

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 14 JULY 1885**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.***Tuesday, 14 July, 1885.*

Presentation of the Address in Reply.—Answer to Address in Reply.—Correspondence respecting Australian Volunteers.—Returns of Sheep.—Question.—Formal Motions.—Supply.—Police Officers Relief Bill—second reading.—Members Expenses Bill—second reading.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill—second reading.—New Guinea Islanders Employers Compensation Bill—second reading.—Return of Electors.—Additional Members Bill—second reading.—Local Government Act of 1878 Amendment Bill.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at twenty-five minutes past 3 o'clock.

**PRESENTATION OF THE ADDRESS  
IN REPLY.**

The SPEAKER invited hon. members in attendance, to proceed to Government House, there to present to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech delivered by His Excellency.

The SPEAKER, accompanied by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and hon. members, accordingly proceeded to Government House.

**ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.**

The SPEAKER, on returning, announced that, pursuant to order, the Assembly had been to Government House, and there presented their Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply :—

“Government House,  
“Brisbane, Queensland,  
“14th July, 1885.

“MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“I thank you for your assurance that you will give earnest and careful attention to all such measures as may be brought before you, and I rely with confidence on your continued loyalty to the throne and person of Our Most Gracious Sovereign.

“A. MUSGRAVE.”

**CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING  
AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEERS.**

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: I have to inform the House that the paper laid on the table on Tuesday last containing the correspondence respecting Australian volunteers for service in the Soudan is incorrect, and I beg to lay upon the table an amended copy of the correspondence, and move that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: With the permission of the House, I will move that the paper laid on the table on Tuesday last be withdrawn, and that the order for its printing be rescinded.

Question put and passed.

**RETURNS OF SHEEP.**

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In the course of debate last week I was asked whether the Government had received any report from Mr. Gordon, the Chief Inspector of Stock, as to the circumstances under which the preliminary report on the stock in the colony at the end of last year was made, and I said I would call upon him for a report, and that as soon as I received it I would put the House in possession of that

report. In accordance with that promise I therefore propose to read Mr. Gordon's report, which is as follows:—

"The charge made against me in the accompanying extract"—

The extract referred to is from Mr. Morehead's speech.

"The charge made against me in the accompanying extract, that I had made an incorrect return to controvert a report as to our losses in sheep, is one of so serious a character that if it had any foundation in fact I should deem myself totally unworthy to hold my appointment for a single hour, and I am thankful of this early opportunity of refuting it.

"The history of the whole transaction is that, *unsolicited by anyone*, I deemed it advisable in the interests of the colony generally, and as a reply to the many inquiries made of me as to our probable losses in sheep, to submit a preliminary or interim return on the 2nd May last, of the number of sheep, as at 1st January, returned up to that date.

"My principal reason for doing so was that the hon. the Colonial Treasurer had casually in the street directed my attention to a report that had been circulated in England to the effect that our losses amounted to more sheep than we actually had in the colony. This interim return I recommended should be published in the Press.

"On the day of—or the day following—the publication of this return in the *Courier*, I met Mr. Morehead at a public sale in Bowen Park, when he spoke to me in the presence of several gentlemen about my return, challenging the accuracy of my figures, and intimating that the expression I used as to our losses having been 'grossly exaggerated' was uncalled for, and calculated to damage the interests of stockowners.

"I gave him, as I then thought, a satisfactory explanation for publishing the preliminary return, and for using the remark complained of. I also added that I should much regret if any misapprehension should arise from the use of the remark, but that I would take advantage of my annual report to Parliament to explain to what it referred.

"On my return to my office, I, on thinking over the matter, imagined I had, in conversation with Mr. Morehead, missed his principal point of objection, and that probably he had construed my meaning to be that the exaggeration of losses might be attributed to the stockowners themselves. I therefore wrote him a short note (which was in no way private) explaining that the term 'grossly exaggerated' used by me applied to the reports in England, as already explained, and which had appeared in the wool circulars. I have had no communication in any way with Mr. Morehead since.

"So far from the returns having been incorrect, they are the exact numbers taken from the owners' sworn returns, and on which assessment was paid as at 1st January last; and it will be seen that they are not only repeated, but their accuracy defended by me in my annual report, which has already been published; and I most distinctly deny having ever said they are incorrect. On the contrary, I consider they are a faithful record of the number of sheep in the colony at the time they were made—namely, at the last muster prior to 1st January last.

"Whether or not the owners have made incorrect sworn returns is beside the question. I have faithfully recorded the numbers returned to me.

"P. R. GORDON,  
"Chief Inspector of Stock.

"9th July, 1885."

Mr. ARCHER: Is the hon. gentleman going to have the report printed?

The PREMIER: It will appear in *Hansard*.

#### QUESTION.

Mr. MELLOR asked the Minister for Works—

When will the department receive the report of the Engineer of Bridges on the bridges he was instructed to report upon in the Wide Bay district about April last?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), in the absence of the Minister for Works, replied—

The Engineer for Bridges has been instructed to prepare plans and specifications for a bridge over the Mary River at Etchell's Falls, with a view to tenders being called as early as practicable.

#### FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the PREMIER—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to Parliamentary Elections, and to make a better provision for preventing Corrupt Practices at such Elections.

The Bill was presented, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton)—

That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Crown Lands Act of 1884 with respect to the Selection of Land before survey, and in other respects.

By the Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN—

That there be laid on the table of the House, a Return showing—

1. The names of the contractors who tendered for the extension of the Railway from Stanthorpe to the Border the first time that tenders were called, with the amount of tender in each case.

2. The names of the contractors who tendered on the second occasion of tenders being called, with the amount of tender in each case.

3. The Chief Engineer's estimate of cost of the line, and the amount for which it was subsequently let.

By the Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN (in the absence of the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith)—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, a copy of all Correspondence between the Agent-General and the Bank of England on the proposed loan to Queensland of one million at 4 per cent. by the Bank, and also all Correspondence between the Agent-General and the Queensland Government on the same subject.

#### SUPPLY.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor being read—

The SPEAKER read the following extract from His Excellency's Speech:—

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The Estimates for the present year will be laid before you forthwith. It is gratifying to note that, notwithstanding the effects of a drought of unprecedented severity and duration, the revenue has continued steadily to advance. The price which, notwithstanding many adverse influences, was obtained in London for the Queensland stock recently offered to the extent of two and a-half millions affords gratifying proof of the unshaken credit of the colony.

"The Bill to provide for the Payment of the Expenses of Members of the Legislative Assembly, of which you have already recorded your approval, will be at once submitted for further consideration.

"You will also be asked to make further provision for developing the mining wealth of the colony by the encouragement of deep sinking.

"The various public works sanctioned by you have been pushed forward with all practicable expedition."

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

#### POLICE OFFICERS RELIEF BILL— SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill, the second reading of which I am now about to move, is one to which I am sure both sides of the House will agree. It seeks to afford relief to certain officers of the Civil Service who originally entered the service as policemen, in which capacity they contributed towards the Police Superannuation Fund. The 20th clause of the Police Act provides that—

"There shall be deducted from the pay and salary of the several members of the Police Force under this Act the sum of two pounds per centum per annum, and so ratably from any pay or salary of whatever amount."

which sums so deducted shall be invested in such manner as may be directed by the Governor with the advice of the Executive Council, and the interest and dividends thereof, or so much of the same as shall not be required for the purposes hereinafter mentioned, shall be invested in like manner, and accumulate so as to form a fund to be called the "Police Superannuation Fund," and to be applied as occasion may require for the payment of such superannuation or retiring allowances or gratuities as may be ordered or appointed by the Governor under the powers hereinafter given to him, to be charged on the said fund or payable thereat."

It will be observed that this contribution was 2 per cent. per annum, which was to accumulate and eventually be paid to the members of the force as a superannuation or retiring allowance. Several of those officers displayed abilities which procured for them promotion, and they were accordingly transferred from the Police Force to positions of responsibility in the Civil Service. The intention of all previous Governments has been to sanction the transfer of the rights which those officers acquired under the Police Act to the Civil Service Act, inasmuch as the contribution of 2 per cent. per annum is the same amount as is fixed by the Civil Service Act of 1863, payable by the Civil servants who held office at that time, in order to entitle them to the benefits of a retiring allowance. It has unfortunately happened in the case of those officers who had acquired rights in the Police Superannuation Fund, that when they were transferred to the Civil Service the Act of 1863 had been repealed; consequently there was no legal authority for transferring their rights to the Civil Service Fund. Although it has been sought at times to restore those rights by Executive minute, yet when the cases came to be investigated by the Auditor-General it was found that they had really no rights whatever, notwithstanding their continued contributions. Some of them have in consequence withdrawn the contributions they had paid into the Police Superannuation Fund and the Civil Service Fund, while others have continued to pay, in the hope that their rights would be eventually restored to them. I believe I am perfectly justified in saying, from the documents I have perused and the Executive minutes which have been passed by various Governments, that the opinion is held on both sides of the House that those officers should have restored to them the rights of which they have been unintentionally deprived. The Bill is not a long one, and it is introduced as purely a matter of justice, which will commend itself, I am sure, to the approval of hon. members. The 1st clause briefly explains what I have endeavoured to lay before the House. It states:—

"When any member of the Police Force constituted under the Police Act of 1863, who became a member of that force before the fourteenth day of September, 1869, and who while he continued to be a member of such force regularly contributed to the Police Superannuation Fund established under that Act, has heretofore been or shall hereafter be appointed by the Governor in Council to another office in the Public Service of the colony, not being an office in the Police Force, the Governor in Council may direct that such person shall have and be subject and entitled to the same rights, obligations, and privileges, as if he had been a member of the Civil Service under the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1863 and the Civil Service Act of 1863 Extension Act, and had been appointed to his office under those Acts on the day on which he was appointed to the Police Force, and such person shall thereupon have and be subject and entitled to such rights, obligations, and privileges accordingly.

The 2nd clause provides that the money payable under the Act shall be payable out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund; and the 3rd clause, that the deduction from salary shall be the same as is provided under the old Acts—namely, 2 per cent. per annum. The 4th clause provides that—

"In any case in which any such member of the Police Force has been so appointed to another office before the

passing of this Act, he shall within three months after the passing of this Act pay to the Colonial Treasurer, to be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, a sum equal to the amount which would have been deducted from his salary for the whole time that has elapsed since his said appointment if he had been a member of the Civil Service under the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1863 and the Civil Service Act of 1863 Extension Act, and had received as such member a salary equal to the salary that he has received from time to time as an officer of the Public Service since such appointment."

In addition to what I have already said, I may state that the want of a measure of this kind presses very injuriously upon certain officers who have only discovered recently the disability under which they labour. Many of them have been contributing to the fund under the opinion that their rights were secured to them by the Executive minutes, charging their rights upon the Civil Service Fund, and entitling them to an allowance therefrom; and they have now learned, with considerable dismay and dissatisfaction, that they have no such rights whatever, and that their only claim on the Treasury is to receive a refund of what they have actually paid out of their salaries. Some of those officers entered the service as far back as 1857, 1862, 1863, 1865, and 1866, and their transference to the Civil Service was made, in some cases, as late as 1880, after having actually contributed for more than twenty years to the Police Superannuation Fund. They now find themselves deprived of that pension or allowance which would have accrued to them had they remained in their original position. I have had a statement prepared, which I shall be happy to submit to hon. members for their information. I think it unnecessary to load the records of the House with it, especially as I am sure the measure will commend itself to hon. members as an act of justice. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—Fortunately I have very little to say on this Bill. All along I have looked upon the police officers as sufferers from the present position of affairs. I do not think the Bill will meet with any opposition from this side of the House.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

#### MEMBERS EXPENSES BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not propose, in moving the second reading of this Bill, to discuss at large the question whether members of the Legislative Assembly ought to be recompensed for the expenses they incur in attending to the service of the country. That question has been discussed so often by this House that I think it may be taken to have made up its mind on the subject. Last year the second reading of a Bill almost identical with this was carried by a majority of 29 to 8. Some modifications were made in committee, and the Bill was then passed and sent on to the Legislative Council, where it failed to meet with acceptance. The Bill now introduced is the identical Bill as it left this House last year, with the one exception that it is called the Act of 1885 instead of 1884. In all other respects the Bill is the same, and I think it is desirable that it should be so; because I think that this is a matter of expenditure of money peculiarly belonging to this House, and as this House distinctly affirmed that a measure of this kind ought to become law on the 1st of January last, I ask the House this session to reaffirm that proposition, that this Bill ought to become law, and as from the 1st of January, 1885. The question arose whether it was better to bring in a Bill in this form, or whether we should

follow the practice in some other parts of the world—the nearest to us being New Zealand—of placing the money on the Estimates as part of the annual expenditure of the country. On consideration it appeared to be desirable, at any rate on this occasion, to introduce a substantive measure for the purpose, inviting the opinion of the Legislative Council once more upon it, unembarrassed by any other consideration. This House has already pronounced its verdict, that it is desirable that members should be paid their expenses of attending Parliament, and I think any arguments which may be used would scarcely tend to strengthen the position the Government have taken up. I do not propose, therefore, to make any further comment on the matter, but will simply move that this Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with what has fallen from the Premier, that this Bill has been pretty fully discussed in this House—that is, the principle of paying members; and as if we were to discuss it again no new light would be thrown on it, such discussion would only be waste of time. But I think the mode of payment might be discussed. I do not quite agree with the inquisitorial system which would be established by getting the Clerk to record the attendance of members. I believe it would be very likely indeed to lead to a conflict of opinion between hon. members and the Clerk, which would be very undesirable. Although not a believer in any principle of payment of members, I think if we do adopt it we ought to adopt it in a decent kind of way, and pay the members at the end of the session without counting the number of days they have been absent from sickness or any other cause. I think if a member is sick it would be scarcely fair to stop his pay. Of course I do not intend to discuss that now, but in committee I think we might very well consider that point—whether it would not be better to pay members a certain sum, as large or small as you please, without any question as to attendance. The member is responsible to his constituents for his attendance in this House, and if they are not satisfied they will soon let him know it. I think it would be better to do it in that fashion than in the manner proposed.

Mr. JESSOP said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to ask the hon. member in charge of the Bill for some explanation with respect to the first schedule, which says:—

"1. For each mile, beyond the first three, which shall for the purpose of attending Parliament be actually and necessarily travelled by land by the nearest practicable route between the usual residence of the member in Queensland and the nearest seaport or railway station, or the place where Parliament shall be appointed to sit, whichever shall be nearest to such residence—is 6d."

Does that mean that members are to be paid only for the days upon which they sit? For instance, if a member were living at Ipswich, Roma, or the Warrego, I do not think it would be fair that he should not be paid for the days he was occupied in travelling to attend the House. I am only asking for information.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to delay the House for more than a few minutes. I think, sir, that we might have had from the Premier some explanation of the statement he is reported to have made at Charters Towers with regard to the action that is likely to be taken in another place in connection with this Bill. The language used, and as reported in the Press here, would certainly indicate a covert threat—that is, that some other step beyond anything yet revealed to either the House or the country will be taken in the event of the Bill being rejected in another place.

The PREMIER: I did not say anything that would bear that construction.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The language used, so far as I understand it, can bear no other construction. The hon. gentleman led people to believe that the measure would be passed by the Legislative Council this session. I do not know what reason the hon. gentleman has for believing that, considering that it was rejected by a large majority last session.

The PREMIER: Because they are sensible people.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Certainly the hon. gentleman has recruited his ranks in the other Chamber by making appointments which may or not be justified. I do not intend to express any opinion on that point at the present time; but I think the hon. gentleman, in moving the second reading of the Bill on this occasion, should have told the House if there was any prospect of it becoming law, and what the probabilities were, because it has been rumoured outside, and commented on in the Press, that in the event of the Bill being thrown out by the Upper House there are other means by which the object in view may be attained. I would point out another fact, which is a startling one—at any rate, one indicating that there is certainly an alteration in public opinion with regard to the propriety or otherwise of passing this measure. I wish to call the attention of hon. members, and to commend to their consideration, a leading article in a paper which is generally considered to promulgate the views of the party sitting on the opposite side of the House—an article in last night's *Telegraph*, in which they speak in anything but unmixed praise of this radical change, which I may almost call a change in our Constitution. I wish to point out further, sir, as I have done before, that this payment of members may defeat its own object. There may be certain members of this House who, for reasons best known to themselves, may refuse to accept from the State remuneration for their services to the country in the way proposed here—that is, that they will not apply it in the way intended by this Bill, but may apply the sum of money that they receive—which may be very considerable if the session is a long one, and may not be inconsiderable if the session is a short one—towards the charitable wants of their constituents, and by so doing get a hold upon them which this Bill is supposed absolutely to prevent. There is no doubt that that can be done, and I shall go further and say that it will be done. I know myself many men who will refuse to accept the payment for their services indicated by this Bill, and who will devote the money to district charities; and I will go further, sir, and say, very properly so, too. The hon. gentleman will, no doubt, explain in committee how he will meet that difficulty, if he considers it to be a difficulty. But I repeat what I said at the commencement of my remarks, that the hon. gentleman should have given the House some explanation of what he said at Charters Towers—that is, how he has arrived at the conclusion that, although this Bill is one identically the same as that which was rejected by the Upper House last year, it will on the present occasion be passed by that House and become law. I shall certainly vote against it, and call for a division, even if I am alone. I do not believe in the principle of it. It has done harm to every Parliament that has adopted it; it is not in any way beneficial to the community, but is calculated to interfere very largely with proper parliamentary representation.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who last spoke proceeded, I suppose, on the assumption that certain constituencies

may be bought and sold. I know that he has had very large experience in that matter, but I am able to believe that the electors are not to be bought even in the manner in which the hon. gentleman has suggested. I do not think that the payment of money for local charities, or for other objects, would have the effect of causing the electors to return to this House gentlemen in whom they do not believe. I have hitherto supported this Bill because I believe in the principle of it; and I intend, of course, to support it on the present occasion. There is a great deal, sir, in the old saying, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." I believe that services faithfully rendered have a right to be remunerated; and I, for one, shall not think that I am lessening or weakening my position, or that my influence as a member of Parliament will be any less or any greater than it is by receiving payment for my services—or rather for being recouped that which I am out of pocket by attending to the business of this House.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: A lot out of pocket!

MR. ALAND: It is all very well for hon. gentlemen opposite who have very long pockets to sneer at members on this side of the House who do not profess to have such long pockets. There are several of us, sir, on this side of the House who are not afraid to say that we cannot, in justice to ourselves, afford to hold the position we do without some provision of that kind.

MR. MOREHEAD: Why do not your constituents pay you?

MR. ALAND: I will tell the hon. gentleman presently. We consider that we have a right to be here, because by a very large majority of our constituents nearly every member upon this side of the House has been returned. We were always returned by very large majorities, and some of us at the express wish of our constituents. The hon. gentleman wants to know why our constituents do not pay us. I think, sir, that would tend very much to lessen our influence as members of Parliament, and that it would also to a very great extent place us in the position of being the servants of our constituents. I am willing to own, sir, that I owe a considerable debt to my constituents, but I am not going to acknowledge that I am their servant and ought to do just as they tell me. I never have done so, sir, and I hope I never shall; but if I were directly paid by my constituents they might perhaps look upon it in a very different light to what they do at the present time. I was present at the meeting at Charters Towers to which the hon. member for Balonne has referred, and although I listened attentively to the speech of the Premier, I do not remember anything which could convey the idea that any threat was being held out to the other branch of the Legislature. I confess that I understood it in the manner in which the Premier has expressed it—that he could not conceive that the other Chamber would be so absurd as to again—I suppose for the fifth or sixth time—reject a measure which the Lower House had passed, in almost every instance, by a large majority. I do hope—I do not know whether I am out of order in saying it, Mr. Speaker, but if I am you will pull me up, of course—that the other House will have wisdom in this matter, and acknowledge that this House represents the voice and wishes of the people, and that in all matters of public expenditure they have a right to agree with their wishes as represented by us. I will support the Bill.

MR. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—Admitting that it is waste of time to discuss the principle of this Bill, I agree with

the hon. member for Townsville that we can object to the manner in which it is to be carried out. I do not believe in the principle, and I intend to vote against the Bill as I did last session. The point I was going to refer to is simply this: The last speaker gave us a quotation, which we have heard on every occasion upon which this Bill has been before us, about the labourer being worthy of his hire. That is a very good proverb; but we are not always to be governed by proverbs. They are perhaps of good general application; but it does not follow that they are always to be applied in particular cases. Taking it in the sense in which the hon. gentleman has given it to us now, we are supposed to be the labourers; but what is the hire? Have we made any contract with the colony?

MR. ALAND: We told them that we should go in for our hire last election.

MR. NELSON: That is not making a bargain with the colony. If the hon. member represented the whole colony, or if we were elected by the colony as a whole, there might be some bargain. But when we were sent here the bond that we made with the colony—with our constituents—was that we were to give our services the same as hitherto, without any hire or reward, and to me it seems not only indecent but actually dishonest, both politically and morally, for this House, now that we have the keys of the cash-box, to vote ourselves money for the services we have contracted to give to the colony without any reward. I think, just for the sake of decency and honesty alone, that if this Bill pass it should apply, not to the present Parliament, but to future Parliaments.

MR. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I was one of the few who voted against the measure last session, and if a division be called for now I shall be found amongst the few who will oppose it again. There is one point in the Bill which does not seem to meet the case at all. Of course the argument is used that the working man will be able to be returned to Parliament—implying that the working man is not represented at present. But there is this proviso left out: that the rich man will always be able to handicap the working man in his election expenses. At present the election expenses are far greater, or are generally far greater, than the remuneration under this Bill, and thus the working man would be stranded, as it were, upon a rock as badly as he would be before he entered Parliament; and that is a matter of more concern than the remuneration would be. It is well known that a candidate is looked upon as fair plunder; and the candidate who will not lay out money in his constituency is always looked upon as very mean. I heard the hon. Attorney-General say, during the discussion upon this question last session, that his election cost him but a very small sum—nothing for his personal expenses. We are not all in the same happy position that the Attorney-General is, and I must say that the expenses I was put to in my election came to a great deal more than my remuneration would come to in a session. In looking at the *personnel* of this Assembly I can see that the working man is very well represented in this House, for with the exception of perhaps the lawyers, who may be said to "neither toil nor spin," the rest may be considered very well as working men's representatives. If the argument be that the working man by this measure will be able to live in the capital and so represent his class, I scarcely think that the proposed remuneration would tempt any working man—artisan or otherwise—to leave a profitable employment to come to the capital for the sake of what he can get as a Parliamentary representative. I suppose

that it will be useless to discuss the principle of the Bill; it has been discussed so often that I can only say I shall adhere to the path which I said out for myself before. I have advocated non-payment of members before my constituency several times, and I shall be amongst the few voting against the principle now.

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

The House divided :—

AYES, 22.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Bailey, Beattie, Buckland, Campbell, White, Foxton, Kellett, Jordan, Isaumbert, Mellor, Smyth, Ailand, Brookes, Fraser, Macfarlane, and Midgley.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Archer, Norton, Chubb, Morehead, Black, Macrossan, Stevenson, Nelson, Jessop, Donaldson, Scott, Palmer, and Ferguson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Bill was read a second time, and, on the motion of the Premier, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—By this Bill it is proposed simply to continue the operation of the Marsupials Destruction Act of 1881 during the course of another year. Opinions have varied, ever since the first Marsupial Act of 1877 was passed, as to the best mode of dealing with the subject. Last year, when I moved the second reading of the Bill to continue the operation of the Act of 1881, I think I mentioned that different opinions prevailed as to the best mode of carrying the Act into operation, and that some persons thought certain modifications necessary, but that probably on the whole the Act as it stood was better than any amendment of it that could be made. During the past year various suggestions have been made to the Government for the amendment of this Act, but I am still of the same opinion, that the Act as it stands is about as good as it can be made. A great deal of work has been done under the Act, and it would certainly be a great pity to allow it to drop. That is admitted. I am sorry I was not able to lay the report of the working of the Act upon the table till to-day. It is a very short report, and contains some reference to the suggestions made for altering the Act. A large majority of the boards are in favour of the continuance of the Act, but many of them want some modification, and most of the modifications suggested were discussed when the question arose in 1881. The Bowen Board dissents altogether from the Act; the Bungil Board thinks it should be optional to adopt it. That is a question that has been very fully discussed in the House. I do not think it desirable that it should be optional. It is a significant fact that out of forty-seven marsupial boards only three were elected, and the remaining forty-four had to be appointed by the Government. I am therefore of opinion that if it were left optional the Act would soon cease to be in operation in the colony to a very great extent. The Bauhinia Board would like to include all classes of marsupials. The Doonmuna Board thinks the rates for scalps should be raised to a maximum of 2s. for kangaroos and 1s. for wallabies, and also that native dogs and eaglehawks should be included; while the Fassifern Board thinks that flying-foxes and cockatoos should be included. The Inglewood Board is in favour of the renewal of the Act with a modification of the principle of local disbursements. The Waggamba Board would also include dingoes and increase the rates on wallabies, on the ground that kangaroos are more easily destroyed than

wallabies. Those are the principal suggestions that have been made. Another suggestion that has been made was that the destruction of vermin should be left to the various divisional boards. Well, that was carefully considered by the Government, and on consideration the arguments against it seemed stronger than the arguments in its favour. The members of divisional boards are not as a rule directly interested in the destruction of marsupials, and the boundaries of divisions are in a great many instances different from those of marsupial districts. For these reasons the Government determined not to adopt that suggestion; and under all the circumstances they thought it best to continue the operation of the present Act, at any rate, until from a little more experience we are able to bring in a Bill which will commend itself to the House as being better than the existing law. In the meantime if any consensus of opinion can be ascertained of those men who are most interested in this matter—I mean men who have the most practical experience in the operation of the Act, and who suffer most personal direct pecuniary loss from those vermin—for of course we are all interested in the subject—we shall be glad to give all weight to their suggestions and if possible to frame a Bill giving effect to them. I may say a word about the suggestion to include dingoes and flying-foxes in the operation of the Act. As to dingoes, there is a difference of opinion whether it is desirable to include them. It has been suggested to introduce cockatoos and flying-foxes on account of their destruction of grain and fruit. But those people who contribute towards the destruction of marsupials do not suffer much from flying-foxes and cockatoos; so that a different set of persons should be taxed for their destruction. I remember on the two occasions when a Marsupial Act was passed what a trouble there was in ascertaining what would meet the views of all parties. For the reasons which I have stated, it is thought best, with our present state of information on the subject, to continue the existing Act for another year, and I therefore beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The speech that has just been made by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, in moving the re-enactment for a further period of twelve months of the Marsupials Destruction Act, is almost identical in phraseology with the one which the hon. gentleman delivered on the 16th of July last year. It is a strange coincidence. The hon. gentleman then, admitting that there were imperfections in the Act, led us to believe that he would take some steps in the meantime to endeavour to bring down an amended Bill. I think the question dealt with in the measure is one of very considerable importance, not only to the squatter but also to the selector; I will go still further, and say, to every individual in the colony. We were certainly entitled to have some fuller explanation than has been given by the Premier as to why he has not carried out the promise he then made. I will refer the hon. gentleman and other members of the House to page 77, volume 43 of *Hansard*, and they will see that everything I have stated is borne out by the facts of the case. The hon. gentleman—and if I am in error the Premier will correct me—received a deputation—I believe, an influential deputation—to-day.

The PREMIER: They did not come.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, I saw a member of the deputation, and I heard this stated: that the hon. gentleman had, in reply to one of the would-be deputation, said that the opposition to the introduction of dingoes into the Marsupials Act emanated from this side of the House.

The PREMIER : I never said such a thing.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Mr. Jenkins, of Tamboourine, is my informant.

The PREMIER : I never saw him.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I do not know whether the hon. gentleman saw him or not: Mr. Jenkins was, I believe, one of the would-be deputation; and I know perfectly well that such is not the fact, and if hon. gentlemen will take the trouble to read the small discussion—which, I think, was a great deal too small—that took place on the last occasion when a Bill was introduced continuing the Act, they will find that the hon. member for Darling Downs and myself were the only two members who spoke strongly on the subject of having dingoes included in the provisions of the Bill. This is a very big question—like the rabbit question—and should have received a great deal more attention at the hands of the Government than it has done; but, instead of introducing a comprehensive measure, the Government have simply come down to the House and asked us to renew the measure, which, from their own admission, is manifestly imperfect; and during the twelve months intervening since the introduction of a similar Bill they have not taken the trouble to inquire as to what steps are necessary to make suitable amendments in the Act. The provisions of that statute have done a certain amount of good, but a great deal more good might have been effected had the Government done their duty. Mr. Kates pointed out in his speech what he considered were faults in the present statute. Have any of these faults been inquired into? It would appear they have not. I think the Government should have gone thoroughly into this most important question. Possibly some of the members may think the marsupial has been pretty well got under by the operation of the existing Act, but I deny that such is the case; such a view cannot be sustained by evidence or facts. It is only within the last two days that I gave my willing assent to the manager of a station in which I am interested as a trustee, to supplement the bonus given by the marsupial board in order to try and check this evil. I asked him how many kangaroos there were on that small freehold, which is not very far from Roma, and I believe he said there were about two marsupials to the acre. I at once agreed to take such steps as were necessary to stop the pest. I only bring this forward as an example to show that the marsupials have not been fairly grappled with under the existing law. It is a question of such importance to the interests of the State that the Government might have taken some steps to have amended the Act and make it more beneficial; but it has been dealt with in the same way as the rabbit question. The Government appear to be asleep as to what has taken place in the interior, but probably they will awaken when it is too late—when the horse is stolen the stable door will be locked. I have no doubt the Premier will see deputations representing those who suffer most directly from the ravages of the marsupials; and I hope he will be prepared to bring down amendments to the Bill, or accept amendments from other hon. members. I object to the bald way in which the Bill is put into our hands. I object to a mere re-enactment of an existing measure, because it is a difficult matter to introduce any amendments into such a Bill: and I would ask the Premier, if possible, to withdraw this Bill and bring in a skeleton Bill which will allow of amendments which a large majority of members believe are desirable. I shall not oppose the second reading, because it will be better to take a small modicum than to hazard all; but I hope the Premier will

fall in with my suggestion, and introduce another Bill which will admit of amendments being proposed, and which will at the same time allow of full discussion.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: The hon. gentleman who has just spoken seems to forget that he was a member of the Government that never made any attempt to alter or amend the Act at the time the country was nearly overrun with marsupials in all directions. It is perfectly well known that there are now only a few isolated spots where the marsupials are at all numerous; and in those cases it is owing to the negligence of the boards, or of the people in the districts where they have got beyond control. Country that was some time ago rendered valueless from marsupials is now comparatively clear.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I may be allowed to make a personal explanation in regard to the renewal of the Marsupials Act of 1881. I was not a member of the Ministry till long afterwards; therefore I can hardly be charged with being a member of a Ministry that never made any attempt to alter the law.

The PREMIER : You were in the Government at the time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS : The hon. member was either a member of the Ministry, or else he sat at the back of a Government which paid no attention to the matter. We know perfectly well that the pest is in a great measure overcome, though there are a few spots where the marsupials are still in advance of the ability of those intrusted to cope with them, that is in consequence of negligence or inattention on the part of the marsupial boards or of the people in the districts infested. The Peak Downs, Springsure, and Banana districts, and all that part of the Dawson, were more thoroughly overrun than any other district in the colony, but there are now scarcely either kangaroo or paddamelon to be found in those districts. One practical difficulty in working the Act is that, though the boundaries of the marsupial boards and those of the divisional boards may be identical, their interests are not identical. One part of a division is probably valuable sheep country enclosed with marsupial netting, while another part is occupied by cattle men, who, for their protection, are obliged to allow the dogs to increase. Anyone who has any practical knowledge of marsupials knows that they will eventually be got under by dogs if the latter are allowed to increase; but the sheep men, of course, insist on the dogs being poisoned. The cattle men, on the other hand, who occupy poor country, have to subscribe in the same proportion as those who occupy valuable sheep country, for the destruction of marsupials. That was a defect in the Act last passed, but it was one which could be remedied by administration; and in a great measure it has been rectified. The boundaries have been so altered as to make the people in each district have interests in common, and wherever that has been done the Act has never pressed unfairly on those who come under its operation. I think that the Act now in force is quite sufficient if fairly, intelligently, and earnestly worked to keep the plague under. It has effected that purpose in many districts where they had got to such a pass that it was thought absolutely necessary to abandon the country. One of my runs was abandoned altogether, as far as stock was concerned—not even a few milking cows could be kept there—because it was taken possession of by kangaroos and paddamelons. Since then the dogs have been allowed to increase and there are no marsupials in the district, all the plains being as well grassed as when the country was first occupied.



Mr. JESSOP said : The Minister for Lands seems to attribute most of the trouble under the Act to the mismanagement of the boards. All that a board can do is to levy a rate and pay for the scalps that come in. If they had power to pay any price they liked for scalps in certain districts it might lead to the destruction of marsupials better than under the present Act. It is true that the dogs will kill marsupials, but not to the extent the hon. member says. In some districts towards the border of New South Wales the marsupials are as bad as the rabbit pest in Victoria—they have increased by almost millions during the last two or three years. The greatest difficulty I have found, as a member of a marsupial board, is in regard to the mode of payment. A scalp-hunter brings in a lot of scalps, for which he gets a voucher signed by the receiver ; the voucher is forwarded to the clerk of petty sessions, who is generally secretary to the board ; it has to be signed by him and afterwards by the chairman ; it has then to go back to the secretary, by whom it is forwarded to the Treasury for payment. The consequence is that a man has often to wait fully two months for his money, and there is sometimes a great deal of trouble in getting the money at all. As chairman, I have heard continual complaints about the money not coming up ; and on inquiry I have been told, "Oh, they don't come to the Treasury." I think these boards should be managed on the same principle as divisional boards. They should receive their endowments upon rates collected, and should be allowed to distribute the money by their own cheques to the scalp-hunters. I fully expected to find some provision of that kind in this Bill, but it turns out simply to be a one-clause Bill providing for the extension of the operation of the Bill. I trust the Government will see their way to make some alteration, and I should advise them to adjourn the debate and bring in the amendments which have been suggested. I think native dogs should be included in the Bill ; the opinion was taken some time ago from the various boards, and they were nearly all in favour of native dogs being destroyed. Possibly native dogs do destroy marsupials, but if they were included in the Bill the country would get rid of two classes of obnoxious animals.

Mr. SCOTT said : I do hope that the Act of 1881 will be amended in some respects, but I would rather see it passed as it is than see amendments introduced which would be likely to jeopardise the passing of the measure. I know the Act has done a great deal of good, and more especially in the district I have the honour to represent. The marsupials there are not a tithe of what they were previous to the Act coming into force. However great the dislike may be to native dogs, I am aware that many of my constituents hold that they do a great deal of good. A native dog destroys, it is said, a grass-eating animal every day of his life, and if that is the case some millions of marsupials must be destroyed by them in a year. Where there are native dogs there cannot possibly be many grass-eating animals. The owners of sheep, of course, in the outset have to erect dog-proof fencing, and when the dogs cannot catch the sheep they are obliged to eat the marsupials. In that way, I know, in many districts they are kept down. I shall support the second reading of the Bill as it is.

Mr. DONALDSON : I am quite prepared to agree with hon. members that this Bill has been a very great success, and the destruction of marsupials is largely attributable to it ; but I think the time has now arrived when it is desirable that we should adopt a more comprehensive

measure than the one in existence. It must be remembered that the Marsupial Bill was first introduced when things were very different to what they are at present. A great proportion of the country at that time was entirely occupied by cattle, but at the present day sheep have been substituted for cattle. There is not the slightest doubt that where cattle only were kept the destruction of calves by dingoes would not be very great, and I can therefore understand that cattle owners would rather have dingoes preserved, simply because they contribute largely to the destruction of marsupials. I think it only fair that under the altered condition of things sheep owners should have the same protection as cattle owners were granted. I cannot make out from the speech of the hon. the Minister for Lands whether he intended it to be understood that the Act had been the means of reducing the kangaroos or the dingoes. If the dingo, as he says, keeps the marsupials down, then there appears to me no necessity for paying for marsupial scalps. Another statement which I cannot help noticing was one made by the hon. member for Leichhardt, and that was that the dingo will destroy one grazing animal every day of his life. I am prepared to support that opinion. But will a dingo kill a wallaby when he can get a sheep to destroy ? In my opinion he will certainly go for the slowest animal. He does not care for eating always, and his chief amusement is to destroy, and in that way the sheep is his natural enemy. I regret very much that the Government have not seen their way clear to allow the various marsupial boards to select the animals that should be destroyed in the different districts. If that power were granted, I think that the Act would work much more beneficially for the colony. In the districts entirely occupied by cattle they would, of course, decide that it was desirable to destroy the dingoes, and would let it be known that they would only pay for marsupial scalps ; while in sheep country the reverse would be the case, and they would pay for the destruction of the dingo. I think if the Bill had been drafted on those lines it would commend itself to hon. members of this House ; and if the powers I have referred to were granted the measure could not be drawn on a fairer basis. I agree with the suggestion that it would be highly desirable that the Bill should be withdrawn, in order that it may be re-drafted to embrace the views expressed by hon. members, but I can understand the difficulty of the Government in having to deal with such a conflict of opinion. One man says, "Do not destroy dingoes, because they destroy marsupials"; and another says, "Do destroy them, because they kill sheep." I confess that I am selfish, and would like to see them destroyed. As an instance of the working of some of the marsupial boards take the Bulloo Board. I believe, up to the present time, more money has been paid to the secretary by way of salary than has been paid towards the destruction of marsupials, and the reason of that is that it does not pay to destroy them. There is a large number of marsupials in that district, but the board should have power to offer a sufficient inducement for their destruction. If the board had power to pay a larger sum than that provided for, the Act would work much better. It would be far better to pay even 5s. each for the destruction of kangaroos, so as to exterminate them, than to pay 8d. and only destroy them while they exist in large quantities. I should like to know from the Premier whether an amendment may be introduced into this Bill so as to alter the rates that are now paid. If that could be done, and power given to boards to pay whatever rate they like, it would have the effect of exterminating marsupials

in districts whither they are extending, and where they are not yet very numerous. It would also be very effective in districts where they were once numerous and have now been reduced to a low limit, because the present price paid for their destruction is not sufficient to encourage scalp-hunters to try to destroy the remainder of them. The consequence is that the marsupials are allowed to increase in number until their destruction again becomes a remunerative occupation. I hope my suggestion will commend itself to the Government as being a desirable one to introduce into the measure, although I am not aware whether it is within the power of the House to alter the Bill to that extent, or whether a new Bill would have to be brought in for the purpose.

The PREMIER: It can be done in this Bill.

Mr. DONALDSON: I am very glad to hear it, and I trust the Bill may be amended accordingly—giving power to the boards to fix the rates to be paid and the animals to be destroyed. I am very anxious to see the Bill pass in that form, because we cannot really take too much care in this country in trying to keep down all kinds of obnoxious animals. I do not wish to speak on any subject not immediately before the House, but I must take the opportunity of warning the Government that it is within my knowledge that rabbits are rapidly approaching our borders. Since the last session of Parliament I have travelled through the other colonies, and have seen the ravages committed by those pests; and I have it on the very best information that they are now within a hundred miles of the border of Queensland. Steps should be immediately taken to exclude them from this colony, for if they once come in, large as the first expenditure may appear, it will have to become an annual one in a few years' time. I trust I may be excused for referring to a subject not before the House, and I am labouring under such a cold that it is with very great difficulty indeed that I can express my ideas. If the Premier will consent to amend the Bill in the direction I have indicated he would be conferring a very great boon indeed on the colony. In conclusion, I may say that the subsidy and the amount levied on stockowners by the Bulloo Board, in the district in which I live, amounts to £1,300, of which only a very small amount has been paid away for the destruction of marsupials. If the board were allowed to fix a higher rate, that money, instead of lying idle in the Treasury, would very soon be expended for the very good purpose of exterminating obnoxious animals in that part of the colony.

Mr. NELSON said: I think it was Lord Melbourne who said, "I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything." That remark would apply very well to our Minister for Lands. He seems to air his knowledge about native dogs, marsupials, and everything else, as if there was no gainsaying it. I am certain that if he got authentic information from other districts he would find that his facts are not facts, or only sham facts. They may perhaps apply to the particular district he is conversant with, but they are not capable of general application. The marsupials are now beginning to spread again, notwithstanding the Act as it is now in operation. There can be no question of that in the district in which I reside. With regard to dogs, even cattle men have now come to the conclusion that after dogs have got a little civilised they will never touch a kangaroo or a wallaby as long as they can get good lamb or veal. I agree with nearly everything said by the last speaker, and I need not repeat it. What I rose for was to suggest—I do not know whether

it is within the forms of the House—that the Bill might be referred to a select committee, because it deals with a matter of great importance, and one in which the welfare of the colony is largely concerned. On the strength of our large wealth in land, we are constantly asking for money from the English lender; but if we once allow that land to get depreciated by the spread of marsupials or rabbits, or any other noxious animal, we shall depreciate our credit to the same extent. I think, therefore, that the Bill should be referred to a select committee, not to take evidence, but to amend it and make it as perfect as possible, so that we may cope with this very serious evil in a far better manner than the present Act provides. This is not, of course, a party question. It does not matter to me who originally brought in the Bill—whether it was Mr. Morehead who introduced it or not. That has nothing to do with the question. What we want to do is to get an Act passed which will enable us to deal with this evil; and with that view I suggest that the Bill now before us be referred to a select committee, so that the necessary alterations and improvements may be made in it.

Mr. HORWITZ said: I am glad the Premier has brought this very important Bill before the House. While not losing sight of the fact that there are not so many marsupials in the colony now as there were a few years ago, it has become evident that the amount of 4d. per head for wallabies and 8d. for kangaroos is not sufficient, and that the time has arrived when the rate ought to be increased to 8d. for wallabies and 1s. for kangaroos. Unless we pay more for their destruction, in a few years we shall have just as many kangaroos and wallabies in the colony as ever we had. In my own district the people who used to shoot these animals will not now take the trouble to do so, as it does not pay for their powder and shot. I should also like to see native dogs included. I hope the Premier will take the advice of some hon. members on the other side to introduce a few amendments into the Bill, and I am sure he will have no trouble in passing it. The Bill should also include flying-foxes and native rats. Native rats and flying-foxes are the biggest evil we have at present in the district of Darling Downs. Last year the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, was very much in favour of the introduction of an amendment for the inclusion of flying-foxes. I am surprised that the hon. member should have forgotten all about it.

Mr. ALAND: If you had been here last week you would have heard me mention it.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The matter referred to by the hon. member for Dalby with regard to the payment of the men employed in the destruction of marsupials was brought under my notice while I was in the North. The men object to the system of vouchers, as they have to wait months and months before the money comes from Brisbane; in fact some of them, when they were out of employment, had to leave the district or remain idle for two or three months waiting for the money. I think an amendment ought to be introduced dealing with this matter. It is very hard to decide when doctors disagree. We have gentlemen on both sides of the House holding different opinions with regard to dogs and the increase of marsupials. I know, from my own experience, that on the introduction of stock into a district the native dogs will leave the marsupials to follow the easier-hunted sheep and calves. I once was the first to introduce stock into a district up north where the marsupials were in myriads. The dingoes were there

as nature allotted them; they had never been kept down by poison or the hand of man in any way; they had unlimited opportunity of keeping down the wallabies. I know we had to poison the dogs, because until we did so there was hardly any increase from the cattle. The wallabies are there still, no worse now than they were then. I am quite certain dogs will give up natural game for stock introduced by man. With regard to payment for scalps, I am quite certain that if that system were amended it would encourage men to lay themselves out for the destruction of marsupials much more than at present. As for flying-foxes, if we begin to include all the native game we shall not stop till we get to cockroaches and grasshoppers.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say one word before the debate closes with regard to the question of including dingoes. We have been told that there is a difference of opinion on the subject between sheep and cattleholders, but I do not think so. Only yesterday I was asked if I could get men to join a deputation that was to wait on the Premier with regard to this matter, and I had no difficulty in getting cattle men to join. I was told exactly what the hon. member for Burke has told us—that as long as dogs could get calves they would not go for marsupials. They prefer the veal, as the hon. member for Northern Downs said. I do not own a sheep at the present moment, but I own a good few cattle, and I am one of those who would vote for the introduction of this amendment—that dingoes should be included in the Bill. I am perfectly satisfied it would be a benefit to the country. I do not quite understand what the Minister for Lands meant. He blamed the late Ministry for not having done anything, and yet in the same breath he told us that the Springsure and Peak Downs districts had been cleared of marsupials owing to that very Act. I do not know what the hon. gentleman meant, but I can tell him that if it had not been for the people in those districts they would have been deserts at the present moment. Had it not been for the action taken by the squatters at that time, and by the Government in backing them up, none of the Peak Downs or Springsure lands would have been worth a penny; they would have been simply the haunts of marsupials. The squatters applied for lands to be put up for sale on condition that they would fence them in so that they could keep down the marsupials. If the Government had not given them those lands at the price they offered the whole districts would have been a desert at the present moment. I have no doubt the Marsupials Act has accomplished a certain amount of benefit to the country; but, at the same time, I say it is to the action of the squatters that the destruction of the marsupials in those districts is due. The hon. the Minister for Lands knows it as well as I do. He was not game to buy any of his lands, because they were not good enough. At the same time, he admits now that one of his runs has been simply denuded of all grass by the marsupials. Had everyone acted as the hon. gentleman did, and taken no action in the matter, the whole country would have been a desert. I want to say one word with regard to what has fallen from the hon. member for Dalby and the hon. member for Burke about the payment of these scalpers. It seems a monstrous thing that these men should be paid by vouchers in such a way that they cannot get their money when it is due to them. I know for a fact that those men have positively to sell those vouchers at a loss of some 10 per cent., and in some cases more—to sell them to publicans or storekeepers who are willing to advance the money. This ought not to be. I hope an amendment will be brought

in, dealing with this subject; and if the Premier does not bring it in I shall take care to bring one in myself, to have the payment made in the same way as it is under the Municipal Boards Act.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: I rise to make a personal explanation with regard to the statement of the Minister for Lands, who first accused the late Ministry of having done nothing with reference to the marsupial pest, and then said that I was a member of the Ministry which introduced the measure. Now, sir, as I suppose his remarks are read by some people, I will take the trouble to show that, at any rate in this case, he is in error. In 1880, Mr. Buzacott, who was then Postmaster-General, introduced the Marsupials Destruction Bill in the other House, and on the 18th November he abandoned it for reasons which he then gave. He said:—

“That when that Bill was before the House on the previous evening he stated his intention, if he found that stockowners—hon. members who were interested in the Bill—were in the same frame of mind that day as they were at the time he made the statement, he would move that the Bill be discharged from the paper.”

In 1881 I happened to be Postmaster-General, and in moving the second reading of the Bill I said:—

“In moving the second reading of this Bill, it was hardly necessary for him to point out what a very great evil the Bill proposed to deal with. He and most other hon. members had hoped that the measure that was in existence for some years would have been renewed last year, but owing to the opposition, of which they were all aware, a Bill, supplementing, or rather taking the place of the one previously in existence, was thrown out in that Chamber.”

That Bill was identical with the one which was previously introduced, and I had nothing whatever to do with its construction, not being a member of the Government which introduced it. That charge, therefore, falls to the ground. I might go on to point out that the Hon. Mr. Mein said he quite agreed with the action taken by the Government of which I was the representative on that occasion. I trust that the hon. the Minister for Lands will in future be more careful and guarded in the statements he makes.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

#### NEW GUINEA ISLANDERS EMPLOYERS COMPENSATION BILL—SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to move the second reading of a Bill to make provision for the assessment and payment of compensation to certain employers of Pacific Island labourers who have been returned to their native islands by order of the Governor in Council. The circumstances which have given rise to the introduction of this Bill are probably well known to every member of the House. I will, however, recapitulate them briefly, especially as some misunderstanding appears to have taken place upon the matter. Very shortly before the present Government came into office great attention had been directed to New Guinea. For some time islanders had been introduced from New Britain and New Ireland, two islands lying north-east of New Guinea. When I say New Ireland and New Britain, of course I include the smaller islands lying near them. A great many objections were taken to the introduction of natives from these islands. They were found to be sometimes unhealthy, and nearly always unsuitable for employment on the plantations, besides which the mortality amongst them became very great, so that it was found to be not a satisfactory recruiting ground. Shortly before I came into office attention was directed to New Guinea and the islands adjacent

thereto, as a possible recruiting ground, and, I think, in November or December of 1883, vessels first started for these islands for the purpose of recruiting. The licenses, as hon. members who have any actual acquaintance with the subject know, were not issued for any particular island, nor do the ships clear for any particular island. The license is issued in the form prescribed by the Act—that is, to introduce islanders from the Pacific Islands. The shipmaster's license says that the vessel is "to be employed in carrying islanders between the Pacific Islands and Queensland." That is the form of license under the Act, and the ships clear at the Customs for "the Pacific Islands." Early in 1884, when I began to discover how the Polynesian Office worked generally, and how the system of recruiting was carried on, I ascertained on the return of some ships that recruiting was going on in the Louisiade Group and other islands about there, but as far as was known the mainland of New Guinea had not been visited at that time. The first suspicion I had that it was contemplated to resort to New Guinea itself as a source of labour supply was when I was at Townsville, in the month of June last year, when, from some inquiries made to me—certainly with a very different object from the result they had—I conjectured that it was intended to resort to the mainland of New Guinea as a recruiting ground. Immediately on my return to Brisbane I caused a notice to be published in the *Gazette*, under the regulations that had been made in April of last year, prohibiting all recruiting from New Guinea. The prohibition of recruiting from New Britain and New Ireland had been made before—as soon as we had knowledge of the unsuitable character of the islanders and the unsatisfactory nature of the transactions that were carried on. We had not then discovered the details of the misconduct, although in one instance I refused to allow a whole cargo of islanders that had been brought from those islands to be landed, and insisted upon the shipowners taking them back to their islands, which they did. Information of this kind is not obtained all at once. However, the lamentable disclosures made in the "Hopeful" case during the end of last year, and information from other sources that we considered reliable, but which I need not now enumerate, led the Government to the conclusion that there was a great deal more that required to be thoroughly investigated, and accordingly it was announced in the Governor's Speech at the prorogation of last session that a commission would be appointed to inquire into the circumstances under which islanders had been introduced from New Guinea. I very much regret that there was ever any recruiting permitted at those islands at all. If we had known what we have since known it certainly would not have been permitted; but we had not then very much of the information that we have now. I took upon myself, upon the authority conferred by the regulations, to prohibit it absolutely. That was in June or July last year; but I cannot blame myself for not knowing any sooner what had been going on during the previous six months. I found the office working as I supposed it had been working for many years. Various reforms were necessary, and they were introduced as fast as they could be. It is quite impossible for a Minister coming into a new department to know all at once more than anybody else about it, and to make sweeping reforms before he is acquainted with the working of the office. I do not think the Government can be charged with much delay; and, so far as the trade with the rest of the islands is concerned, I believe it is now as free from objection as it can possibly be.

Whether it is still free from objection in another sense is another question altogether, and whether it ought to be stopped is a matter that must be considered upon another occasion, and is not the matter that is before us now. The Commission proceeded to the various places where the islanders from New Guinea and the adjacent islands were employed, and they examined every one, to the number of about 500, and a most careful investigation was made. Hon. members have probably read the evidence that was taken by the Commissioners, and I am not going to inflict it upon the House. The islanders were brought from a number of islands, and upon various occasions; the number of voyages which were investigated being eight. The first vessel sailed from Brisbane on the 31st December, 1883; and the last from Mackay on the 12th July, 1884, six months after this Government came into office. The first voyage was that of the " Ceara," which sailed from Brisbane on the 31st December, 1883, and arrived at Townsville on the 17th February, 1884, with a large number of islanders. The next one investigated was that of the "Lizzie," which sailed from Townsville on the 22nd December, 1883, and arrived at Townsville on the 17th February, 1884. The next was the " Ceara," which sailed from Townsville on the 13th of March, 1884, and returned on the 28th of April. The fourth was the "Lizzie" again, which sailed from Townsville on March 14th and returned on 2nd June, 1884. The fifth was that of the "Hopeful," which sailed on the 3rd May and arrived at Dungeness on the 17th July. The sixth voyage was the "Sybil," which sailed from Mackay on the 22nd April and returned on the 6th October. The seventh was the "Forest King," which sailed from Brisbane on the 17th May and returned on the 31st October. The last was that of the "Heath," which left Mackay on the 19th July, 1884, and arrived at Townsville on the 25th November. These vessels visited various islands, as may be seen by hon. members on reference to the chart which accompanies the report; and the conclusion of the Commissioners was to the effect that none of these islanders understood the nature of the engagements under which they were supposed to have entered. I need not add anything as to the lamentable occurrences on board the "Hopeful"; some of them were made the subject of inquiry at the Supreme Court, and two of the guilty persons were sentenced to death—a sentence from which they were rescued at the last moment by a large number of weighty petitions that were presented in their favour. For my own part, although I do not shirk my share of the responsibility of these men still being alive, I think that no two murderers ever more richly deserved death. At any rate, what the Government did in bringing the criminals to punishment has had the effect of showing that the Government of Queensland will not tolerate crimes in any place over which our courts have jurisdiction. The murders that were disclosed upon these trials were, as was shown by the subsequent evidence taken by the Commissioners, only one or two isolated cases out of several; but I am glad to believe, and I do believe, that the plea that was put forward mainly for the saving of those men's lives—that such murders had been going on unchallenged for a long period before—was entirely unfounded. I decline to believe that the people who have engaged in that trade during many years before have been habitually engaged in scenes of murder and rapine of that description. I do not wish to say any more about these cases, but although in that particular case of the "Hopeful" other murders were committed quite as atrocious as

those for which the men were tried and convicted, I do not believe that such occurrences as marked that voyage have marked other voyages except on rare occasions, and I do not believe there has been any instance as bad as that. With regard to those eight ships, the report of the Commissioners was that none of the men really understood the nature of their engagements, and the Government were bound to do something. We came to the same conclusion—that the men did not understand the nature of the engagements into which they were supposed to have entered. The question then arose, as to what was the right thing to be done with them. I confess that there seemed to be only one answer. They were here—brought here against their own will, without their intelligent consent—and it was the duty of the Government, for the sake of the honour of the colony, to give them at once the opportunity of returning to the places whence they had been improperly brought. That seemed to me to be the only possible answer as to what ought to be done, notwithstanding any question that might have arisen as to the effect of the agreements that they were supposed to have entered into on their arrival in the colony. There are, no doubt, in existence documents bearing the signatures of the employers, and bearing also, no doubt, marks witnessed as being the signatures of the islanders supposed to have been engaged by those agreements; but who can prove that those men understood the nature of their agreements? The interpreter could not have been produced to show that they did not understand them, and the nature of the evidence that has been given shows that they came under circumstances very different from those which are supposed to be evidenced by the formality of signing agreements on their arrival. That evidence was sufficient to show that the Government officers who were employed at the port of debarkation to see that they understood the nature of their agreements had been deceived—that they did not understand them, and that there was no real agreement existing—and to keep them under those circumstances would be in effect treating them as slaves, as all the essential principles of the state of slavery were present. Then the Government, having arrived at the conclusion that they ought to send the islanders back, proceeded first of all to let the men know that they were at liberty to go if they thought fit. I have heard that in some cases information was not given to the employers—in one or two instances the employers did not receive information on the subject; but that was owing to some inadvertence on the part of the inspectors, and was not in consequence of any instructions given by the Government. I have not thought it necessary, nor do I think it at all desirable, to go in detail into the evidence given before the Commissioners, or attempt to justify their report. It is sufficient to say that in matters of this kind the truth must be ascertained in some way. When ascertained, all that is to be done is to act upon it. It is useless afterwards to go into details to see how it was investigated or how the Commissioners arrived at the opinion expressed in their report. We considered it satisfactory and acted upon it. We take it as a fact now, and shall take it as a fact, that a very large majority of the people here and elsewhere, in fact all who have read the evidence, agree with us that the conclusions of the Commissioners were justified by the evidence. Having then notified to the islanders that they were at liberty to go if they chose to do so, arrangements had to be made for taking them home, and that involved some trouble and consideration. We thought it desirable to send them by steamer. We asked the assistance of the Special Commissioner for New Guinea, General Scratchley, and obtained such assis-

tance as he could give, which, however, in consequence of his want of instructions and the limited means at his disposal, was unfortunately not much. But we were fortunate in securing the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Romilly, to accompany the vessel chartered to take the islanders home. When the vessel was chartered it became necessary to concentrate the men at places where they could be conveniently shipped. Let me here say, lest I forget it afterwards, that one matter that anxiously attracted the attention of the Government was this, that a great number of the men brought from those islands were dead, and that if on the return of their friends the dead men were not accounted for it might have caused a great deal of trouble. The satisfaction felt at the return of the living friends would not have atoned for the sense of injury that would have been felt in connection with those who had not been returned. We therefore thought it desirable to follow the practice which, I believe, it is customary to observe in trading with these people—namely, that every man must be accounted for in some way. Arrangements were therefore made in every case that every man who was dead should be accounted for to his living relatives by as much “trade” as he would have taken back had he been alive. In every case a dead man was accounted for by a package of “trade,” which was to be given to his relatives in his name. The arrangements were as complete as could be made under the circumstances. We had the advice and assistance of persons who could give us sound advice on the subject. I had hoped that one at least of the missionaries who have been stationed for a long time on the coast of New Guinea would have been able to accompany the expedition, and communicated with them with that object. I very much regret that they could not go. However, as Mr. Romilly, the Deputy Commissioner of New Guinea, has gone, and as he is well known, and is acquainted with a great deal of the coast, I hope their absence will not affect the result. Then, having decided to return the men to their homes, the question arose of getting the men ready to go. Some of the islanders expressed a willingness to remain in the colony—I believe about seventy or eighty who all came by one ship—and to attempt to take them back when they were willing to remain would have been almost as great a wrong as to bring them here without their consent. But those men who were willing to go the Government determined to send. There were then rumours abroad that some of the employers intended to try to prevent the Government from returning the men, and that they would get an injunction from the Supreme Court for that purpose. An idea seems to prevail in the ignorant mind that an injunction will be granted to any person who asks for it. The Supreme Court will do nothing of the kind. Unless imposed upon or misled by false statements respecting the circumstances under which the islanders were obtained, and the action the Government proposed to take, no court would have granted any order to restrain the Government from acting. I have not referred to the well-known doctrine that the court never interferes with the Executive. So that any talk about an injunction was merely idle talk which would not have been carried into effect except by imposing upon the court, and I do not suppose that any court of this colony would have allowed itself to have been imposed upon. They would have known sufficient of the facts to have required further information if any attempts had been made to obtain an injunction. Fortunately no such attempts were made. A statement has been made elsewhere as to what I had said to the representative of some planters, who were employers of these men, and

I will take this opportunity of saying exactly what took place. I had heard rumours about intended attempts to get an injunction, at which I laughed; but having seen the statement in the papers that an attempt was to be made that day to prevent the Government moving in the affair, I thought it well to let the persons concerned know the position which the Government intended to take up in the matter, and as soon as I arrived in town that morning I sent a communication to a gentleman whom I supposed to be the representative of the employers, who, it appeared from statements made in the papers, intended to take these measures. He did not get my message for a little time; and very shortly before he came another gentleman arrived, inquiring on behalf of those employers what the Government intended to do; and I told him at once that the intentions of the Government were to send these men back to their homes at all hazards, and that nothing that could be done would have the effect of preventing the Government doing so. Then he remarked that he was aware that an action could not be brought against the Government without their consent in less than thirty days. I said, "Yes, that is so. I shall not give you any assistance to take any proceedings in less than thirty days, and by that time the men will be gone." I said, further—"If you attempt to take any proceedings, which you cannot do without deceiving the court, to interfere with the individual officers of the Government, you will find that you are fighting shadows. The Government have the civil power at their back, and they are engaged in doing a duty that they consider a necessity, and no efforts you can make to prevent them doing it will be successful. It is, however, quite fair that you should know that I have sent to Mr. So-and-So, whom I thought to be the agent of the principals of this matter, to let him know the position which the Government will take up in reference to every man who may attempt to prevent them carrying out this righteous duty." I then told him that every employer who attempted to prevent the Government from performing this duty would be considered as identifying himself with the original wrong, and as disentitled to compensation for any loss he might have sustained by the return of the islanders to their homes, and that, as far as I was concerned, any person who took such a step would have no compensation for the loss he might have suffered by the removal of his servants. Moreover, I said I should regard any such person as having proved himself totally unfit to employ islanders in this colony, and that as long as I held the office of Colonial Secretary no such person would ever get a license from me to introduce Pacific Islanders. I added, "It is only right that you should know the kind of enterprise you contemplate entering into, and I therefore take this opportunity of telling you." That is exactly what took place, and so far as I am concerned I was perfectly prepared to do what I said. Rather than fail in doing so, I would have ceased to hold office. Some persons were misguided enough to make an attempt to retain the islanders by force. I anticipated such an act. I believe the instructions to do this foolish thing were given before my message was communicated to the persons concerned. But, as I said, I anticipated such a thing, and had given instructions to the officers to disregard all protests, and also to other Government officers to get all assistance from the police, and to use such force as might be necessary. Force was necessary in some cases. In more than one instance employers actually locked the islanders up to prevent them from being removed. In those cases the doors were broken open. Besides this, threats were made to give into custody, as trespassers on the plantations, those who were engaged in removing the islanders; but of course

the police were there to enforce the action of the so-called trespassers, and so all the men were taken away. If those threats had been carried out—the attempts to detain the men, with the full knowledge of the consequences—as I intimated on the previous day, I should have been disposed to maintain that the men were disentitled to consideration; but as I have reason to believe that those instructions were carried out in obedience to orders given previously without a full knowledge of what the real position of affairs was, I am not disposed to make any distinction between them and other employers. Now, sir, the men have gone—very fortunately for the colony—and we have rid ourselves of that blot so far as we can, and it only remains to decide what is to be done with respect to the employers from whom these men were taken, and who have been deprived, to some extent, of their services. Before passing to that point, however, I will advert to the contention put forward, that if the Government intended to send the islanders back they might at least have waited till the end of the crushing season. Some people consider that a sound argument, but I must confess I cannot understand it. If the men were detained in involuntary servitude for one, two, or six months, why should they be detained wrongfully any longer? Of course no answer can be given. No doubt the employers sustained some loss, and as soon as I had an opportunity I intimated that the Government were prepared to make some proposition to Parliament for compensating the planters, so far as they were entitled to compensation. The Government are not entirely blameless in the matter; it is idle to suppose that they are entirely to blame, however. I do not mean the present Government; I refer to the colony. It is perfectly true that on board each ship there was a Government agent who was supposed to superintend the recruiting, but Government agents have not always been men of irreproachable character or of satisfactory competency. I may say that none of the men then employed on those ships are now employed by the Government. Several of them, however, had been in the employ of the Government for a considerable time, and though I was not satisfied with them, still I could not from mere suspicion dismiss a Government servant. I have endeavoured to satisfy myself personally of the competency of every man at present employed by the Government under the Act, and I am satisfied from my own knowledge, of the competency and reliability of every man now employed. Those men were there and were Government officers, and to that extent the colony is committed to the recruiting of the islanders. At the same time, it is notorious that the recruiting did not always take place in the presence of the Government officer, nor were there, in the majority of cases, any regulations or instructions to guide the officers; this, however, I did not discover till afterwards. The system had prevailed for several years, and the duties were performed in a very perfunctory manner, if they were performed at all. Men were recruited on shore and brought to the ships, where the agent was assured that it was all right, and the same assurance was given to the inspectors on shore. But the recruiting was actually performed by the agent of the employer. Every man was induced to come to the colony by the agent of the man to whom he was indentured on arrival. The license to an employer to introduce islanders into the colony is in this form:—

"SCHEDULE C.

"In pursuance of the provisions of the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880, I hereby authorise or his agent, the master of the ship to introduce islanders from the Pacific Islands."

So that the license is given to the employer to introduce the men, or to his agent, the master of the ship. Therefore the employer, through his agent, is at least equally responsible with the officer of the Government. But I do not care to insist on that as a reason why compensation should not be given, because we propose that compensation should be given; it is just as well, however, that attention should be called to the matter, especially as one or two employers appear to think that they were perfectly innocent in the matter, never entertaining any idea of their responsibility as the original recruiters of these men. The matter now stands in this way: The men were introduced into the colony wrongfully; they have gone back; the Government admit that, through the default of the system, the colony is committed to some extent to compensate the employers of these men; and a Bill has been brought in for the purpose of granting that compensation. We do not propose to leave them to actions at law; indeed, if actions were brought against the Government they would have very great difficulty in getting any compensation at all, and I may suggest as one reason their responsibility in the matter, and as another, the impossibility of showing that the men were engaged to them at all. But we do not propose to shelter ourselves behind any technical rule of law; we think the colony may fairly be called upon to indemnify those employers who have suffered loss on account of the islanders who have been sent back by the Government. In passing, I may say that the Bill does not apply to the employers of New Guinea islanders only—there were some natives of New Ireland and New Britain sent back under similar circumstances, against the wishes of their so-called employers here—it applies to all of them. They may send in claims before the 1st January, setting forth the name of the islander returned, the time he was introduced, the expense of introducing him, the time he ceased to be employed, and particulars of the loss alleged to have been sustained by the employer by reason of being deprived of the services of the islander. Then it is proposed that these claims shall be investigated by a court specially appointed for the purpose, consisting of a judge of the Metropolitan District Court, who is well known as a specially competent person to deal with questions of fact and evidence, and two assessors, one appointed by the Government and one by the claimant. The assessors may be different in different cases, so that they cannot now be named, though it is not unusual in cases of this sort where a special tribunal is constituted to name the officers in the Bill. I remember that last session hon. gentlemen opposite were particularly anxious to know the names of the persons to be appointed to hold judicial office under the Land Act. With respect to the mode of procedure, the time and place are to be fixed by the judge, and it is proposed that the court shall proceed to inquire into the claims by such evidence, and in such form as shall appear to the judge most likely to do substantial justice between the parties. It is provided, however, that the rules of evidence followed in the Supreme Court shall be observed in every case unless the judge otherwise directs. Then comes an important provision as to the rules upon which the amount of damages is to be assessed. It is very desirable that some rules should be laid down in the Bill itself, for the amount of damages to be allowed in such cases, suppose an action would lie, would be a very nice question for a court of law to decide. During the whole history of British jurisprudence, only two cases have arisen where an action has been brought against a person for depriving another of the services of his servant. One was the case of a theatrical singer—*Lumley v. Gye*—a great

many years ago in Great Britain, where a proprietor of a theatre brought an action against a rival for having induced a celebrated singer whom he had engaged to sing to stop away. The question arose whether the action could be brought, and it was decided that it could, but no decision was come to as to damages. The other case occurred in 1880—*Bowen against Hall*—where it was again held that the action could be brought, but on what basis the damages should be assessed has never been settled. Under these circumstances, it is just as well we should lay down the principles on which damages are to be assessed, especially as, from correspondence I have received and communications I have otherwise had, I understand that in some cases the planters would like to sell their plantations to the Government under the form of damages. Now, we are not prepared to do anything of that kind. We are not prepared to pay them the value of their plantations as compensation. In the 5th clause we endeavour to lay down a fair rule, which will recommend itself to every hon. member who desires simply fair play between the colony and the employer, bearing in mind that each is partly responsible for the loss sustained. Technically, perhaps, the employers are most responsible, but as far as the Bill is concerned the very opposite has been admitted—that the colony is responsible. If the provisions of the Bill err I think they err on the side of liberality to the employers. The rules laid down are these:—

"1. A claimant shall not be entitled to any damages that have not been actually sustained, or that are of a merely speculative nature; nor for any loss of prospective profits.

"2. Regard shall be had to the length of time during which the islanders were actually employed by the claimant.

"3. No greater damages shall be allowed than the actual net difference between the expenditure which has been actually incurred or would have been incurred by the claimant in respect of the introduction, maintenance, clothing, medical attendance, wages, and return of the islanders of whose services he has been deprived, if such islanders had remained in his service for the full period of three years, and the cost of engaging other labourers to perform the same work which would have been performed by such islanders if they had remained in the claimant's service, together with any loss which has been actually sustained by the claimant by reason of his inability to procure other labour."

The last provision means this: That if the employer has employed any other labour to do the work that would have been done by the islanders he has been deprived of, he shall be paid the difference in cost; and if he was unable to employ or engage other labour he is to be paid the amount of loss sustained. I believe that is the rule that would probably be laid down by a court of justice if it was left to be decided on general principles—the highest amount of damages that could be claimed on any estimate. It is not to be forgotten that, in considering what loss has been sustained, these islanders would have cost a considerable amount for maintenance, clothing, medical attendance, and their return, and that other labourers may turn out to cost not so very much more after all; but lest this provision should be abused, two other rules are laid down. The 4th rule is:—

"A claimant shall not be entitled to any damages unless he proves that he has used all reasonable means to supply the place of the islanders of whose services he has been deprived."

That means this: That if a man has lost money on thirty or fifty islanders he will not be allowed to say, "I will let the plantation go to ruin and I will make the Government pay for it." The reasonable thing for a man to do is to secure other labour for himself, just as he would do if his islanders had become sick and incapacitated



from work or had died. Exactly the same rule is applied in courts of law in the case of a man suing for damages for wrongful dismissal. A man cannot, after being dismissed, lie down on his back for six months without trying to get work, and then claim damages for loss sustained during those six months. If he can get work and will not, he cannot get damages. That is only common sense and justice. The same rule must therefore be applied to the planters, and the loss is theirs if they do not try and provide a remedy for themselves. No reasonable man would ask for any more than is given by this Bill. There is another rule laid down which must not be forgotten, and it is brought home to us very forcibly in connection with the New Guinea difficulty. The 5th rule for assessing damages has reference to the probability of the islanders refusing or becoming incapable of working, or dying before the expiration of the full period of three years. Of course, it may be said that there may be some difficulty in ascertaining these things; but so there is a difficulty in ascertaining all facts when left to a jury; but if a judge and two assessors cannot come to a right conclusion, then I think no other court that we can constitute would be more satisfactory. So much do the Government propose to concede, and I should be very sorry indeed if the planters asked for any more than is offered. If more is asked for I think it would be very unfortunate. We now come to some formal provisions in the Bill. If the assessors agree their decision is to be final; but if they differ the judge is to decide between them. If any point of law arises it is to be referred to the Supreme Court; and when any employer has had more than one man taken away from him he is to make one claim in respect to the whole lot. Then there is a provision for appointing other assessors if one dies, and there is a provision for allowing a reasonable amount of costs, £50 being the maximum. I think that is quite sufficient, because after all it is simply a question of fact. A provision is also made to the effect that no person shall be appointed as an assessor who is in the Government service, or in the employment of the claimant or of any other claimant. Those, in short, sir, are the provisions of the Bill, and I think none can say that we do not intend to deal with the planters fairly and honestly. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BLACK said: I am not prepared, Mr. Speaker, to criticise this Bill in an adverse way; but I must say that I am prepared at once to admit that the main provisions contained in the Bill are of an equitable nature. They are certainly far better than I anticipated the planters would be able to get from the present Government. If I misunderstood the Government in the past, I hope they will continue to carry out the principles of justice which I think they have commenced in this Bill. But, sir, although, if the terms of this Bill are carried honestly into effect I do not think the planters will have any very serious ground of complaint, yet I do not think that I should be doing right if I were to allow the present occasion to pass without taking some exception to a few remarks which have fallen from the Premier in connection with this vexed question. I regret very much, that when the Government determined that these islanders should be sent home they did not at once apprise the employers of their intention to meet their claims in an equitable manner. Had they done so, a great deal of the ill-feeling which has been engendered against the present Government would have been avoided. I also wish, Mr. Speaker, most emphatically to state this: that the planters in no way ever connived at the irregularities brought

to light, or other irregularities in connection with the traffic; and I will not admit that the planters have been in any way responsible in recruiting these islanders. The hon. gentleman has referred to the captains of vessels holding the licenses to recruit. Strictly speaking, that is quite correct; but I would ask who it is who appoints the captains? Who is it that approves of every man on board the ships? It is the Government.

The PREMIER: They do now.

Mr. BLACK: And they have ever since the last Polynesian regulations were put in force, and that is during the whole time that six of the vessels now in question have been to the islands.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: The captain can not be appointed until he is approved of by the Government, and the whole of his ship's crew have to be approved of by the Government before the vessel can get away. It is not the wish of any planter to employ men who have been improperly obtained, and they have done everything in their power, as laid down by the Polynesian Labourers Act, to see that the supervision over that trade should be properly carried out. They do this by the payment of the poll-tax to the Government of 30s. per head to enable them to employ agents. They further do it by nominating the captain, who is to be approved by the Government before he is allowed to sail; and the same thing applies to every one of the crew. Although the Commission acted to the best of their ability in taking the evidence they did in the North, I still maintain that the evidence was in a great many cases such as would never have justified any court of justice in declaring that those men were improperly obtained. I leave out, certainly, the cruise of the "Hopeful"; than which a more disgraceful filibustering expedition I have never heard of in the annals of the past few centuries. But let any impartial person refer to some of the evidence, and he must be of my opinion, that the islanders as a rule have no idea and no conception of what time really is—whether it is three moons or yams, or borimas, or ten or twenty moons. All they knew, in the majority of cases, was that they had made up their minds to leave their islands. I will refer first to the cruise of the "Ceara." She left on the 31st December. I wish the House to understand that in this case here was the same ship, the same master, the same Government agent, the same recruiting agent. If it was ever intended wilfully to mislead those men as to the duration of their agreements, any sensible man will see that one tale of deception should be maintained throughout that particular voyage if those men were to be brought there for three years. If it was intended to mislead them they would all have been told that they were to come for, say, three months. But what do we find according to the evidence? One man states that he came for one day, five stated they came for one moon, five for two moons, eight for three moons, seven for four moons, five for five moons, three for ten moons, one for thirteen moons, one for twenty moons, one for twenty-three moons, one for two yams or borimas—which is synonymous with year—and one for three years. Seeing on board the same ship such a diversity of ideas as to the duration of their agreements, it seems to me that those men did not really care how long they were coming for. They were not misled, in my opinion, as to the duration of their agreements. Then we come to the next ship, the "Lizzie." There were four boys for one moon, twenty-seven for two moons, forty-five for three moons, two for four moons, and four for three yams or years. It is hardly necessary for me to



go through the whole of those voyages, but the same irregularity prevails in every one of them. Let us see what the boys say themselves as to time. In question 224, a boy named Nimal is asked by the Commission, "How many moons in one yam?" and the answer is "Ten." That is his idea of one yam or one year. Then he was asked, "In how many moons will you go back?" His answer is, "Two and a-half moons on schooner, eleven moons here, two yams and four moons go back." If the Commission can make anything out of that it is more than I can do. And that is the evidence on which that boy is supposed to have been brought here without understanding the nature of his agreement, and is to be sent back. Another boy from the same island is asked—after he had been eleven months in the country, from the 17th February to the 17th January—"How many moons have you been here?" and his reply is "Three." That is his idea of the value of time. Question 355 is, "How many moons in one yam?"—to which is appended the words, "No answer." "How many moons have you been here?" Again, "No answer." He was unable to tell the meaning of a moon, or a yam, or anything else in connection with time. Another boy is asked—question 367—"How many moons in one yam?" and the answer is, "I do not understand." At question 6596, a boy is asked, "How many moons are there in one borina?" and his answer is, "Three." Another boy brought by the same ship is asked the same question, and his answer is, "Four"; and the reply of another boy—question 6633—is "Two." A borina is supposed to represent one year or one yam. There is no doubt that, when those boys saw there was a chance of being returned home—and they had several weeks to prepare for this visit of the Commission—directly they found they had a chance of going back to their islands, the same love of novelty that induced them to come here induced them to say they were quite willing to go back. I am very glad to find that every question asked by the Commission of the boys as to their treatment was answered satisfactorily, and I am very glad that the hon. member for Buimba certified to the facilities offered to the Commission in every place for a fair and thorough examination. No attempt was ever made by the planters to mislead the Commission, or to prevent their examining every boy on the estate. They were not only allowed to examine every boy they specially came to examine, but they were given every opportunity of getting a full insight into the way the Northern estates are managed, which hon. members know has been a matter of very serious misrepresentation in years past. There is one very interesting document in the report of this Commission, and I think it is to be regretted that the advice given in it was not acted upon by the Government very much earlier. It was well known to planters that the labour that was being brought from New Guinea and the adjacent islands was anything but suitable for the work upon which it was to be employed. This is a letter from one of the Polynesian inspectors, dated 26th January, 1884; and I would point out that only two of the vessels referred to by this Commission—two out of eight—had left the colony at that time. This letter was from Mackay, where the mortality amongst these islanders had already been very great, and the planters themselves drew the attention of the Polynesian inspector to the unsuitability of labour coming from New Guinea and the adjacent islands. I shall read this letter because it shows that those who knew most about the subject lost no opportunity of bringing it under the attention of the Government:—

"Sir—I have the honour to report that owing to the large number of deaths among the Pacific Island labourers at Homebush, I, by request of the manager, accompanied Dr. Byrne to that estate, for the purpose

of holding inquiry into the matter. The arrangements in connection with the labourers we found to be satisfactory; every precaution had been adopted to guard against the spread of dysentery—the particular form of disease from which the bulk of the invalids were suffering; but, in spite of all care, twenty-five deaths have been reported during the current month; and immediate preparation is being made at the islanders' hospital for the reception of thirty patients from this estate alone. I have requested Dr. Byrne to send in, at his earliest convenience, a professional report respecting the cause of the sickness. In a less degree, on all estates where recent arrivals from strange islands are employed, the mortality is high, and I very much fear that during the ensuing winter the death rate will be still greater than it is at present. Under these circumstances, the conviction is forced upon one that the natives of New Britain, New Ireland, and the adjacent islands—and even of Santa Cruz and the Northern Solomons—are physically little adapted to contend with the change of climate and the mode of life entailed by residence in this district. In connection with this subject, I have also the honour to bring under your notice the constantly recurring desertions on the part of labourers recently landed. It is beyond doubt that the late arrivals from strange islands have come in here with very imperfect notions of the nature of the work required from them; it is difficult—impossible—to convey to an untutored savage precise ideas of the novel conditions of life that he will be called upon to encounter on his arrival in this colony; and there is nothing surprising in the spectacle of an islander who has been used to pass the greater part of his time lying under the shade of the nearest rock or tree, exhibiting a tendency to relapse to his natural mode of life, rather than adapt himself to the steady, continuous drudgery exacted from a labourer on a sugar plantation. There are, however, elements of danger in these desertions, to the men themselves from exposure and possible starvation, and to the general community from depredations committed by the absconders in their search for food; and from the display, latterly, of a spirit of resistance, on any attempt at recapture, which may easily assume an attitude of active aggression. On the grounds, therefore, of the excessive mortality amongst these people and the frequency of desertions, the result of an absolute ignorance of the work they bind themselves to perform, I, in so far as I may be permitted to do so, would protest against the further introduction of a class of persons who are of very doubtful benefit to their employers, and are a source of trouble and perplexity to everyone interested in their welfare; and in doing so I believe I am in accord with every enlightened employer of labour in this district."

Now, sir, after that letter was received, six vessels out of the eight referred to in this report were licensed by the Government to proceed to these islands.

The PREMIER: To go to the Pacific Islands.

Mr. BLACK: They went to these islands.

The PREMIER: To not one of those islands. The Government prohibited their going to those islands, at the earliest possible moment—to New Britain, New Ireland, and the adjacent islands.

Mr. BLACK: "And the adjacent islands"—New Guinea.

The PREMIER: Not a man had been brought from New Guinea at that time.

Mr. BLACK: I maintain the traffic should have been stopped from those islands.

The PREMIER: It was stopped from the islands referred to in this letter—New Britain and New Ireland.

Mr. BLACK: "And the adjacent islands." Now, sir, the hon. the Premier has told us of the threatening attitude he adopted towards the employers when they, in ignorance of what the Government intended to do, stood upon the defensive as far as their rights were concerned. Their idea was that if they allowed these islanders to be taken away without any protest at all it was quite likely the Government would turn round and say, "Why did you let them go?" Yet there was no resistance. The resistance the hon. member referred to, about the men being locked up, was simply passive resistance. That took place on the Herbert;

the men were kept in a hut, and when the Polynesian inspector came he was told, "If you want them you will have to go and take them." That was the whole amount of resistance that took place. At Mackay I do not believe there was the least, and at the Johnstone the same. I do not think it is necessary to criticise this Bill now; when it gets into committee we shall have a very good opportunity of doing so; but it is a question for consideration in order to facilitate the matter, whether instead of a judge of the Metropolitan District being appointed, a Northern judge would not be better. It would save a great deal of trouble in the event of claimants wishing to defend their cases in person. However, that is a matter we can decide when the Bill comes into committee. I was rather amused at the Premier's information in connection with the 4th subsection of section 6:—

"A claimant shall not be entitled to any damages unless he proves that he has used all reasonable means to supply the place of the islanders of whose services he has been deprived."

The hon. gentleman said that, if a planter lets his plantation go to the dogs because he is losing a few of these islanders, he is not entitled to compensation. I can only tell the hon. gentleman that the planters are not quite such idiots as that. If a planter has got a good crop he will do the best he can to get it taken off, but the chances are that, being deprived of his labour at a very critical time, he, in order to get it off, will—as the hon. gentleman himself has admitted—have to engage labour at a higher price than that which he believed he was paying to those islanders. That is a matter that I believe will be honestly decided by the arbitrators whenever they meet; but I certainly deprecate the idea that planters, or any business men, out of mere pique, are going to allow their interests to suffer in such an absurd way as the hon. gentleman suggests. However, I must congratulate the hon. gentleman upon having brought in a Bill which is a somewhat tardy act of justice towards a large class of persons in this colony.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, and committal made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### RETURN OF ELECTORS.

The PREMIER: I beg to lay upon the table a return showing the number of electors in each electoral district of the colony, as far as at present known, and move that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

#### ADDITIONAL MEMBERS BILL— SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The question of additional representation in certain portions of the colony in the Assembly is a matter that comes up periodically, and I suppose there is no question upon which more difference of opinion may reasonably arise. Inhabitants of different portions of the colony know that particular districts are rapidly increasing in population, but in the interval between one census and another there is no means of ascertaining exactly what the increase is, and while they feel a sort of vague sense of injustice no one is able to say that there is actual injustice, or, if there is, where it exists or what is the best way of remedying it. Now and again, however, some sudden change takes place in the distribution of people, from some unexpected increase of prosperity, or some new discovery in one part or another, and this is sufficient to show that there is a real injustice or inadequacy in the representation of some parts of the colony. The census upon which the present representation was founded was made in 1876, and since that time a very great change has taken place in many parts of the colony. In the North it has been the custom to say for a long time that the constituencies are entirely under-

represented, and the old case of Fortitude Valley, of course, we are all familiar with. The last census was taken in 1881. It is no use referring to that now as a basis for amending the representation. The next census will be taken next year, and as soon as that has been taken it will become the duty of whatever Government may be in power in the following year—1887—to bring in a Redistribution Bill. I think it will be accepted that it will be the duty of the Government of the day to do that. In the meantime, attention has been often called to alleged inadequacies of representation. About two years ago the late Government proposed to give one additional member to each of four constituencies—Fortitude Valley, Mulgrave, Mitchell, and Townsville. That measure was not passed, as the Government were defeated. Last session the present Government contemplated bringing in a Bill dealing with the subject, but the extreme pressure of other business prevented them from asking the attention of the House to it at that time. The Government have now undertaken that duty, and take this, the earliest moment, of introducing a Bill for that purpose. I freely admit the difficulties there are in dealing with the question, and the only thing we can do in that case is to arrive at the best conclusion we can, and propose it to Parliament. Some hon. members think that the proper basis of representation is the electoral rolls. The party on this side of the House never recognised that as the true basis; we have always maintained, what is regarded as an axiom in Great Britain by both sides of the House, that population is the proper basis of representation. That is recognised, I suppose hon. gentlemen are aware, in the United States of America, where the representation of the different states in Congress is adjusted periodically, according to the population, and not according to the number of voters. In the Dominion of Canada, the province of Quebec always returns a fixed number of members—sixty-five—and the representation of the other provinces bears the same proportion to the number sixty-five that their population bears to the population of Quebec. We decline—of course it is a radical doctrine, yet the opposite doctrine is not put forward even by the Conservative party in Great Britain—to consider that male adult population ought to be the basis of representation. This battle has been fought in this House over and over again, and I only advert to it now because there are many members here now who were not present when those discussions took place. At the present time we have no statistics to go upon, and the only information we have at all reliable in the form of statistics is from the electoral rolls, and they are not a sound basis to go upon alone, though, of course, they afford some information. I suppose everyone who has thought of additional representation to any of the constituencies of the colony up to the present has admitted in the first place that the Valley is entitled to an additional member. That has been recognised ever since the Act was passed in 1878, by which it did not get the additional member which was proposed by the Government, and which it ought to have got. Probably the attempt to take away the additional member for Fortitude Valley was made more as an attempt to throw out the Bill and defeat the Government than because it was desired to deprive Fortitude Valley of another member. It might have been done for various reasons, but no doubt the majority voted against it for that reason. Those who are familiar with the northern part of the colony know that Townsville is under-represented; that has been known for some time. When the Redistribution Bill of 1878 was passed, the population of that town was comparatively small to what it is now. It was comparatively a small town, and was given one

member, while the district of Kennedy had two. That constituency then not only included the town of Townsville, but extended from Cape Grafton to the Burdekin. Since then Townsville has become one of the largest towns of the colony. It is larger than several towns which are returning two members. I have no statistics, and I have been unable to get any accurate information as to the population of that town; but judging from its proportions, number of houses, and number of children, I estimate that the population is larger than that of Drayton and Toowoomba or Ipswich, and nearly as large as that of Rockhampton or South Brisbane. Those who have seen it more recently will be able to form an idea as to whether my estimate is correct. I do not think I am far wrong in supposing that the town of Townsville contains about 7,000 people, and is continually increasing. That is one constituency. Besides the town of Townsville which has increased, there is the rest of the district—the northern end—where, on both sides of the boundary, which is a line drawn from a particular spot in the watershed, not very easily definable, north-east to Cape Grafton—a country which was a *terra incognita* when the last Redistribution Bill was passed—there is now a considerable population. On the Townsville side there is the town of Herberton with a considerable number of people; in the north-east corner there is the settlement on the Mulgrave River; then there is the Herbert River and the sugar plantations; there is Mourilyan Harbour, and the sugar plantations on the Johnstone and on the Burdekin—all these have sprung up, besides the enormous increase in the town of Townsville since the last Redistribution Act was passed; so that really Townsville is under-represented. The Cook electorate is sometimes referred to. I do not know whether it is under-represented or not, because the circumstances of the electorate change; some of the districts that were at one time very flourishing are now almost depopulated, and other parts that were almost uninhabited are thickly populated now. It is almost impossible to discover, in the absence of statistics, what the population of that district is. We are, however, able to ascertain the number upon the electoral roll; and I believe it is a little less than half of what it was some time ago. Another district that has been frequently maintained to be under-represented is that of the Mitchell, and I think, from what we know of the settlement which has taken place there during the last seven or eight years, that that must be so; it has increased more in proportion than other electorates of the colony. Another district, which was mentioned on another occasion, was the district of Mulgrave. There has been a great increase of settlement just along the coast; but on the other hand, in the western part of the district the population has diminished. There again, statistics might or might not show that the district is entitled to an additional member. That cannot be settled at present. With respect to another district, which has not been mentioned formerly—the district of Mackay—it has been said that it is under-represented. Upon that again there are great differences of opinion. We are told sometimes that people are leaving it by hundreds—some hon. members say that it is on account of the conduct of the Government in that part of the colony. At other times we hear that the population is getting larger. Another district that is mentioned sometimes is the district of Rockhampton. We are certain that the boundaries of the different electoral districts, from the events that have happened since 1878, have become unsuitable. These are all difficulties which must suggest themselves to anyone who attempts to deal with the matter in a practical way;

but they are difficulties which cannot be solved just now. We have not the materials for solving them, but we shall have next year, when the census is taken. I shall take care that that census shall be so taken as to show the populations of the different electoral districts, and such other adjacent portions as may be conveniently added to them or taken away from them. The census ought to be taken in such a way as to facilitate the redistribution of the electorates of the colony. I have pointed out now some of the difficulties that beset the question; what remains is that the electorates of the Valley, Mitchell, and Townsville are under-represented. Some electorates are perhaps under-represented and some are over-represented, but we can be sure of these three, which are the ones that specially demand attention. The latest statistics I have been able to get are the electoral rolls, which are complete in some cases up to the end of April. The others, which are not complete, are not of much consequence, but I have been able to get them circulated this evening, and I will ask hon. members to follow me. I refer to these as a means of gaining information, and not as the true basis of representation. The true basis of representation is population, and hon. members may supplement the information given by these lists by their own knowledge of the population, and the circumstances of those parts of the colony. We may take it, I think, that about 1,000 or 1,100 is a fair number for one member, as near as I can make it out. There are some constituencies very small, and others very large. I have not had time to add these up and divide, but I think the number comes to about 1,000. That is about the number, but I say I do not recognise it as a basis; I am only arguing from the information given in this list. I will take the electorates in order; the figures given are in most cases after the revision in April:—

Electoral Districts.	Number of Electors on 1st January, 1885.
Aubigny ... ..	1,355
Balonne ... ..	884
Blackall ... ..	829
Bowen ... ..	615
Bulimba ... ..	1,434
Bundamba ... ..	1,018
Burke ... ..	1,290
Burnett ... ..	417
Carnarvon ... ..	487
Clermont ... ..	531
Cook ... ..	1,963
Dalby ... ..	546
Darling Downs ... ..	2,237
Drayton and Toowoomba ... ..	1,933
Enoggera ... ..	2,582
Fassifern ... ..	1,223
Fortitude Valley ... ..	2,443
Gympie ... ..	1,659
Gregory ... ..	533
Ipswich ... ..	1,476
Kennedy ... ..	2,859
Leichhardt ... ..	783
Logan ... ..	1,251
Mackay ... ..	2,022
Maranoa ... ..	1,563
Maryborough ... ..	2,194
Mitchell ... ..	3,072
Moreton ... ..	1,150
Mulgrave ... ..	1,588
Normanby ... ..	394
North Brisbane ... ..	2,806
Northern Downs ... ..	537
Oxley ... ..	613
Port Curtis ... ..	508
Rockhampton ... ..	1,480
Rosewood ... ..	899
South Brisbane ... ..	2,420
Stanley ... ..	2,051
Townsville ... ..	3,343
Warwick ... ..	817
Warrego ... ..	1,229
Wide Bay ... ..	1,892

There are three one-member constituencies: Fortitude Valley with 2,443; Mitchell, 3,072; and Townsville, 3,343. Each contains very much more than the number, about 1,000, which should return one member. Taking this as a kind of basis for the two-member constituencies, it will be seen that they have all nearly about the proper number of 2,000 for two members, with the exception of Leichhardt. The first is Cook with 1,963, which is not unreasonable; Darling Downs has over the 2,000; Drayton and Toowoomba, slightly under the 2,000; Enoggera has considerably over the number; Ipswich under the 2,000; Leichhardt, of course very considerably under; Maryborough, just over; North Brisbane, considerably over; Rockhampton, very considerably under; South Brisbane, considerably over; Stanley, about right; and Wide Bay about right. On considering this list, it will be seen that the conclusions one would arrive at *a priori* from a knowledge of the colony on this subject correspond in a remarkable degree with the figures shown by the electoral rolls. We do not of course recognise the electoral rolls as the proper basis; but the results shown by this electoral roll list bear out in a surprising degree—much more closely than I should have supposed—the fairness of the proposition suggested in the Bill, the second reading of which I am now moving. The most unfair cases at present are those of Fortitude Valley, Mitchell, and Townsville. Mackay is set down as over 2,000, but, as I said before, there are a good many circumstances about that which require consideration. We have been often told that there is a great exodus going on there, and I do not think we should be justified, especially as we do not know the actual population of the place, and as from our knowledge of it there are other places equally as large returning but one member, we should not be justified, I say, in dealing with it and giving it two members at the present time. I point out that Cook, according to this return, taking the basis of the rolls and not the male population, has already two members for 1,900 electors. That the boundaries of the district are very inconvenient, I of course admit. I saw a telegram in the papers this morning that Cairns and Herberton should be in the same electorate. At the present time, Cairns is in one electorate and Herberton is in another; but to define this and make new boundaries would take a very long time, and the Government are not prepared to bring in a complete Redistribution Bill now. We have arrived at the conclusion that we should make an alteration in these pressing cases. First of all, we propose to deal with the electoral district of Fortitude Valley. No doubt, objection will be taken to giving Fortitude Valley a second member, although it has been proposed from this side of the House every year since the injustice has been done, and on one occasion it was proposed from the other side. In addition to that, the electors of the district of Fortitude Valley once obtained a promise from the late Government to give them a second member, though that promise, of course, has never been carried out. So far as Fortitude Valley is concerned, the proposition is not to divide it, but to return an additional member. Coming to the electoral district of Mitchell, the question arises as to which is the best way to deal with it, whether to give it an additional member or to divide it. There is no harm in referring to what is well known, that at the present time there is likely to be a vacancy in the electoral district of Mitchell; almost at any time we may expect it. There is no reason why the election should not take place for the new districts, for of course it would be absurd that a man should elect to sit for one half of a district in which perhaps

he had a minority of votes. We have considered it expedient to divide that district, and the vacancy about to arise in the district will afford a very good opportunity of doing so. Hon. members will see from the plan circulated how we propose to divide it. There is a south-eastern half, which will take in Tambo, Blackall, and along the Barcoo River, and I may say that I think there will be no difficulty in making up the electoral roll should the electorate be divided. The magistrates will meet at Blackall, and in the course of a morning—or, at all events, of a morning and an afternoon—they will be able to see in which part of the two divisions an elector resides.

Mr. DONALDSON: There will be no difficulty whatever.

The PREMIER: I think not. I think there will be no difficulty whatever, because the divisions will correspond as nearly as possible with the divisional board boundaries; and the boundaries have been chosen so that it may be seen in which division each elector is, without any difficulty; and I think a revision of the roll for that district could be completed within three weeks after the passing of the Act. At present the district is extremely unwieldy, and the division of it will be a great improvement. As to the population in each part, it is of course impossible to give an accurate estimate, but although I have not a very great knowledge of it myself, I have been through it, and I think it will be found that the population will be as nearly as possible equally divided. Possibly in the south-eastern half, which is the smallest half and includes the Barcoo, the population is likely to be larger than in the other and the number of electors smaller. Passing from there to Townsville, the absurdity exists of one member representing a district including a large and populous town like Townsville, and the settlements and sugar plantations on the Johnstone, Mulgrave, Herbert, and Burdekin Rivers. There will be no difficulty whatever there in dividing the district into two. There will be the town of Townsville; and what is proposed as the boundary of Townsville is a line between the Ross River and the Bohle River, which are, I think, about six miles apart. I do not exactly know the line that runs between the two, but it is a well-known boundary, and in an hour or an hour and a-half a division could be made of the electoral roll, showing which electors should be in the town electorate and which in the country electorate, with the exception, perhaps, of half-a-dozen situated on the Ross or Bohle River. Townsville is a large town, and it is proposed that it shall return two members, leaving the country district at present included in the electorate, which is to be called Musgrave, to return one by itself. We desire to do what is fair. Some people, I believe, think we are doing rather more than is fair in this respect. I do not think so. In 1864, when an Additional Members Bill was proposed, the sitting member for a district out of which a new electorate was carved held his seat for the electorate which retained the old name, and a new election was held for the other. That principle might have been followed here, but it seemed to be, perhaps not strictly so proper, but more courteous at any rate to the sitting member to give him the choice. It is therefore proposed that the sitting member for either of the electorates which have been divided shall be allowed to say which constituency he elects to sit for, only he must signify his decision in writing to the Speaker within seven days after the passing of the Bill. Following the precedent of 1864, the present sitting member for Townsville would be deemed to have been elected for the electoral district of Musgrave. However,

as I have stated, we do not propose to follow that form. Those are substantially the provisions of the Bill. In reference to the revision of the electoral rolls, it is provided that the Governor in Council shall appoint a day or days "not less than fourteen days nor more than two months after the passing of this Act, for holding revision courts for each of the said electoral districts," and, as I have pointed out, one sitting will, I think, be quite enough to complete the rolls. I do not suppose that every hon. member will think that this is the best arrangement that might be made. I am quite aware that there are many inequalities of representation in other parts of the colony, but, with the materials at our disposal, I think no other proposition could be made as being so distinctly and indisputably fair, and required by the existing circumstances of the colony. I hope that the Bill, if passed, will be passed in a short time, so that the additional members may take their seats as soon as possible. I move the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I agree with what the hon. gentleman has said about the difficulty there is in dealing with a question of this kind, and I am inclined to give him full credit for having attempted to meet that difficulty according to the basis laid down in this Bill. But I am bound to dissent from the proposition which he has just stated, and which I must say he has stated before in this House, that population should be the basis of representation. The hon. gentleman has quoted the practice of England and the practice of the United States. Now, if one comes to look at the conditions of society in those countries and compares them with the conditions existing here, one must come to the reasonable conclusion that that basis alone would not be fair. Unfortunately for us in this colony the basis of representation has been made a party question, which it should never have been. I do not know how it has arisen, but it is a fact that it is a party question, and has been so for some time in this House. If we consider the condition of the North we shall see how utterly wrong such a basis would be. There the population is chiefly composed of male adults. The male adults of the colony are the taxpayers of the colony, and without the taxpayers there can be no Government. Now the great principle of representation is taxation, so that population alone cannot be taken in this colony, or, in fact, in any colony with a large extent of new territory being gradually peopled, as there is in Queensland. There must be some other basis added to population to make it work fairly and honestly for all parties. In a country like the United States, where one member represents about 150,000 people, it makes very little difference whether he represents a thousand or two more or less. I need not refer to England, where the same thing is seen more distinctly, as that is a much older country. I mention the United States because it is a comparatively new country, and there, as I have remarked, one member represents—I cannot say the exact number at present, but I am certainly not far wrong in putting it at 150,000 people. Now, the hon. gentleman seems, I think, to have a sort of suspicion that opposition will be made to the increase of representation for Fortitude Valley. Well, I do not think there will be any, and he might know that from the proposition made by the late Government before they went out of office. He is quite mistaken as to the reason why Fortitude Valley did not get a member at the redistribution in 1878; the reason Fortitude Valley did not get a second member given to it when that redistribution took place was that the majority of the members of this House thought that the

capital was represented by five members and would have been over-represented by six; and I believe most heartily that such would have been the case. We all know that Brisbane is more or less represented by more than city members; every member from the country represents, to a certain extent, Brisbane and its surroundings. Therefore, I maintain that the capital of a country should not have as large a share in the representation of the country as the outside districts have, in proportion to the population; and I think it will be found, if the hon. gentleman refers to Great Britain, that this is the case there—that the number of members representing London and its suburban districts is very much less than it should be were the representation according to population. I have just made up the number of electors on the electoral rolls of the metropolis at the present time, and I find that Brisbane, with an additional member given to Fortitude Valley, will not be represented as it should be according to the population basis. Brisbane—consisting of North Brisbane, South Brisbane, and Fortitude Valley—will have under this return 7,669 electors on the roll, and that is considerably over the number required for six members; therefore no person could oppose an increase on the ground that it would be over-represented—as I certainly would do otherwise. I have often heard the hon. gentleman state that a member of the late Government promised an additional member to Fortitude Valley, but all I can say about it is that I was a member of that Government at the time, and I knew nothing about it till I heard it in this House. I do not deny that such a promise may have been given; but it did not emanate from the Government. The hon. gentleman has stated the case pretty fairly; at the same time this return of the electoral districts is not quite correct, for I think it can scarcely be supposed that the electoral district of Mulgrave has lost over 200 electors within a few months. Here is the roll, which was the latest published till we received the list supplied to-day; and I find Mulgrave had then 1,796, while now it has only 1,588 electors.

THE PREMIER: A lot of the navvies have gone away.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps that is so, the railway being finished; but the hon. member must remember that the town of Bundaberg has been growing with a rapidity exceeded by, perhaps, only one town in the colony—that is, Townsville. There is also a large settlement in the Woongara Scrub, and that, with the increase to the town of Bundaberg, will far more than compensate for the number of navvies who have gone away. Therefore I have come to the conclusion that the list is not correct; and I think that Mulgrave should have been considered as entitled to an additional member, seeing that it is growing so fast and that it is such a large district. The hon. gentleman talks about the absurdity of the present member for Townsville representing the town of Townsville, the plantations on the Burdekin, the plantations on the Herbert, and the Herberton Tin Mines. I admit that it is rather a conglomeration, and that it is rather absurd for them all to be represented by only one member; but the absurdity will not be removed by the Bill. Whoever represents Musgrave will represent a constituency, two portions of which have been looked upon as being antagonistic. The member for Musgrave will represent the plantations on the Burdekin, the plantations on the Herbert, the few squatters on the lower side of the ranges, the tin-miners and silver-miners on the Star River, and the tin-miners on the Herbert: the only

difference between him and the present member for Townsville will be that he will not represent the town of Townsville. Something might have been done to put Herberton along with Cairns, and the good sense of the House would have seen the necessity for that, because the interests of the people are the same, whereas the people of Herberton have no interest in common, except as colonists, with the planters on the Herbert and the planters on the Burdekin. I shall give the Bill my hearty support and I think no member of the House will oppose it, because it is well known that the places to be represented by additional members have been under-represented for a long time, and it is just as well that the under-representation should cease, as it ought to have ceased two years ago.

Mr. BEATTIE said: I am very glad indeed that the Government have fulfilled their promise by introducing this Bill to provide for additional representation of certain electorates, which certainly ought to have had additional representation—as the hon. member for Townsville states—years ago. From both observation and information I have formed the opinion that Townsville and the surrounding district ought to have had increased representation two or three years ago; therefore I heartily concur in giving that representation to Townsville and the adjoining electorate which they ought to have. At the same time, I need not congratulate myself on the proposition the Government are making to give the electorate I have the honour to represent its fair meed of justice, because I have tried often to get it; but I must say, in face of the remark made by the hon. member for Townsville, that I differ from him as to the manner in which increased representation was taken from Fortitude Valley at the time the last Electoral Act was passed. The reason he gave for taking away the additional representative was not the correct one, because the motion for depriving Fortitude Valley of an additional member was moved by a member who did not represent one-half the number of people, taking population as the basis of representation. I have often dinned it into the ears of hon. members that Fortitude Valley was peculiar in itself—that it was most wrongly deprived of the representation it ought justly to have had. I thoroughly agree with the Premier, that population is one of the best bases of representation. The hon. member opposite spoke about a male population being all taxpayers; but I would ask whether a large mixed population is not composed of taxpayers? When we speak of the indebtedness of the colony, we say that it is £60 or £70, as the case may be, per head of the entire population—we take care to include the whole; and I do not see why the whole population should not be represented. It does not require many words from me to show that Fortitude Valley is entitled to another member. The population is something over 12,000 people, and surely that population is entitled to more than one member. When the proposed additional representative was taken away it had a population of 9,000. It actually had a population of 4,000 more than many of the towns which return two members to this House. Therefore I looked upon it as a serious act of injustice, and that was one of the reasons that I continually brought the matter, session after session, before the House and tried to make hon. members retrace their steps and do justice to Fortitude Valley. On the occasion I refer to, it was brought under my notice that some of the outlying districts were in want of representation, and I certainly supported hon. members in giving a member to an outside district that had never had representation, because it was proved to me that that large district ought to have representation. Yet, while I was

favourable to meting out justice to districts that had an insufficient amount of representation, the House deprived my constituency of that fair amount of representation to which it was entitled. I am very much pleased indeed that matters have arrived at this point, and that the Government propose to mete out that fair share of representation to the electorates that require it. I will cordially give my support to the passing of this Bill, hoping at the same time that the necessary steps will be taken to enable the new members to take their seats in the House during the present session.

Mr. BLACK said: I can understand that those electorates that are receiving some consideration are naturally inclined to speak in favour of the Bill, but after hearing the promises that the Government made up north lately I look upon this Bill as a perfect sham. The Government made a great point during their tour to Townsville and the Towers of telling the people up there that their great want was additional representation, and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government led the constituencies to believe that at the meeting of Parliament he would bring in, if not a Redistribution Bill, an Additional Members Bill which would remedy the great want that it was suffering under. What do we find? The hon. gentleman has brought in a Bill by which the northern portion of the colony receives two additional members. The southern portion also receives two, and I would like to know where the proportion of representation is that is going to be of such benefit to the North. There is certainly slightly increased representation. At present the North has eight members out of fifty-five, or one-seventh. If this Bill becomes law, the North will have ten members out of fifty-nine, or one-sixth. This is the way the hon. gentleman tries to remedy the vexed question of under-representation which he told the Northern people was their great grievance. That is the hollow way by which the hon. gentleman is going to relieve what he himself pointed out as their one grievance. If the hon. gentleman had really wished to do justice to the North—not merely to the North, but to the whole of the constituencies—he might just as easily have brought in a Redistribution Bill based on the figures which he has read to the House to-night, and in which no interest is taken; he might then have relieved any inequality in representation by bringing in an Additional Members Bill after the census is taken. It would have been quite as easy to do so as to have brought in this half-and-half measure, which gives additional representation to certain portions of the South that really are not in want of it. There is at present a bunch of no less than six members for the Brisbane district alone, and I consider that is quite enough, bearing in mind the area represented. I agree with the hon. member for Townsville that population is not the only basis which we should go upon; taxation is one chief element of representation, and should be taken into account more than the area of the electorate. As far as the northern portion is concerned, recollecting that they contribute one-fourth of the revenue of the colony, they are entitled to more than one-sixth or one-seventh of the representation, and until the northern portion of the colony gets greater representation than it has the electors will not be satisfied. The hon. gentleman has slurred over the case of Mackay; actually when there are 2,000 electors resident there, he does not think that it should have another member—but why he does not say. There are some electorates down upon this list that it is hardly an honour to anyone to represent, because of the few electors. The average

of the whole electorates appears to be about 1,040. There are eleven electorates with 6,000 electors in the whole lot, which makes an average of 548, whereas there are no less than 12,000 electors in the northern portion of the colony, and at present they are only returning eight members. I am not prepared to oppose the passing of the Bill, because I am glad to see the North even getting two additional members; but I am quite certain that the Northern electorates will see what a hollow promise it was the Premier made during his recent tour, and as in this House he has betrayed the electors of the North, so they will find that every promise he has made was a promise the hon. gentleman never intended to keep.

Mr. PALMER said: I do not intend to say a great deal on this Bill, because I agree with the Premier that there is much difficulty in dealing with a question like this so as to suit all the circumstances of the colony, with its increase of settlement and increase of towns. But, taking this Bill as a whole, and speaking as a Northern member, I think the Northern constituencies will be very much disappointed when they find that it is the outcome of the Additional Members Bill which has been held up before them for some sessions past. I am quite certain I speak the sentiments of most of the voters in my district when I say there will be great dissatisfaction amongst them when they find that there are to be only two new members added to the Northern representatives. The anomalies in the list before us must be apparent to anyone who scans it and who sees the number of electors on the rolls. Owing to the circumstances under which population is distributed in this colony, population is not a fair basis for representation, as the area of some of the districts will show. For instance, the area of Burke is 124,750 square miles. It stands about fourth on the list for its Customs returns, which gives a good indication of the kind of people in the district; it includes a large mining centre; and it is represented hereby by one member. I intend, when the Bill is in committee, to move an amendment giving an additional member to represent the interests of the mining district from the Etheridge to Woolgar, leaving the pastoral districts and some of the towns for another representative. It is quite time the entire system of representation was placed on a different footing; and I hope the Premier will carry out thoroughly the reform he has promised, when the new return of population has been taken and a Redistribution Bill comes before us. In the House at present there are eight or nine members representing Brisbane alone; for I consider that the representatives of places such as Enoggera and Fortitude Valley represent the capital quite as much as those who sit for North and South Brisbane. There is another anomaly which I will point out. According to the last returns there are 1,290 names on the electoral roll of the district of Burke, and I have every reason to believe that that number will be increased by 300 or 400, whose names are now on the quarterly list. In that case, that vast district will not have the same representation that Drayton and Toowoomba have, or Ipswich with its 1,476 voters, or Rockhampton with 1,480. Those places have two members, while the Burke has only one. There is another reason why population is not a fair estimate for representation. In towns there are organisations in existence to see that men's names are put on the roll, while in large pastoral or farming districts they have not the same facilities, nor do they take the same interest in politics as men do in towns. I notice that the Mitchell district is to be honoured with another member, although its area is only 65,000 square miles, while that of

Gregory is 106,000 square miles. Looking at the bunches of members for Southern constituencies that sit on the other side, I say the change I contend for is a just and fair one. Increase of settlement has been going on much more rapidly in the North than in the South of late years. A remark was made some time ago by the junior member for North Brisbane—a remark that has not been contradicted or explained away by any other hon. member—that the North had neither brains nor money. The real fact is that the North of Queensland is able to buy the South three or four times over, and then have sufficient to start a new colony with. Remarks of that kind are owing to the dense ignorance which prevails here with regard to the actual condition of things in the North. Ministers take trips to Townsville, but we seldom hear of their going further north, and the idea of going to the Gulf of Carpentaria is one which has never entered their heads. I can assure them that the first Minister who visits that part of the colony will receive a very cordial reception. It is their duty to learn more of the wants of the North; and the long recess of several months might have been very properly employed by one or more of them in going further north than they have hitherto been in the habit of doing. The outcome of that ignorance we see in the Bill before us, which is supposed, for two or three years, to smooth a difficulty and soothe all those harsh feelings which have sprung up between North and South. This is all the sop that is thrown out, and the people of the North will be very much dissatisfied when they hear of it.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I can scarcely allow the occasion to pass without a few remarks on this Bill. From the observations already made, one would be led to believe that this colony was divided into North and South, and that there was no West to it at all. As a representative of the western portion of the colony, I must enter my protest against any such idea. It is very true that the Western districts may be thinly populated, but we are entitled as much as any part of this colony to increased representation. I regret that the Government cannot see its way clear to give to Warrego an additional member; but if we were to go on increasing the number of members according to the electoral rolls I think we should crowd the House, and our seats would become uncomfortable. Certainly I should see no objection to the probability of getting additional members on this side, as we have plenty of room; but those on the other side, I feel sure, would be very uncomfortable. I have said already I would like to see Warrego have an additional member, and I will give my reason. The area of that district is very large, and one member is hardly able to do justice to the whole of it. I am very glad to hear that there is a probability of having a Redistribution of Electorates Bill before very long, because this return which I hold in my hand is convincing proof that some parts of the colony are entirely over-represented and other parts under-represented. It is quite time that some of these pocket boroughs, or rotten boroughs, or whatever you like to call them, were wiped out and large ones substituted for them. I do not think we require a large addition to the number of members; what we require is to have them more equally distributed over the colony, and I shall certainly view with delight any proposition dealing with the question on an equitable basis. Some remarks have been made to the effect that the only true system of representation is on the population basis. If that basis were taken, and a member given to a certain number of individuals, it would mean over-representation to the towns. If any proposition of the kind is entertained, it will surely be necessary to say that

a certain number of persons in populous parts shall be compared with a smaller number in the country districts. The last Distribution of Seats Bill in Victoria was on that basis, and I think it was a very fair one indeed. When that matter comes on for consideration, if there be an attempt made to give a member for an equal number of residents in town or country, I shall certainly enter my protest against it. I have already remarked that I hardly think it desirable that a large number of members should be added to this Chamber; but I certainly regret that an additional member is not given to the district I represent, because I know there should be a much larger number of electors on the roll than are on it at present. The reason of that is that in the country districts they neglect to place their names on the roll. As an illustration of this, I may mention that during my trip through the electorate I was on three stations where more men were employed than were on the roll altogether. I can give the names of the stations—they are Landsdowne, Nive Downs, and Thurulgoona. In the country districts people do not take the trouble to register as they do in the towns. I am sure that if population were taken as the basis of representation Warrego would be entitled to another member. I cannot conclude without complimenting the Government upon what I consider the very fair manner in which they have brought forward this Bill. One of the districts to which they propose to give extra representation is certainly one in which they are not now supported. My intention is to support the Bill.

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

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1878 AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—An error has occurred in the printing of this Bill, and I must take advantage of the forms of the House and move that the Order of the Day be discharged from the paper, with the view of introducing another Bill.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was discharged from the paper.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. We propose to proceed to-morrow with the business in the same order as to-day, except the Marsupials Bill, which is to be considered on a subsequent day.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at seventeen minutes past 9 o'clock.

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