gratifying was it to hear the correctness of those principles affirmed after a trial had been given to a political opponent to work out an exactly opposite principle. He had seen the other side, on most important matters of State, legislating in one direction, then confessing that the principle was wrong, and ultimately going to the opposite extreme. He had seen them bring forward a scheme of public works, the cost of which was to come out of the sale of public lands. He and those working with him condemned that system at the time and prophesied truly what would be the result. They had lived to see the present Government, during the present session, rushing to the opposite extreme, and acknowledging that the principle which they formerly condemned, and for which he had contended, was right. He had seen, in 1876, those who represented the

present Government bring in a Land Bill, the principles of which were diametrically opposed to those of the Bill which had just been passed. But it was very seldom it fell to the lot of a public man to see the principle he had been fighting for condemned and affirmed by the same party in the same session of Parliament. If the speeches that had been made by the hon. member for Oxley, and the hon. junior member for North Brisbane, had been delivered when the Immigration Act of 1884 was passed, and if their votes had been conscientious, he did not believe that there would have been the slightest chance of that Act ever having come into operation. All that had been said with regard to the pamphlet issued by the Mackay planters was, in truth, a condemnation of that Act. Let him review the position, a most important position it was to the colony, and a position upon which their existence as a united colony depended. It was a position which had forced the hon. gentleman to take action in the southern part of the colony. During the last election it was plainly put forward by the leaders of the party in power at present, that they would oppose black labour in every shape and form, whether in the shape of coolie or kanaka. All were condemned, and if the sugar industry was not able to stand without black labour, then they said it must go. That was the principle which was enunciated by certain of the leaders, and there was not the slightest doubt that it was upon that principle that the constituencies returned the present Government to power—that kanaka labour or any black labour should not be allowed on the sugar plantations or for any industry. The Premier was placed in this position: he had provided a back-door by which he might retreat from his position. He did not take up that position with regard to the kanaka trade, which, carrying out his principles fully and honestly, he should have taken. But instead of tackling that Act as he ought to have done, formidably and strongly, backed up by members on his side of the Committee who were pledged to those principles, he encouraged the sugar-planters to go on with mitigated regulations with a promise of legislation which would have the effect of providing them with a much better class of labour for the sugar plantations. They waited with a great deal of patience until that came about, and it came about in the shape of the Immigration Act of 1884. It had been demonstrated by experience in the colony during the past ten years, that the ordinary immigrant, paying his own passage or otherwise, would not work on the sugar plantations. That had been proved. No amount of wages would induce white men to work on plantations, nor was that labour adapted for the purpose. He did not believe that money would tempt white men to do the work that was required to be done in tropical agriculture. That had come to be admitted as a fact by every man who had visited the canefields of the North. At the same time it had been stated by the Premier and others that a cheap class of European labour had been employed to go into tropical regions before they had been employed in the sugar industry. The scheme of the Premier, therefore, was to divert that stream and bring a stream of immigrants to the sugar plantations in the North. Of course to make that labour a perfect substitute it would have to be as cheap to the planters, or rather allow the planters to work as profitably, as they had previously. The Premier said "English labourers will not come here to work at the wages that can be offered to carry on the sugar industry of the North; we will take the men from a place where they can be secured at a lower price, and the country may step in and

provide a certain part of the expense incurred in bringing that labour to the colony." The planters before had been contented to pay for introducing the black labour that they employed, and also for taking it out of the country; but the Government stepped in and said, "We will make the country provide the expense of supplying the planters with labour. We will make the country pay the whole of the expense of it." The next question that came in was, on what principles could those men be employed? That was forced upon the attention of the Premier by the opposition that was made to the scheme. They all knew that perfectly well. He himself brought forward an agreement to the House, showing that men were encouraged from the northern parts of Germany and Sweden and elsewhere to go and work on plantations for about £3 per month, with no rations or anything except a shelter from the weather. That was the rate of wages that was put forward. Were the Government going to do anything to regulate the rate of wages that would be offered? That point was repeatedly pressed upon the Premier, and his answer was always, "No, it is not the business of the Government to interfere with the price of labour." Then the position taken up by the Opposition was perfectly clear. They had argued against the Act all through for the reason that the Government were stepping in to provide cheap labour at the expense of the colony to a certain industry, while their own countrymen were perfectly prepared to come out on the assisted system; paying a large portion of their passages. It was upon those terms that they opposed the Bill. It was clearly put before Parliament that it was only on account of that labour being cheap, and on account of the greater part of the expense of its importation, in fact, the whole expense being paid by the colony, that it could possibly have been made to answer what the Premier had promised—namely, as a substitute for black labour. They insisted that it was wrong on those grounds—that it was unfair to the working men of the colony that they should be made to pay the expense of bringing labourers to the colony to work at a lower rate of wages—that they were actually paying the expenses of labourers from the North of Europe to take their own places. The Government, in spite of the arguments they used, insisted upon carrying out the Bill. Any man could indent labour for particular industries by paying £2 per head. The hon. gentleman proposed that it should be reduced to £1 per head. That was material, because it showed the class from whom it was contemplated by the Premier that the proposed immigrants should be recruited. They proposed also to bring out the wives and families, at something like a proportionate rate. The reason for the Act was that, whereas the ordinary Immigration Act provided simply for indenting immigrants, it was never intended to apply to a large industry like sugar-growing. It was made apparent throughout the discussion that the hopelessness of getting English labourers was the reason why they should go to Germany, and what had actually been foretold by the Opposition had come to pass. The Opposition saw the difficulty, and they predicted what it would be. They told the Government—"You make this a success. Land two or three thousand immigrants down the coast on the terms of paying the whole passage, and allow them to come into competition with the working men of the colony whenever they had served the two years, and then see the result. The working men of the colony would see the fallacy of paying for the importation of men to compete with themselves." Then what was to happen—that pamphlet had opened the

eyes of the Government to the fact that it could be shown to the working men of the colony that the operation of the Act was just as was predicted. The Government were asked, pressed, and tried to be forced by the Opposition to fix some rate of wages under which men should not be brought to the country, so as to bring about undue competition, but the answer made by the Premier of the colony was: "That with respect to the rate of wages, he conceived that it was not the business of the country to regulate the same." That was the answer given—that it was not part of the duty of the Government to regulate wages, although they did regulate the class of accommodation that the men were to have. Now it was provided in that wonderful Act—the Act which was creating such a stir, and which he hoped would create a bigger stir—that every agreement should contain the stipulation that the employer should provide proper and sufficient house accommodation for such labourers with their wives and families. The Act made it the duty of the Government to see that the immigrants were properly housed.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Quite right.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: But the Government did not see that it was part of their business to regulate the wages of the labourers. What did they foresee? Did they foresee that the men to whom they had given the power to indent labourers brought out at the expense of the country, would not go to Europe and employ men at 15s. a week, when labourers could be obtained for 7s. 6d. a week. Having stated the conditions under which the immigrants would have to work, the pamphlet went on to tell truthfully the position of the colony. The only objection that was taken to it was that it placed the rate of wages at too low a rate; but was it likely employers would give double the wages for which they could get men to work? The only objection, he repeated, that was taken to the pamphlet was that it provided too low wages and not sufficient accommodation; but the labourer was provided for in the Act. The Government provided sufficient accommodation so that that went for nothing; but the other objection, when raised, the Government refused to have anything to do with. What could be a clearer proof than that it was the desire of the Government to make the Act a failure. It was the intention of the Government that it should be a failure; but the Premier was bound to find the relief he had promised. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) believed that promise was made in sheer recklessness. The Premier did not see quite clearly and distinctly how he could supply a remedy after taking away the black labour, and when he brought forward the German-Coolie Bill he had not gauged the difficulty. But what he (Sir T. McIlwraith) blamed him for was that he actually risked keeping his promise to the planters at the expense of the working men of the colony. But, he saw his perilous position now, and he was glad to catch at the objections that had been taken to the pamphlet; for instead of writing to the planters, and saying he objected to the terms, or that he thought the labourers should get £30 or £40 a year instead of £20, he raised a cry against the greed of the planters in trying to bring labour into the colony at a less rate of wages than he approved of. The Government, deliberately, on the pressure of the Opposition, declined to fix the wages, and they now came forward and said that the rate offered was altogether too low. The Government had deliberately fished for the arrangement that the planters had put before them, and whether it was contemplated by the Government or not, wages must in consequence be reduced. That they saw clearly that would be the result was demonstrated when

the Bill was passing through. Those men would come out, and whether they served their time or not did not matter. They would be brought out at the expense of the colony, under conditions more favourable than those already here, and would reduce the wages of those enjoying high wages at the present time. The Englishman was to be immediately brought into competition with the low-priced German labour, look at the question how they might. What was the reason given why they should go to the north of Germany for labourers? Simply because they could get men to come from there when it was impossible to get men in England. The reason given by the Premier was that agricultural labourers could not be obtained in England, and he said the records of his office would show that; but he (Sir T. McIlwraith) maintained that the records of the office would show distinctly to the contrary, because the last immigration report written by Captain Almond said that he considered that as many ploughmen as the colony could absorb could be obtained, not by paying the whole passage money, as contemplated by the German-Coolie Bill, but by the Assisted Immigration Act, the immigrant paying £8, and the Government £10. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) had not the slightest doubt that that could be borne out by further testimony to be obtained both inside and outside the colony. The real reason for making the Act applicable to the northern parts of Germany was that the Government believed they could get there a cheap class of labour, which would stave off the great difficulties the Premier had brought on the colony by putting his foot on black labour. The more manly thing would have been to meet the difficulty boldly. He had laboured years ago to bring about such a state of things, that the planters would in time have to give up kanaka labour altogether, and that alternative was before the Government during the present session. But they had adopted a different course, and had succeeded in alienating the northern part of the colony by the way in which they had hurt the sugar industry. They had made the difficulties of procuring black labour more difficult than ever. They had succeeded in raising a universal cry for separation simply on account of the black labour question.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Oh, no!

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was one of the causes of the present agitation, and another was that the South had looked upon the prosperity of the North with the greatest callousness. They could see perfectly well that they legislated for themselves and ignored the interests of the North. While that was the case, how could they possibly blame the North for asking for separation? What could the southern men say when separation was asked for? The North said—"You will not consider our position. We are not going to submit to legislation of this kind. We want to legislate for ourselves." And the South would then say, "Well, go and do the best you can for yourselves." He was sure all sensible people would look upon it in that light. He had before repeated that the Premier had held out to the North the promise that he would provide some means of bettering their interests, and that he would not destroy their industry; but instead of that he was destroying the industry, and destroying also the position of the working men of the colony.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, of the many extraordinary speeches which he had heard the hon. member deliver, that was the most extraordinary in its mixture of self-congratulation, gratuitous assumption, and reckless inaccuracy. The hon. member began by congratulating himself

upon his views having been accepted by a majority of the House. That was surely a very singular notion. Did the hon. member remember what the views were that he insisted upon? His panacea for the evils complained of was the unlimited introduction of Indian coolies; and he flattered himself that that was recognised and would be adopted. He (the Colonial Secretary) flattered himself that that view was a long way from being adopted, and never would be adopted—in the south of the colony, at any rate. That was the keystone of the hon. member's argument—"We must have Indian coolies"—and the hon. member got up and made a speech, in which he thought of that and nothing else. He had—he was going to say the effrontery, but that might not be parliamentary—he had the audacity to stand up and congratulate himself that he was the champion of the working men of the colony. The working men had too much sense to accept such a champion.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: We shall see.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he thought he understood what he was doing. He certainly had a definite object in view, and that was to keep this country for white men. The hon. member had also a definite object, and that was to open the country to black men. If the hon. member could congratulate himself that he saw his way to attain that object let him congratulate himself. Which view was right they would see in the course of time. The question would take a good deal of fighting yet, and it would not be settled by such speeches as the hon. member's. The Government recognised the magnitude of the question. The hon. member went on to give, as he often did, what he called the arguments of the Government with respect to European immigration. In every particular the hon. member was inaccurate and erroneous. Those were arguments which the Government had expressly disclaimed every time they were placed in their mouths; but the hon. member continued to repeat them. It sometimes nearly tired his (the Colonial Secretary's) patience to be always contradicting him, and he would not trouble to do so now were it not that a long interval had elapsed since they last heard them. The hon. member went on to say that the Government promised to supply the place of kanaka labour with equally cheap sources of labour. The Government never promised anything of the kind. They had expressly disclaimed such an idea, and refused to propose any such scheme. He had said that over and over again; yet the hon. member returned to the statement. The hon. member also gave his views about the kanaka question incidentally in the course of his speech. He said that the Government, instead of strangling and throttling the trade, ought to have tried to crush it at once. When the hon. member used the expressions "strangling" and "throttling," as applicable to what the Government had done, he revealed a great deal as to the course adopted by his own administration with regard to the South Sea Island trade. All that the present Government had done was to prevent the kidnapping that was going on. The present Government had never said anything about introducing labour as cheap as kanakas. What they said to the planters was, "We cannot get you coolie labour, but we will give you an Act that will help you to get white labour." The planters expressed their willingness to do so, and instead of apparently thwarting the efforts of the Government, they said they were willing to give it a fair trial. The Government said the men could be got—that there were plenty of men quite able and willing to work at any work in Queensland. But the

Government saw that the planters did not want that done; they would not try the system as long as they could help it. They would not give any system a fair trial other than that of Indian coolies; and it was not possible that any system would get a fair trial if the planters showed that they wished it to be a failure. So long, therefore, as they tried the attempt in that spirit, it would be a failure. The hon. member said it did not concern the Government what wages were given.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I quoted your own words.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would point out that no agreement could be made without the sanction of the Government Agent, as it must be witnessed by him; it would therefore be taken to be with the sanction of the Government. If an agreement was proposed of such a character as to be a highly objectionable arrangement, was it not the duty of the Government to at once say that they would not be parties to any such arrangement? They would not be parties to any arrangement which might be proposed which would result in certain failure. They did not wish to fill the gaps of the colony with persons who were proceeded against under the Masters and Servants Act. They would be no parties to any agreement so monstrous and unfair as to be almost fraudulent. He had said that it was a difficult thing to interfere with wages; and he said that still. He thought, sometimes, that the planters had an idea that they would exhaust the patience of the Government by continual insults and apparent thwarting of their efforts, with the object of making them say at last, "Well, you can have your way; we will allow you to do the best you can." But he was not going to be tired out, although sometimes his patience was almost exhausted. It was of course not extraordinary that the planters did not look on the matter from the same point of view that the Government looked upon it. They had made no reckless promises; they had entered on a course of policy which they believed would be best for the future welfare of the colony; and they would pursue that course steadfastly, keeping the same end in view. If the majority of the people of the colony thought they were wrong, they would willingly give place to others, and let the contrary policy be tried. The hon. member had accused them of driving the North to become alienated by giving no consideration to their wants. That, if it meant anything, meant that the North was becoming alienated because it could not get black labour. If the North was going to become alienated because some few individuals could not get a particular kind of black labour, he could not help that. If those individuals could satisfy the majority of the country that their view was right, the Government would willingly give place and let the contrary policy be tried. He should look with equanimity upon the alienation of the North on that ground; and he did not think the North would gain much by it. Of one thing he was certain, that if a Northern black labour colony was to be started it would be as a Crown colony, for the Imperial Government would never trust a handful of planters with the sole control of a servile population.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. member seemed to have quite forgotten his own speech on the celebrated Immigration Act of 1884. The very questions which had now cropped up, and out of which he was endeavouring to make political capital, were those which members on the Opposition side had wished to have settled. They showed that the planters would endeavour to take advantage of the facilities offered and obtain low-class labour,

and they pressed the Government to say that they would sanction no agreement for wages below a certain amount. The hon. the Premier then said that it was no part of the duty of the Government to regulate wages, and declined to do it. On another point the Government were not so stiff. They said that good accommodation should be provided for what they called the servile class of labour, and provision was accordingly made in the Act. Why should the hon. member now make it a point against the planters that they had provided insufficient accommodation?—tentatively, for as yet it was only put forward in a pamphlet. It was quite in his power to write to the planters at once that such accommodation could not be allowed for any white man. As a matter of fact, he thought it was an arithmetical error; it was never intended that sixteen men should live in a house 16 feet by 16 feet. That was such a paltry matter that he was astonished at the hon. member referring to it. When the hon. member came down and said it would be the duty of the Government to see that no agreement was made giving a lower rate of wages than they considered right, he was doing what he refused to do when the Act was passing.

Mr. ANNEAR said with reference to the remark of the hon. member for Ipswich that new arrivals could not expect to jump into comfort at once, there was no doubt that if they entered into such an agreement as was proposed in that pamphlet, they would jump into such comforts as he hoped never to see white men have in this colony. It would be a state of servile labour and nothing else. A remark had been made that a man should not be paid on wet days—that mechanics were not paid. But mechanics worked for daily wages, and agricultural labourers who received weekly wages had never, so far as he knew, had any time deducted for wet days. There was a statement in the pamphlet that the men who drove horses should get up at the first morning bell; that was about 4 o'clock in the morning. That was a nice time for a white man in Queensland to leave his bed to earn the great wages of 7s. 6d. a week that those gentlemen wished to give men coming from Great Britain; for under the Immigration Act they would come from Great Britain as well as from the continent of Europe. One would think from the appeal the hon. leader of the Opposition had made to the working classes that they were on the eve of a dissolution. He would point out that it was an insult to Germany to speak of "German coolies." Germany was a great nation, and Germans were able to hold their own, which had lately been proved. It was not the case, as stated in the pamphlet, that kanaka labour was entirely stopped; kanakas would, from the present time, come to the colony in larger numbers than ever before. The "Eliza Mary" had arrived during the present week with her full complement; and there would be no lack of labour to be procured from the South Sea Islands. If the hon. the Premier had the aptitude of the angel Gabriel he would not be able to please the sugar-planters. What they said was, "It is Mr. Griffith; and nothing from his hands, however good, will go down with us." He maintained that if Port Mackay were properly populated, it would be in a ten times better condition than it was to-day. Thousands of pounds' worth of produce went there every week from the southern ports, and Port Mackay, with her beautiful soil, could grow every product of the southern colonies. A thousand men could live where there were fifty now, and the pressure at present existing would exist no longer. The time was sure to come when those beautiful northern lands would grow all the produce for which we

1884—4 x

were sending thousands of pounds now to New South Wales and Victoria. He was confident that the working men of the colony were not such fools as some people took them to be; and if the question tried fifteen or sixteen months ago were tried again to-morrow, there would be a still greater result than was achieved then. Every right-thinking man must deplore the position of the sugar industry, but in his opinion the price of sugar was the sole cause of the depression. Some planters at Maryborough had asked him if he thought Mr. Griffith would fulfil his promises; and he had replied, "Take him by his acts. I believe him to be a gentleman, and there is no doubt he will carry out what he promises." A remark had been made that the Government and their supporters were returned on false pretences. He supposed he was one of their supporters, and he was returned on no false pretences; he got the votes of free, intelligent, and educated men.

Mr. MIDGLEY said, if he understood the speech of the leader of the Opposition rightly, he gathered from it there was an Act passed this session which was an Act to give considerably increased facilities for introducing European immigrants at a lower rate of wages than the previous Act provided for. He found by the 13th clause of the original Act this provision, which he would read:—

"The employer, or his duly authorised agent in Europe, shall pay to the Immigration Agent in Brisbane, or to the Agent-General, or to the agent on the continent of Europe, as the case may be, such amount as is in accordance with the scale contained in Schedule D heretofore the passage of such mechanic, labourer, or servant to be so engaged; and such employer, or the duly authorised agent of such employer, shall sign an agreement with such mechanic, labourer, or servant, whereby such mechanic, labourer, or servant shall agree to serve such employer as aforesaid, for any term not less than twelve calendar months at such rate of wages as may be agreed upon, and every such agreement shall be delivered to the Agent-General, or the agent on the continent of Europe, as the case may be."

So far as he could understand, that Act was passed during the administration of the late Government of which the leader of the Opposition was the head, and that clause contained the facilities and inducements given to men here to bring out immigrants at any rate they could get them to come for. There was another provision about the time made in the Bill which was passed this session. The provision was that the amount to be paid was reduced one-half; instead of paying £2 only £1 was to be paid.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The same. Wrong again!

Mr. MIDGLEY said he listened attentively to the Colonial Secretary, and he understood him to say those agreements had to be ratified or agreed to by some agent of the Government, which he failed to find in either Act.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To be attested by an agent of the Government.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought the effect of the speech of the leader of the Opposition was in no way favourable to the arguments he advanced—that he was opposed to any Act which would have the effect of lowering the rate of wages. He listened to the pamphlet being read; he had opposed that being done, but after it was read he was glad of it. Hon. members had stated there were certain serious objections in it, and the most serious one to him had been lost sight of. He thought the most serious objection in it was the terms it offered in regard to the hours of labour. He thought in a country like this where the Government officials worked seven or eight hours—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Six hours.

Mr. MIDGLEY said they were in their offices six or seven hours, and where there was a general eight hours' movement the State ought not to be a party to make it imperative on men engaged in the arduous work of sugar-planting to work ten or twelve hours a day. The Government should not sanction it. It would indeed be a most marked objection to a form of class government if that were tolerated. With regard to the rate of wages which were stated—he thought the rate was too small: but as things were, every man had a right to go into the labour market and get men to work for him as cheaply as he could, and most men did so. He knew there were people here—there were people in those two Assemblies—who had really lived on rations, and who had received very small wages, and they were amongst the most prominent, promising, and able men in the colony at the present time. He had done that kind of thing himself, and felt no worse a man for it; in fact, he believed the man who had had a little of the roughing it in a colony, was very likely to be all the better colonist. When he came here—and he was glad to get anything to do that he possibly could—wages were very little better than the amount which was here stipulated. He did not say that as agreeing with the amount; but he thought it would be a very serious matter, at this particular juncture, to step in and attempt to stipulate the amount of money the planters were to give to their employes. He would like to ask the Government what they intended to do in the matter. There were objectionable features in that pamphlet; there were objectionable conditions in those agreements it was proposed to make; and if they were objectionable, and seriously objectionable, did the Government intend to state on what terms and conditions they would be prepared to co-operate with the sugar-planters? He thought the planters were entitled to that information. Supposing, for instance, the Government objected to the hours of work; supposing they objected, as they reasonably might and would, to the kind of accommodation as here stated; or supposing they objected to the state of wages, would it not be a better thing for the Government to say they wanted so-and-so, and let the planter know definitely what terms he was expected to offer to those he sought to have brought out to the colony? He had said before, and would say again, that he did not share in the slightest degree in the feelings of levity, almost amounting to cruelty and indifference, which some members seemed to cherish and express with regard to the present position of the planters. If the planters were to get into difficulties, into straitened circumstances, or into a corner, it would affect and was affecting a great many more people in the colony than the planters themselves. There were men here in Brisbane who were advancing to those men thousands of pounds, and they would begin to feel the pinch. He should like the Government to take it into their consideration, and seeing they did not feel disposed to accept that sort of overture, or the condition which had been mentioned, let them on their part make some kind of overture to the planters, and let them have something on which they could proceed. There were a number of men in this Assembly, and he did not suppose there was a producer amongst the members of the Government. There were a few producers amongst the members of the Assembly on the Government side, and he did not know anything about the constitution of the Opposition. There were men here selling sixteen-perch allotments, men selling maize by auction, and lawyers engaged in professional pursuits,

and they must beware they did not try to injure the interests of the men engaged in that industry, who had gone into it under special circumstances. If the proposition and the condition in the paragraph were not acceptable to the Government, let the Government say what would meet their wishes in the matter, and let planters have some sort of finality to the difficulties in which this change had put them.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had been afraid when the hon. member for North Brisbane spoke about bankrupt sugar-planters, and no other members on that side spoke, beyond interjecting a few "hear, hears," he was afraid there was no member on the Government side who was going to say a word for them. Well, he was very glad to find that the hon. member for Fassifern, who made a very sensible speech, had pressed the Government to do what the hon. members on the Opposition side had been doing all the evening—to say on what terms they would allow the planters to indent those men. He was glad the pamphlet had been read. A good many objections had been raised to some of its contents, but those on the other side who cheered the objections most loudly were precisely those who were the least likely to know what they were cheering about. A good deal had been said about the proposed house accommodation. He knew something about the accommodation generally given to men in the bush, and which even employers of labour were often glad to put up with, and it did not compare at all favourably with the hut 16 feet by 16 feet for sixteen persons, which had horrified some hon. members. Hon. members opposite did not seem to understand how the thing was arranged, and the junior member for North Brisbane had talked about a passage of three feet between the bunks. But it was nothing of the sort. The space would be 12 feet square, with the sixteen benches arranged in two tiers; and in a climate like that of Northern Queensland men were seldom indoors except at night, or for a little shade at midday. There was nothing unhealthy about a house of that kind, even with sixteen men sleeping in it, for there would be a door at each end to insure thorough ventilation. In the early days in the interior he had for years to put up with far worse accommodation than was proposed to be given to those men. Compare those huts with the accommodation allowed to a sailor in the fore-castle of a vessel. The sailor had to creep into his bunk, while in the huts there would be at least room to stand erect. The proposed hours of labour no doubt seemed long in a climate like this, but they were not longer than the ordinary farm labourer had to work in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The wages were better than those given at home, where only the best men got £20 a year, the others ranging between £15 and £20. Although the engagement was for two years the change would not be looked upon as a bad one by men who had worked as long hours at home for far less wages. In Germany, indeed, he believed the hours of work were quite as long, while the wages were from one-half to one-third less. There were plenty of men working at the present moment in the old country for wages as small as those mentioned in the pamphlet without any rations at all. His principal reason for speaking was to draw attention to certain remarks made by the hon. member for Oxley. Hon. members could not help noticing the virtuous indignation which the hon. member for Oxley professed to feel at the wages proposed to be given by the planters of the North. Earlier in the evening the hon. member for Mackay referred to the case of a family who applied for work to a sugar-planter in the South. The wages offered were 7s. a week to the father of the

family, and 6s. each to the three sons, aged respectively thirteen, fourteen, and sixteen years, with three rations for the whole family, which consisted of his wife and two other children, in addition to those already mentioned. The hon. member for Oxley was the man who offered those wages, as he (Mr. Stevenson) was in a position to prove. Notwithstanding the virtuous indignation shown by that hon. member at the wages proposed to be given by the Northern planter to German coolies, he wanted to engage the services of a sturdy Irish family for 25s. a week and three rations, wet days to be deducted from the wages. The same hon. member also talked the greatest rot on the subject of rations. He (Mr. Stevenson) had had a good deal of experience in rationing men, and was able to say that, to a man working hard, the ordinary ration was not quite sufficient; more meat and more sugar were generally required, and, in some cases, more tea; but it was absurd for the hon. member to tell them that a man could consume a ration of 18 lbs. of flour and 20 lbs. of meat. As to the pamphlet, it bore the stamp of honesty and truth; it was a straightforward production, and would not mislead those for whom it was intended. The idea of the Immigration Act was to supply the planter with cheap European labour—he had heard the Colonial Secretary himself make use of that term—and now, because that hon. gentleman was not satisfied with the terms proposed in the pamphlet, he wished to avoid mentioning any particular rate of wages, in order to throw the onus of doing so upon the Agent-General at home. He knew that it was unpopular to name a low rate of wages. The hon. gentleman was either deceiving the working men or the planters. He brought in a Bill to give advantages to the sugar grower by the introduction of a cheaper labour than he could get in England, Scotland, or Ireland, and he had to go to another country for it. Of course the planter was willing to give that class of labour a trial. It was like a drowning man catching at a straw. Why was not the Premier straightforward, and why did he not name the rate of wages that he thought ought to be paid? They knew very well that men could be obtained at home for those wages, and if they were willing to come there was nobody to prevent them. The Premier was trying to throw the responsibility on to the Government agent.

Mr. KATES said he should not have risen had not the leader of the Opposition made a remark with regard to what he called "servile labour." When the Immigration Bill was before the House on its second reading, he said he strongly protested against its being known that Germans were to be introduced into Queensland as a substitute for kanakas. He could not understand what the hon. gentleman meant by "German coolies." There might be coolies in India, but he had never heard of them in Germany. He protested against the Germans being dragged about in that Committee, as they had been ever since the Bill had been introduced. The German nation stood too high in the world to be dragged about like that. In art and literature there were none to be compared with Germans; and it was his opinion that if any gentlemen went abroad and said that Germans should be introduced as substitutes for coolies, they would meet with a very hot reception. With regard to the pamphlet, he did not see anything very wrong in it; or anything very unfair, with the exception of a few points. He, and several other members, objected to the proposed way of housing. He maintained that a house 16 feet by 16 feet was not sufficient accommodation for sixteen persons. Then he thought the rations were too low. The member for Oxley, who had

spoken, went too high; a man could not use in a week 16 lbs. of flour and 20 lbs. of meat. With regard to the wages, he thought that if they offered £20 for the first year, and £30 for the second, it would be accepted; and the hon. member for Mackay might be sure that if those men made an agreement, and understood the tenor of it, they would perform it, with a view of becoming masters in their turn. He would like to see Germans introduced by thousands, because they made excellent colonists; and, although they might have hard work for the first two years, they would cheerfully submit to that in the hope that by their thrift they might become as prosperous as the planters themselves.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member must have misunderstood him. He had been talking against introducing Germans as a substitute for kanakas for sugar growing. He was glad to hear the opinion of the hon. gentleman with regard to the introduction of Germans, and he would like to have his opinion on another point. Did the hon. member, from his experience in Germany, consider that the offer of the Queensland planters in the North, of £20 a year and rations, and quarters, and their passages paid, would be availed of by them? Did he consider that the inducements held out in that pamphlet would be sufficient?

Mr. KATES said it was a long time since he had left Germany; but he thought that, in consideration of the passages being paid, and £20 wages for the first year and £30 for the second, they would willingly come, with proper treatment and fair rations.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to find that they were getting rational at last. The question was brought into the Committee with an amount of excitement and rapid talk that rendered it perfectly impossible to get a calm discussion on the matter. Nothing had given him greater satisfaction than the reply of the last gentleman who spoke, that were the planters to offer £20 for the first year and £30 for the second, with proper accommodation and rations, that would be a rate of wages which would probably lead to the experiment being tried. The request that had been preferred had only emanated from one section of the planters, and other planting districts were making their own arrangements independent of Mackay. He ought to have stated that if £20 was not considered sufficient the planters would be prepared to give £25; and if £25 was not enough, then £30 would have to be given. Now, when they were told that labourers could be obtained for £20 the first year, and £30 for the second year, which was an average of £25, was it not fair to ask that the Government should give some assurance that on those terms they would be prepared to appoint agents on the Continent who would attest the agreements? The experiment had to be tried, and he would like to know what the terms of the Government were to be. The hon. member for Maryborough had said that Polynesians were still to be obtained in any number, and if that was so the planters would not attempt to go to Europe for labour; not that they disliked European labour but that they believed the labour to be unsuitable to Europeans in the tropics. He was not applying that argument to the southern portion of the colony, but experience had proved that Europeans did not willingly do the work which was at present done by kanakas. Now they were getting down to a rational argument; and they had been told that by offering £25 a year they were likely to be successful; and some hon. gentlemen were willing to accept that rate as a reasonable one. He should be very glad to have some assurance from the Colonial Secretary

that he would facilitate the introduction of labour on those terms. The Mackay planters had subscribed £4,000, which they expected 800 labourers would cost at the rate of £5 a head. That money was actually available, and they were anxious to put the scheme in operation as soon as possible. The idea that they were going to try and make the experiment a failure was simply nonsense, for they would not risk their money and reputation in that way. The men when they came would have every fair treatment the Government chose to ensure that they should have. The house accommodation that had been referred to he did not consider sufficient for a hot climate, but the Act under which the labour was introduced provided for ample accommodation, and it remained for the Government to see that they got it under the Masters and Servants Act; also proper rations could be enforced; and he thought hon. members would know that when the men came here under proper supervision of the Government, and in a free country with people of their own nationality all around them, it could be assumed that the men would be given perfectly fair and honest treatment. Here was an experiment which had to be tried, and he asked the Government, in the interests of an industry, which was of great importance to the colony, to take such steps as would give the planters those facilities which they had been led to believe the Government would afford them. He could not close his remarks without drawing attention to the claptrap arguments the Colonial Secretary was in the habit of using when speaking on the Labour question—arguments that he (Mr. Black) did not believe the hon. gentleman would indulge in, except for political purposes. He spoke of the unlimited introduction of coolies; and that was a phrase the hon. member had been in the habit of using; but there were many reasons why it was simply impossible to introduce coolies in unlimited numbers. Indian coolies were not procurable in large numbers in India; and then again the whole control of the system being in the hands of the Government, it was at their option to stop the labour if they considered that step necessary, and if it proved to be in excess of what was advisable for the country; and there was another check—the salaries for the services of the department managing the coolie labour would always have to be voted by the House. Assuming there would be a sum down for coolie immigration, it would be in the power of the House, if they saw it was becoming a dangerous element, to limit or contrive to do away with it altogether. The hon. gentleman said also, "Is this to be a white man's country, or a black man's country?" That was what he (Mr. Black) called claptrap. The country was going to be both.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. BLACK said that was simply a matter of opinion. Hon. gentleman said no. He said, at present the country was no more a white man's country than a black man's country, but by the judicious combination of the two, the colony had undoubtedly achieved a certain success in agriculture. If it was not to be a mixed colony, what were those gentlemen who called out "No" going to do with the coloured men now in the colony? They had had eighteen years' experience of the mixed description of labour, and he defied any hon. gentleman, unless carried away by obstinacy, to point out in what way eighteen years of mixed labour had been a harm to the colony. They might fairly base the probabilities of the future on the experience of the past. It had been the means of introducing hundreds of men of capital who had established the sugar industry and brought it to its present perfect state.

Successive Governments had held out inducements to capitalists to come to the colony and carry on their operations, and they had come and commenced, and carried on the industry up to a certain point. Considering the great difficulty in getting Polynesians, he would be very glad to see a better class of labour and better regulated, in the shape of coolies, brought into the country. They would be as amenable to control as the Polynesians, and the regulations which had been framed had been agreed to by the Indian Government. Another mistake which the hon. gentleman made—he did not know whether it was intentionally—was in stating that if separation took place the Home Government would never consent to the North being a new colony, except as a Crown colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not say that.

Mr. BLACK: Well, the hon. member said that the Home Government would never allow a stream of coolies to be under the control of the Northern planters.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear! I said that.

Mr. BLACK: And he said that on that account the Home Government would not consent to separation, or that, if separation did take place, the new colony would be a Crown colony. But there was a very good argument against that in what had taken place in the Northern Territory. That was not a Crown colony, and the Home Government had consented to coolies being introduced there. He could tell the Committee that the planters, in their dire necessity, were turning their minds to the probability of having to remove their operations to the Northern Territory. They could see that the present Government were adverse to their interests, and they thought they were not getting that fair treatment to which they were entitled. He was expressing the views of the planters when he said that they were suffering under the most intense irritation and indignation at the present Government, because the Government held out to them that they would give them relief in the shape of cheap labour, and were not doing so. They therefore said that they must endeavour to clear out, and go to a colony which would receive them with open arms and give them more facilities for carrying on their industry than the Queensland Government would give. The hon. gentleman said the separation movement was got up by the Mackay planters, and that it was on the question of coloured labour. The hon. gentleman was quite mistaken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I know who is pulling the strings.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman thought he knew a great deal. He might know who was pulling the strings; and he (Mr. Black) should be glad if he would tell him. He believed it was a spontaneous movement throughout the whole of Northern Queensland. It was not initiated by the planters of Mackay, nor was it a movement that would be justified by the question of coloured labour. The northern people were smarting under a general feeling of irritation against the present Government. They did not think their wants were being properly considered. They believed that by the present Queen-street Ministry their requirements were misunderstood; and that there was no sympathy existing between the South and the North. Let hon. members look at the constitution of that Chamber. The whole northern portion from Cape Palmerston to the Gulf of Carpentaria contained as much territory as the south below Cape Palmerston, which was the proposed line of separation; and yet it was represented in that House by only eight members against thirty-seven. How could

the North reasonably expect to get a fair consideration of their requirements? He himself, as the representative of the sugar industry, had to face a huge majority opposed to him on the other side. He felt the difficulty under which he laboured, and he maintained that he had no right to be placed in such a position. Were the North represented as it should be, it would have at least sixteen members instead of eight. Those were the reasons, or some of them, why the North was seeking for separation. Hon. members who had been in that House as long as he, knew that he had always deprecated separation. He would rather see their grand colony, with all its varied resources, one united colony; but in order to do that there must be more consideration shown for the varied soil and climate that it possessed. In connection with the sugar question, there was one limit, and that was the cost of production. If that cost was more than the article produced, the industry could not last, and it would collapse, no matter whether it was worked with white or black labour.

Mr. MELLOR said he was not going to speak on the Labour question. He wished to allude to the immigration arrangements, which were not satisfactory to Maryborough and the Wide Bay district. Ships used to be sent to Maryborough direct; but now most of the immigrants came to Brisbane first. He thought it would be better either to revert to the old system, or send immigrants to Maryborough as soon as they arrived.

Mr. GRIMES said he understood that, during his absence from the Chamber, the hon. member for Normanby had stated that he (Mr. Grimes) had offered a man 7s. a week and three boys 6s., to work for him. He never made such an offer to any family. Further than that, no man in his establishment, over the age of twenty-one years, was getting less than 15s. a week and everything found, and a great many of them got more. Whoever had given the hon. member the information had told him what was false.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, in answer to the hon. member for Wide Bay, that the present arrangements were that immigrants were brought by steamers. That had been found to be more convenient and satisfactory. It had also been notified publicly throughout the colony in the most ample manner, that information as to the demand for labour in the different districts should be sent to the different immigration agents. That information was received at the Immigration Office, in Brisbane, weekly; and if people desirous of employing labour would not give the information, the Government were scarcely to blame if they were not able to supply a demand of which they had no notice. As long as the information was given the arrangements would be made. For instance, they learnt that fifty or sixty labourers were required at Maryborough, and fifty or sixty would be sent. The conditions that had to be complied with were the most satisfactory that could be made, and were framed so as to let the Government know where the demand for labour was.

Mr. ANNEAR said the people of the Maryborough and Wide Bay districts did not care about having their immigrants brought by the steam-boats; they preferred having them brought direct. When they came to Brisbane first the best of them were filtered out, and the rest sent on to Maryborough. It was a question affecting the interests, not only of Maryborough, but of other districts.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a good deal in the complaints made by the hon. members for Gympie and Maryborough. If the immigrants were sent direct to Mary-

borough they would arrive as the Government got them—good, bad, and indifferent; but at present the Maryborough people got only the bad and the indifferent. With regard to what the hon. member for Oxley had said, he could assure the hon. member that some months ago he heard the same statement which had been made by the hon. member for Normanby, about the rate of wages offered by the hon. member for Oxley. He thought the hon. member at the head of the Government could not be congratulated upon his own side of the Committee having raised the long dreary discussion upon the merits of that pamphlet. He was glad that it had not originated on his side, so that nothing could be said about obstruction. He had never seen the pamphlet before, but on reading it through he did not see anything so very bad in it. There was nothing in it to prevent the hon. the Colonial Secretary from carrying out the arrangements made under the Act of 1884. The hon. member had brought that Act forward as the remedy for the kanakas; and though he might try to get out of it as he pleased, it was intended as a substitute for the kanakas in the North. When the question was raised as to the results of bringing out cheap labour to compete with the working men of the colony, the Colonial Secretary pooh-poohed the idea, and said the Government could not interfere with the rate of wages; but now, when the question had assumed a definite form, by the planters taking him at his word, and issuing the pamphlet, he saw looming before him the danger that the working man would find that he had been deceived—avoiding the Scylla of black labour and falling into the Charybdis of low-class North of Europe competition. Which was the worse of the two, let the working man himself decide.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member had no right to say, as he had said, that he would refuse to ratify any agreements because they were fraudulent. What could be fraudulent in that pamphlet? It was sincerity itself. The hon. gentleman had not the power to refuse to ratify an agreement. The only power given by the principal Act was for an officer of the Agent-General to endorse the agreement, attesting that the person signing it knew what he was doing. If a man agreed to come for £10 a year, the Government had no right to refuse him a passage. The hon. gentleman seemed to be trying to evade the Act he had himself introduced and carried. It was not fair for him to throw cold water on the efforts made by the planters at Mackay to make the Act a success. As to the rate of wages, everybody knew that agricultural labourers were badly paid in every country. In America, the first country in the world for wages, any number of agricultural labourers could be got on the eastern seaboard for £20 to £30 a year; in England the wages were lower; in Ireland lower still; and lower again in Germany and the north of Europe generally. It was no use talking about the rate of wages. Besides, the Government had deprived themselves of the right to interfere in the rate of wages, and the planters had the right to offer £10 if they liked. He knew from his own knowledge of the north of Europe, and from the information which had been given by the hon. member for Mackay, that thousands of men could be got to come for £20 a year. They would be glad to leave the north of Europe to better their condition by coming to Australia at almost any price. When they did come let it be for the planters to treat them properly and give them every inducement to fulfil their engagements. If they did not fulfil their engagements it would be a sorry thing for the

country, for the great amount of low class labour would have the effect predicted by hon. members on his side of the House, of reducing the general rate of wages all over the colony. He might say before he sat down that the pamphlet had been reviewed. He found, by reading the organ which supported the Government, that it had been reviewed favourably from beginning to end, except in regard to the wages. He would just read for the benefit of hon. members the last paragraph of the review in the leading article, which appeared on Monday, 17th November, just three days ago, in the *Telegraph*—the leading organ supporting the Government:—

"It is believed that the publication in question is a *bona fide* production, and that it really is what it seems to be—an earnest attempt at the inauguration of the system desired by the present Government and by the colony at large—namely, the establishment of the sugar industry on a permanent basis in Queensland, carried on exclusively by European labour."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It does not strike me in that way.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that possibly it did not—it was a difference of opinion. That was a paper which supported the Government on any question, through thick or thin, right or wrong. Now the only fault it found with the pamphlet was about the rate of wages. The rate of wages was too small, in his opinion; but, nevertheless, he knew also that at the present time there were men—and had been for years—working here at a rate quite as low as that, and in many parts at a rate not much higher than that. He recollected that twenty years ago, in New South Wales, he found men working on farms or 8s. a week and rations.

Mr. GRIMES said that the hon. member had again referred to him, but he denied the truth of the report. He was not answerable for what people might tell the hon. gentleman. There were many false reports going about. There was one started at the last general election, that his firm had made arrangements to get kanakas, and had them on their plantations. They traced that report to a Northern planter, and they found it was done for a purpose. He had no doubt the report which the hon. gentleman had heard had also come from a similar quarter. He denied it most emphatically, and of course the Committee could take it for what it was worth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would remind the hon. member for Townsville that he was in error when he said he (the Colonial Secretary) had stated the pamphlet would have the effect of preventing the Government from carrying out their promises. What he had said was that the publication of that pamphlet would not prevent the Government from carrying out the promises which they had made; but that it would really not be surprising if the persistent efforts made by the planters to thwart the Government in every way, should exhaust their patience; but as he had said, the patience of the Government would not be exhausted; they would proceed steadfastly in the course they had set forth. The hon. member for Townsville told them that the ruling rate of wages in the Eastern States of America for agricultural labour was from £20 to £30, but then how was it that ruling rate of wages for agricultural labour did not reduce the general rate of wages in other places in America? How was it that it would reduce the wages here when it did not affect them in America?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would ask the hon. gentleman what was the ruling rate of wages outside agricultural labour, and whether he did not know that the wages throughout America were from 30 to 40 per cent. below the wages of working men in Australia? The

working men of America were working for one dollar or 4s. 2d. a day, whilst here what was called the ruling rate of wages—namely, those paid on public works by contractors—was from 7s. 6d. to 8s. a day, and 8s. a day all over New South Wales, and in some cases 8s. 6d. Now, that was not the case in America—it was just one dollar there, and, in the State of New York, there were tens of thousands working for three-quarters of a dollar a day. As to the question the hon. gentleman asked him, whether that did not reduce the rate of wages, it certainly did bear in proportion to the general rate of wages.

Mr. JORDAN said that a short time ago he had seen the pamphlet reviewed in one of the weekly papers, and, he thought the review was a very unfair one. He thought it took a very wrong view of the objects and intentions of the pamphlet, and threw ridicule and contempt on a large industry. He regarded the pamphlet as showing a disposition on the part of the planters to accept the scheme of the Government. He was going to ask the hon. member for Townsville, as he had read the last paragraph, to read the previous one in regard to the rate of wages, as he wished to put himself right, it being pretty well known that he wrote the article in question.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he could assure the hon. gentleman he had not the slightest conception that he had written the article. It was unusual for newspaper men to reveal their identity. He would, however, read the paragraph:—

"It is to be hoped that before this well-written pamphlet is made use of for the intended purpose, the whole matter of remuneration to the workmen will be carefully reconsidered, and that the terms offered will be such as will be likely to be accepted by European labourers, and as they will find reasonable and satisfactory on their arrival in the colony."

What he said was, that he thought the great exception that reviewer took in that article to the pamphlet was in regard to the rate of wages. He was very glad to find the hon. gentleman did write for the *Telegraph*.

Mr. JORDAN said he would like to add that he had been opposed to black labour perhaps as strongly as any man in the colony. He had never been opposed to the sugar planters nor had he said one word disrespectful of that class of men. He thought the colony was greatly indebted to the planters for the energy, enterprise, and the great amount of capital they had laid out, and if he thought the Government were doing anything now that would be likely to injure the planters, except with regard to the higher interest of the colony, he would certainly oppose their policy. He believed their policy would be beneficial to the planters of the colony, and he had no sympathy with the remarks which were sometimes made in the way of ridiculing the planters and their grand enterprise.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said it was very interesting to know that the hon. member was one of the contributors to the *Telegraph*. They had noticed lately a change in the policy of that paper. The hon. member for South Brisbane was credited with that policy for a long time, and it was well to know the hon. gentleman had the ability to perform these arduous duties and attend that House also, as it had saved him from making one of his speeches on the immigration question. The modesty of the hon. member led him to fancy that no one could detect his handiwork in that article. He had heard the hon. member deliver one speech on immigration twenty times. He remembered the first time on which he heard him deliver it, and he then remarked to an hon. gentleman who was then sitting alongside him—the Hon. W. H. Walsh—that it was a very good speech; and as soon as

the hon. member had sat down, Mr. Walsh rushed across the Chamber and said to the hon. gentleman "I congratulated you on that speech before. I have heard you deliver it ten or eleven years ago. I know it quite well." But to hear the hon. member on the general kanaka question, there was his article before them, and he was the only man who showed any intelligence on that question on his side of the House, barring the Premier. They did not look for intelligence from the Minister for Works after what he said last night, and the Minister for Lands had shown what he knew of things in general by his exposition on the Land Bill. At all events when anything was required to be said in favour of the Ministry they always looked to the man behind the Ministry—the hon. member for South Brisbane—who expounded the ideas of the Premier. The article said:—

"It appears to have been written for the purpose of circulation among such classes of labourers as we desire to see coming from Europe to settle in the colony, and especially to assist in the working of the sugar plantations at Mackay and other places in the north. The pamphlet is carefully and well written, setting forth, first, that the Government of the British colony of Queensland, in Australia, being desirous of introducing agricultural immigrants, who will eventually settle down on small farms of their own, has recently passed an Act offering to such persons a free passage, less the payment of £1 for their ship-kit, to European labourers, and that such persons are now invited to come to the colony under indenture for two years to employers, who will pay £2 towards their passages, the remainder of the cost being defrayed by the Queensland Government. The work to be done is plainly described, such as cart driving, ploughing, field work, mill work, and the rest; and a somewhat attractive but fair and intelligent description is given of the climate, and the country, and the surroundings of sugar planting in the north of the colony. It is stated, very truthfully, that there is no prejudice against European foreigners in Queensland; but such persons will be chosen by employers here just as willingly as if they were English, Irish, Scotch, or Australian.

"It is shown in the pamphlet that labourers, thus engaging themselves for two years on a sugar plantation, will be in the way of learning a great deal that will be very valuable to them as intending settlers on the land in the near future, and it explained how they can procure their own farms of 160 acres, or less, at 2s. 6d. an acre, by a payment merely of 6d. an acre for five years, thus making the property their own. Many of the advantages of life in Australia are very well and very fairly stated in the pamphlet, and intending immigrants from Europe are told that they may thus learn during their two years of indenture, the English language, the ways and customs of the colony, and a trade suitable to the wants of the country.

"Farming, as it has been carried on by the Germans in Queensland, is made to appear as it really is. The writer describes the farm, and the vineyard, and the orchard, and the surroundings of German farm settlements in Queensland very truthfully and very attractively, especially as they exist in the more southern parts of the colony. 'The Germans,' as the writer of this pamphlet says, 'have proved themselves worthy of being classed among the most successful of colonists, and their comfortable houses are to be seen dotted up and down our river banks. Such plodding industry and sobriety as the German shows, is bound in the long run to reap success in a free country like Australia. The vine grows well in many parts of Queensland, and the chief wine growers are Germans. The writer of this pamphlet has visited many of the vineyards, and always found comfort and plenty, even affluence, as the result of the culture of the grape.'

"On the other hand, the heat of the climate in summer, and the prevalence of intermittent fever on the new lands of the north, and certain other drawbacks are honestly set down in this little publication, which is evidently intended for circulation in Europe among a class who may be thus induced to try their fortunes in this part of Australia. Translated into some of the languages of Northern Europe, and freely circulated, this information would no doubt prove very useful indeed, and be the means of attracting to Queensland many persons, just such as we want, from Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark."

Then the article went on to refer to the rate of remuneration offered—

Mr. JORDAN: Please read that,

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the writer continued:—

"There is one great error in the scheme as laid down in this publication, and that is, that the terms of remuneration offered to the immigrants are altogether too low. £20 a year, with the addition of rations, may appear good enough to the labourer in Northern Europe, while he is on that side of the water, but he would be certain to feel very much dissatisfied with it on his arrival in Queensland; and it seems a pity that so low a rate of wages had been thought of, as this must damage the scheme, and cause dissatisfaction. Working men who have been some years in the colony have too much sense in these days to oppose immigration, because they know that the more labour we have introduced of a suitable kind, and within certain limits, the better it is for all parties concerned; while they do not wish to see wages generally lowered, they know that new arrivals cannot expect, and are not worth the wages obtained by those who have gained a few years of experience; but they will take great exception to an attempt to begin this new system of European labour for sugar plantations at a rate of wages which is unreasonably low; and it appears unwise at the very start to raise up any feeling of opposition on their part to a scheme which otherwise is well devised, and calculated to realise what is so much to be desired—that is, prosperity to the sugar-planting interest in Queensland, without black labour. It is true that the pamphlet honestly states that the wages offered, £20 a year, with the addition of rations and hut accommodation, are much lower than those ruling generally in the colony, which are quoted, but the difference is too great. A year ago, when it was suggested that European labourers might be obtained by the sugar-planter at 15s. a week, with the addition of rations, the idea was ridiculed; yet now it is gravely proposed to pay these men at very little over 7s. 6d. a week, with the addition of rations. If men can be found to accept such pay, which is, to say the least, doubtful, they will find on arrival here if they be married men that it is utterly impossible to subsist on such a pittance, and not even a Mackay bench of magistrates would condemn men for resisting absolute starvation. Some of the other conditions of the intended agreement appear too one-sided and illiberal. It is to be hoped that before this well-written pamphlet is made use of for the intended purpose, the whole matter of remuneration to the workmen will be carefully reconsidered, and that the terms offered will be such as will be likely to be accepted by European labourers and as they will find reasonable and satisfactory on their arrival in the colony. It is believed that the publication in question is a *bona fide* production, and that it is really what it seems to be, an earnest attempt at the inauguration of the system desired by the present Government, and by the colony at large—namely, the establishment of the sugar industry on a permanent basis in Queensland carried on exclusively by European labour."

The hon. member must feel indebted to him for having made a very good speech. The article was a fair criticism of the pamphlet, with the exception, perhaps, of the part relating to wages. The pamphlet stated clearly and distinctly the terms to be offered to the labourers. If the terms were not suitable the labourers would not come out; and if they were distasteful to the Government, the Government ought to say so now in order to prevent the Act from breaking down. The Colonial Secretary had said now what he declined to say on the passing of the Bill, that agents would be appointed in the north of Europe who would not sanction any agreements that would be inimical to the interests of the labourers. In order to give the Act a fair trial—especially as the hon. gentleman had charged the planters with trying to make it a failure—all that was wanted was for the Government to state what rate of wages they would sanction. The planters would then know whether to indent for labourers or not. The Committee would then get to business, and the whole of the pamphlet business would be disposed of. It was a matter of opinion whether the pamphlet bore the character attributed to it by the hon. member for Bundamba, or by the hon. member for South Brisbane. His opinion was that the hon. member for South Brisbane had reviewed it sincerely and temperately, and that the pamphlet itself was

written with the object of getting the class of men intended to be brought out by the Government. At any rate, after the declaration made by the Premier, unless he disclosed what would be a sufficient rate of wages to satisfy the Government, the responsibility of the Act being a failure would rest with the Government and not with the planters.

Mr. WHITE said it had been reiterated from time to time by hon. members opposite that the pamphlet was a fair statement—that it showed earnestness, and was not misleading. He quite agreed that it was not misleading, but it only showed earnestness in trying to make the introduction of white labour for sugar plantations a failure. There was no possibility of their getting any agricultural white labour from Great Britain to sign an agreement beyond one year, and he believed the same rule would hold in Germany, unless some good authority could inform him to the contrary. In the next place the hours of labour would prevent their getting intelligent workmen from Great Britain or the Continent, as he knew they would not get one single individual to work more than ten hours a day. Such a thing never occurred in Great Britain, even through the harvest time. With regard to wages, he considered that the remarks made by hon. gentlemen opposite concerning the rates of wages ruling in Great Britain were altogether misleading. He doubted very much if they could find men to work for such wages, even in Germany. For £30 a year they might get men who would be useful, but if they gave only £20 or £25 they would get men who were not worth anything.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Do the Government decline to answer the question I put to them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What question?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the question he had put was this: the hon. the Premier had intimated to them at an earlier period of the evening that a gentleman appointed by the Government would see that no contract was signed, unless at a fair rate of wages; would the Government now state the instructions that they would give to their agents as to the rate of wages? The Government had already intimated that their agents would have that power.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman had again failed in correctly stating what he said. He said that every agreement made under the Act would be attested in Europe by an agent of the Government, and that gentleman would not be justified in allowing any agreement to be made, the terms of which were such as would be fraudulent. He did not say that the Government would fix the rate of wages, nor was he prepared to say that any instructions would be given as to the rate of wages. There were many things to be considered besides the rate of wages. He did not consider that to be the most objectionable of many objectionable parts of the pamphlet. He should reply to the authors of the pamphlet to the effect that the Government were not prepared to assist the planters in bringing in labour under those terms. He should also remind them that the pamphlet did not appear to be written with a desire that the experiment should succeed. It was brought before the Government, and the Government would express their opinion upon it, and in the present case they had to express their disapproval. The amount of food and work and accommodation might be stated, but the rate of wages would be regulated by the laws of the land.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the hon. gentleman would give as much informa-

tion to the planters of Mackay he did not think there would be much difficulty.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have told them before.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the hon. gentleman had wished to stop the debate, instead of getting up a claptrap debate in which he could pose all right amongst the working men, he would have saved time by making that statement before and have made great progress in his Estimates. The Premier had an extreme disinclination to see the Act working. The simple statement that the agent objected to assent to a contract would not be satisfactory. He would be required to object specifically. Up to the present time there had been only two points discussed—one was the question of wages, and the other, that of accommodation. The latter they could set aside, as it was provided for in the Immigration Act, but the rate of wages was a matter quite outside the Government. The Premier would evidently lead them to suppose that the agents would see that no unfair rate of wages would be sanctioned in the agreement. He had also said that supply and demand would regulate everything, but at all events his Act was undergoing a critical test. Let him bring out two or three thousand immigrants. If they were brought out successfully it would be the biggest failure the hon. gentleman had made, because the colony would rise up against him; and if the experiment was not successful, it would be an equal failure, because the hon. gentleman had failed to find a remedy when he had promised to find one. There was another matter he would now refer to. He could not find anything at all in the correspondence that passed between the Colonial Secretary and the Agent-General, instructing the latter to limit the number of immigrants to 12,000. The debate on that point had been interrupted by the other matter introduced from the other side of the Committee. He asked what was the scheme of immigration for the present year, and the hon. gentleman answered 12,000. He could not find any instructions to that effect, and so far as he could see it was left very much to the Agent-General to decide. Then he should like to have another question answered. Why had the Government giving up sailing vessels? Sailing vessels were very suitable for certain parts of the colony, and was it not intended that that should be a permanent arrangement as far as the Government were concerned?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the information that he gave when he last spoke as to the views of the Government with respect to the administration of the Immigration Act had all been given by him to the representatives of the planters of Mackay personally and verbally, so that he had thrown no new light on the subject as the hon. member had said he had. The hon. member had had the opportunity of pointing out to the Government the operation of their Act, and he was welcome to all that he had scored. He (the Colonial Secretary) did not think the hon. member had scored very much. The Government had shown very clearly that they did not intend to allow the Act to be used for any such purposes as those contemplated. The first instructions with respect to immigration were contained in the immigration correspondence laid on the table last session. They were given on the 2nd of November last, and were in the shape of a telegram and letter. The following was the telegram:—

"Immigration after completion present arrangements emigrants not to exceed thousand per month giving preference nominated passengers, confining free passages to single women and farm labourers. Invite tenders

time to time conveyance immigrants by steamers under section seventeen. When number in vessels sailing under that section exceeds fifty adults impose same conditions as to diet fittings and supervision as ordinary immigrant ships with surgeon and matron appointed by you. Government pays usual gratuities. Submit by cable all tenders and arrangements for approval. Despatch few immigrants as possible under existing arrangements.

"GRIFFITH."

There was a lot more correspondence, but that was the basis of the instructions on which the arrangements had been made from time to time. There was a contract between Messrs. Gray, Dawes, and Company, and also between Messrs. Green and Company and the Government. The arrangements for next year had not yet been made, so that he could not speak on that point; but at the present time it was exceedingly easy to make arrangements at very short notice.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the contracts had been made since the instructions were given, but he could never have understood that from the correspondence. Since the 30th November all the contracts had been made, so that the number might exceed 12,000 or be less than that number. He would also like to know why the sailing port had been altered from Plymouth to London, and whether that was intended as a permanent arrangement? The Premier had forgotten to answer another question he had asked with reference to sailing ships.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the question of employing sailing ships was regulated by what appeared most convenient. The Government had not made up their minds to have no more sailing vessels; and if it was convenient to resort to the system it would be resorted to. With respect to the change of the port of departure, that was done by the Agent-General, and he did not see any reason to dissent from it. The accommodation at London was much better than Plymouth, and the means of getting there were much more convenient. That was how the facts were represented to him. The present Agent-General had the matter under consideration. There were many things to be said in favour of both places. Plymouth was further down the channel and was more convenient in that way, but London was more convenient from other points of view.

Mr. JORDAN said the advantage of the port of Plymouth was that agricultural labourers were more easily obtained from the west of England, and a very valuable class of agricultural labourers they were. If they started their ships from Plymouth, they would more easily get a class of people who were specially suited to the requirements of the colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had not yet given the reason why the change was made from sailing ships to steamers. Was it intended to make London the permanent port of departure? That was virtually done by doing away with sailing ships, because they would not start from Plymouth. He only wished to know what the policy of the Government was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had given all the information he could on the subject. If the Government proposed to engage sailing ships, of course they would not sail from London. The contracts made for some time were for steamers, and there was no room for sailing ships, except when they desired to bring out a few bounty passengers. A small number had come out in that way.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again tomorrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, stating that that House had agreed to the Brands Act Amendment Bill with an amendment, and requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly thereto.

On the motion of the Hon. B. B. MORETON, it was resolved that the message be taken into consideration on Friday.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment, said that Supply would be gone on with tomorrow.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Can the Premier tell us when the Loan Estimates are likely to come on?

The PREMIER: Not until the Estimates-in-Chief are disposed of.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: They will not come on before the Estimates-in-Chief are disposed of?

The PREMIER: No.

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