

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 26 August, 1885.

Pacific Islanders Employers Compensation Bill.—Rabbit Bill.—Petition.—Question without Notice.—Formal Motion.—Isis Branch Railway.—Message from the Legislative Council.—Extension of Western Railway.—Mackay to Eton Railway.—Financial Statement—resumption of debate.—Marsupials Destruction Act Continuation Bill.—Additional Members Bill.—Adjournment.

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

**PACIFIC ISLANDERS EMPLOYERS
COMPENSATION BILL.**

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that on behalf of Her Majesty he had assented to 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.

RABBIT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that on behalf of Her Majesty he had assented to a Bill to prohibit the keeping of rabbits in the colony of Queensland, and to authorise their destruction.

PETITION.

Mr. FOOTE presented a petition from certain ratepayers and others in South Brisbane near the Victoria Bridge, against the permanent closure of the Victoria Bridge, and moved that it be read.

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

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. BLACK said : I beg to ask the Premier, without notice, when the statistics for last year are likely to be ready for distribution? The only information hon. members have as to the statistics of the colony is that to be derived from those of 1883; but a considerable time has elapsed since then, and it would be useful to the House if we had information of a much later date on which to base our calculations.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said : I cannot answer the question now, but if the hon. gentleman will give notice I shall be able to do so to-morrow,

FORMAL MOTION,

The following formal motion was agreed to :—

By Mr. LISSNER—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing the amount of money paid by the Government for advertising to the different colonial papers, specifying the amount paid to each paper during the past financial year.

ISIS BRANCH RAILWAY.

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

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions, namely :—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Isis Branch Railway, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 18th day of August instant.

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

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Isis Branch Railway, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 18th day of August instant.

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

—said the length of the proposed railway, which would start from the main line on the Howard side of Bundaberg, was 11 miles 48 chains. It would pass through remarkably easy country, which contained a large quantity of timber suitable for railway purposes, and the cost of construction would not exceed £3,000 per mile. There was a considerable farming settlement in the Isis Scrub, and a very large extent of available rich scrub land, from 20,000 to 30,000 acres, was still open to selection. The farmers living in that locality had been unable to cart their produce to market up to the present time on account of the distance they had to go, and this short branch line, which the Government now proposed to construct, would prove a very great boon to them. As he had indicated, there was a large farming population in the locality, so that, what with the timber traffic and agricultural produce, he had very little doubt but that the line would turn out a profitable one. The cost, exclusive of rolling-stock, would be between £32,000 and £33,000. He moved the resolutions standing in his name.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Has there been a town proclaimed at the terminus of this railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the Isis Scrub?

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not aware that there has, but the terminus is in the centre of agricultural farms.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Does the Minister for Lands know whether any arrangements have been made for creating a town there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton): Yes; there is a town called Abingdon, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Isis Scrub.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: On the route of this line are there any lands now open to selection under the present Land Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: None of the land in the Isis Scrub is open for selection under the present Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. A small portion of the land has been taken up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The land in the locality of the terminus was selected some time ago.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Under the old Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; under the old Act.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: What I want to know is whether there is any land selected under the new Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think not.

Mr. MELLOR said he believed that what had been stated by the Minister for Works in connection with the line would be realised. The land in the Isis Scrub was some of the best in the colony, and he had not the slightest doubt that when the railway was constructed it would prove a paying one. The present contractor for the Bundaberg line would be much benefited if he got the contract for this branch, because there was neither sufficient ballast nor enough timber on the land along the Bundaberg line, whereas there was any amount along the Isis branch, which line could be built very cheaply. The township of Abingdon was, he thought, somewhere near the terminus, and there was a considerable population there at the present time. The proposed branch would be a great boon to the residents, as it would afford them good means of access to market.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think the township of Abingdon was anywhere near the proposed terminus; it was near the junction, and the main line from Bundaberg passed not very far from it.

Mr. MELLOR: No.

Mr. NORTON said it was not a very great distance from it. The township was nearer to the main line than it was to the terminus of the branch line. The township was at the commencement of the scrub. He had never been into the scrub, but it was pointed out to him at one time when he was passing. He did not know how far the line would extend beyond that. He wished the Minister for Works would tell the Committee, if he could give any idea of the area of land under cultivation in that scrub which would be benefited by the construction of that line.

Mr. BAILEY said he had some little acquaintance with the district, and he thought he accompanied the hon. member for Port Curtis on the occasion that gentleman referred to. The township of Abingdon would be very near to the terminus of the line, and immediately adjoining was an immense quantity of scrub lands which had hitherto been utilised by timber-getters; but of late years those timber-getters had become farmers, and there were a great number of selections, portions of which were cleared and under crop. Those selectors had no access to any market, and had had to draw their produce a great many miles until they could secure water carriage, and get it the best way they could to Maryborough. There was still a great quantity of timber left, and a considerable amount of the land was held under timber leases, which were now falling in and which would be open for selection. Every acre of land that had been open for selection in that scrub had been eagerly taken up by selectors from Bundaberg and other places, and he did not think that, at any time, where there had been an opportunity of taking up land there, one selection had been refused. There were thousands of acres in that scrub still that ought to be thrown open for selection for agricultural purposes as soon as possible. He had seen crops on

the land, and he must say that they all looked very well. Not only had they to depend upon the population already there but also upon that which would settle as soon as the lands were thrown open. Not only was the land good for farming purposes but there was an immense amount of peculiar kinds of timber there, which were not to be found in many other scrubs in the colony and which were of great value, and would be brought down by that line. As a branch line it would act as a very important feeder to the Bundaberg line, and, as his hon. colleague had said, it would lessen the cost of the Bundaberg line very materially indeed by furnishing the contractors with timber and ballast, which could not be obtained on the present line.

Mr. ALAND: Has not the contract been let for the Bundaberg line?

Mr. BAILEY said it would be so much the better for the contractors. He was very glad when he saw contractors make something. He had been told that they were not doing so well under the present Government as they used to do, and if they could help them to make their contract better he would be very glad to see them benefited as well as the country. The timber-getters were the real pioneers of the country—the men who had gone into dense scrubs remote from any market, and almost inaccessible to any market, and who had the courage to take up selections and commence as farmers, having cleared away the timber. Those were the men who were deserving of every encouragement; and the branch line asked for was only a small matter and would add to the trade of Maryborough, as well as assist a great number of struggling men and settle a large population in the district.

Mr. NORTON said he thought from what had been stated that the country referred to had been overrated. The hon. gentleman who had just sat down had said that there had always been the greatest eagerness to secure those lands when any portion was thrown open, and at the same time he said that they were almost inaccessible to markets. It was a remarkable thing for farmers to settle in a place where there was no prospect of a railway. There must be something not quite accurate in the statements he had heard. He did not think the hon. gentleman would willingly mislead the Committee; but he suspected that those farms could not be in such inaccessible places as had been represented. The selectors certainly deserved as much consideration as many others who had already lines of railway. He understood just now from the Minister for Lands that the terminus of the line would be in the centre of that agricultural district; but the hon. member for Wide Bay told them that it would be very near Abingdon. When they reached Abingdon they were only at the commencement of the scrub. The time he met the hon. gentleman there, it was pointed out to him that the scrub ran up ten or twelve miles beyond that. At Abingdon they were merely at the commencement of the scrub, so that the great bulk of the selectors would be as far, probably, from railway communication as ever. There had been a great deal of discussion as to which route the line to Gayndah would take. The line by Abingdon would be shorter than any other of those proposed; and he wished the hon. Minister for Works would tell the Committee whether the line to Gayndah would be an extension of the one at present before them?

Mr. BAILEY said the hon. gentleman had asked why the selectors took up those lands when there was no market accessible. They did so in the way that pioneers generally did. They showed their energy and determination

to conquer the natural difficulties, and trusted that at some time the Government would provide them with communication by means of a road, a railway, or some other means. It was that faith that led many selectors to settle there. At the present time they were debarred from access to a market; but they had great confidence in the Government, the same as people in all other parts of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government had not yet any reliable information as to which route the line would take to Gayndah. Until there had been a trial survey made it was impossible to say by which route it would be extended. It would depend entirely upon the nature of the country and its adaptability for settlement.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the Minister for Works meant to say that there was no possibility of the line to Gayndah being an extension of the one at present before the Committee? Was the present one of the alternative lines?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was a trial survey from the Isis Scrub towards Gayndah, and he thought it had reached as far as Dingwall. There was also a trial survey from the Kilkivan line, and a third trial survey from Mungar. It would depend upon which was the best for settlement. The Government were unable to say at present which of the lines would be adopted—whether from the Isis Scrub, from the Kilkivan line, or from Mungar.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as there was such an amount of indefiniteness about the future policy of the Government with regard to this line it would perhaps be better to postpone it until they came to some fixed determination.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the proposed line was a good one in itself, and it did not matter whether it was extended to Gayndah or not.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if the Minister for Works would hand over his portfolio to the Premier they would get on quicker. If the Premier would undertake to do the whole of the work of the Government they would get on much better.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the Minister for Works whether it was the intention of the Government to continue the proposed line further through the scrub? Was it their intention to add to the line beyond the plans now laid on the table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that at the present time it was impossible to say. It might be the intention of the Government hereafter. They asked now for authority to construct a line of railway 11 miles 48 chains in length. Of course if the necessity arose for its further extension he presumed the Government would undertake it, but before they did so they would get the approval of the House. He could not say at the present moment whether the line should be extended to Gayndah or not. In the meantime all they asked for was the line to the Isis Scrub where there was a large population.

Mr. NORTON said he did not refer to the Gayndah line when asking the question. He referred to the Isis Scrub line itself. It had been represented to him that the scrub extended for about ten miles beyond Abingdon, and then branched to the right and left. If settlement took place to any extent at all in that scrub the whole of it would be taken up. If farmers were going to settle there the line would be practically useless to them until it was carried on further. He therefore asked the Minister for Works whether it was the intention of the Government

to carry the line further into the scrub to give the whole of the selectors of the scrub lands the use of the line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not their intention to do so at present.

Mr. NORTON said he supposed, from his remarks, that the Minister for Works did not really know the position of the country, and had not much information upon it. It was a pity, if the scrub extended as far as had been represented to him, that for the sake of the cost of a few miles it was not to be extended further. When the job was undertaken at all it was as well to take the line seven or eight miles further as to stop where the Government now proposed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was no doubt it was a capital line of railway. So far as settlement was concerned the district was well settled before the railway was spoken about, and it would be much better settled now. It was one of the branch lines which the Government might safely go on with. He spoke from a knowledge of the country. With regard to the remarks made by both the hon. members for Maryborough—namely, that this line would be a fine thing for the contractors of the Maryborough and Bundaberg line—What had they got to do with the contractors for that line? Let them tender low enough to get it if they wanted it, and he hoped a few thousands would be taken off their tender too.

Mr. MELLOR said that what he said about the contractors was that it would be more likely they would get the line done cheaper now than if they waited longer, because he was satisfied the contractors of the Maryborough and Bundaberg line could carry out this line cheaper at the present time than anyone else could. The hon. member for Port Curtis, he thought, knew very little about the country, because the line would go very nearly into the centre of the scrub.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Does it run near Abingdon?

Mr. MELLOR: Yes; and south of that there is also a considerable amount of scrub.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Where is Abingdon?

Mr. MELLOR said it was on the main Bundaberg road. It had been a settlement for a considerable time, and there was close settlement all round. The land there was of great value to the State and a great deal of it was unsold.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he was not personally acquainted with the country through which the proposed line of railway was to pass, but he knew a great deal about it from hearsay. For many years he had been accustomed to hear the people of that neighbourhood say that there was an unlimited supply of really good land and a quantity of valuable timber there. There was no idea when the money was voted for the line that it was to be a contingent line from which an extension might be made to Gayndah, and it would not be just or fair to the community to delay the construction of the line for that reason. He hoped the Committee, having voted the money for the line, would not by any action delay its construction, which would be a great benefit to a thriving community.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he noticed the junior member for Maryborough was, by a sidewind, attempting to induce hon. members of the Committee to express an opinion with regard to the Gayndah line. He sincerely trusted that his (Mr. Morehead's) hair would be as grey as the Chairman's before any such railway was sanctioned by Parliament. A more

wretched or rotten railway could not be conceived or imagined. Surely they had done enough, or would have done enough, by the proposed alterations in the tariff, to oblige Maryborough without saddling the country with a worthless railway into a worthless country. A more miserable, more God-forgotten country they could not see except they went to the desert of Northern Queensland. The only justification for the construction of a line to Gayndah would be the extension of such a line as that proposed, where, when it went through such country as the Isis Scrub, it might be extended without any very great loss, possibly, to the State. He entered his protest now against the extraordinary proposition—a proposition that could only have been conceived by a Maryborough man or a Maryborough member—that there should be a railway from Maryborough to Gayndah, whether by way of Mungar or any other place. "From Dan to Beersheba" all was barren. The whole thing was bad. Both terminal points were useless and rotten, and it would be almost a good thing for the colony if Maryborough were treated in the way the Chairman suggested the other night that the Darling Downs should be treated. He could not give a better simile than that—not invented by the Chairman, but copied by him from possibly an equally able statesman. He trusted the Committee would not be misled by what had fallen from the hon. member for Maryborough, to imagine that a railway from Maryborough to Gayndah would be anything but a perpetual millstone round the neck of the taxpayers of the colony.

Mr. BAILEY said that to class the Burnett district with the land near the coast was too grave a matter to be treated lightly. He would suggest to the Minister for Works that, while the two dogs were quarrelling over the bone of the rival routes, it might possibly be best of all to extend the railway from Kilkivan to a point some five or six miles to the westward of Gayndah. He did not know the country himself, but he had been informed that upon that route were some of the most splendid wheat lands in the colony. It was a remarkable fact that the only land he had heard of in the Burnett district as being fit for agriculture had been left out of any possible railway survey. He was very glad to hear the Minister for Works say that he would take the Western line through the country where closest settlement was possible, and he would strongly recommend him, before coming to a decision, to take into consideration the suggestion he had just made. It would be far more profitable to the country and convenient to the settlers to send the line in that direction than to run a straight line from east to west for the benefit of a few pastoral tenants at Gayndah.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House.

The resolution was adopted.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning the Charitable Institutions Management Bill, with amendments.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

EXTENSION OF WESTERN RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions, namely:—

1. That the House approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the

Western Railway from 299 miles 37 chains (from Dalby) to Charleville, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 18th day of August instant.

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

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Western Railway from 299 miles 37 chains (from Dalby) to Charleville, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 18th day of August instant.

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

—said the length of the proposed extension was 30 miles and 35 chains, and, with the exception of a small portion of land required for station purposes at Charleville, ran all the way through Crown land—land, as some hon. members knew, not very good and not worth much. The earthworks, bridges, and culverts required were very light. The cost of construction was put down by the Chief Engineer at £4,000 a mile, and he did not think that a very high rate when the nature of the country was considered. All the timber would have to be dragged from the neighbourhood of Miles and Dulacca. The cost of carrying the timber the whole of that distance would, of course, considerably increase the cost of the work. He believed there was no timber to be found near the line suitable for bridges and similar purposes, and therefore the work was estimated to cost £4,500 a mile.

Mr. NORTON: What about ballast?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The timber in the locality was too small for use, but it was intended to make a trial of some of it to see how it would turn out, because it was an enormous distance to have to haul timber from this side of Dulacca to Charleville.

Mr. NORTON: What about ballast?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was plenty of very good ballast to be found along the line, so that there was no difficulty on that point. The country through which the line passed was very poor—almost worthless. After the station at Morven, he did not suppose that there would be any necessity for another between there and Charleville. The cost of constructing the station would not be great. This section would take the line to the end of the bad country, and it was to be hoped that it would be a benefit to the settlers in the district and out west.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: No land would be required to be purchased at all for the line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There would be a small portion required to be purchased for the Charleville station. There was no private land along the line.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions to the House.

The resolutions were adopted.

MACKAY TO ETON RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Mackay Railway to Eton, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 11th day of August instant.

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

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Mackay Railway to Eton, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 11th day of August instant.

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

—said he might mention that it was the hon. member for Townsville, he believed, who got the plans and sections for the Mackay Railway passed through the House, and at that time it was represented that the site fixed for the terminus at Eton was the most suitable in the locality, being free from flood. The inhabitants of Eton had, however, been agitating for a considerable time to have the site changed and an addition made to the line, so as to bring it into the town. He felt some difficulty in complying with that request until such time as he could get the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Ballard, and the Commissioner for Railways, to go up to Mackay and inspect the site. The result of their inspection was that Mr. Ballard came to the conclusion that the line should be sent into the town, more particularly as it passed through a Government reserve. All the land that was required for the terminal station was about two acres, which had been purchased from a private party with the assistance of the hon. member for Mackay. The price put upon this land in the first instance was, he thought, £1,400 or £1,500; but the owner made considerable concessions, and ultimately it was bought for £120. It was not at all an unusual thing to do that. He had known people ask £3,000 and perhaps be paid £200. There was nothing unusual in such a big price being asked. At all events the land was got at a reasonable price, which he believed anybody would have given for it. There were two acres, and the price was about £70 an acre. It would be very inconvenient for the people to have to tramp a mile out of the town to the railway station. The extension would cost about £5,000, and the line would not be complete without it.

Mr. BLACK said he could indorse nearly everything that had fallen from the Minister for Works in reference to the extension. But he would point out to the Committee that not even two acres of land were required—only about an acre and a-half—and the hon. member was quite correct in saying that he (Mr. Black) had taken some trouble in arranging the financial matters in connection with that small purchase. The amount first asked was £700, but he considered that in the interests of the district, and certainly in the interests of the Government, he was justified in trying to arrange more favourable terms. He believed the cost of the total amount of land necessary to complete the extension would be about £120. The inhabitants of the district were very much astonished when they found that the contract for the present line, by some extraordinary means, stopped about a mile short of the township. They naturally thought that they were entitled to the advantage arising from any expenditure of Government money in the district; and they had bought land in the township at an enhanced value, on the understanding that the railway was going there. No one was more astonished than he was to find that the contract terminated about seventy-five chains outside the township, and on private land. The consequence was that the owners of the land on which it terminated at once proposed to cut up their land into a rival township, which would, of course have materially affected the interests of those who had bought land in the town. Besides that, it would add very considerably to the cost of every-

thing going backwards and forwards between Mackay and Eton. He was very glad that the Minister for Works had sent up Mr. Ballard and Mr. Curnow to look into the matter, and he believed those gentlemen, as soon as they got on the land, at once admitted the absurdity of stopping the line a mile from the township. If the extension were not made, it would disappoint the people for whose benefit the line was constructed, and probably put them in this position: that in order to carry on their trades they would have to abandon the sites they had bought from the Government, and remove to the rival township. He trusted the Committee would see that it was really necessary in the public interest that the extension should be made. Hon. members would see, on looking at the plans, that there was no engineering difficulty in the way—that the extension would entail no heavy expenditure, but that it would confer a considerable benefit on that part of the district.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions to the House.

Resolutions adopted.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, further to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question—

That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, it is desirable—

1st. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid, in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon the undermentioned goods, the several duties following, that is to say—

Brandy and other spirits, or strong waters of any strength, not exceeding the strength of proof of Sykes's hydrometer, and in proportion of any greater strength than the strength of proof, 12s. per gallon.

Spirits, cordials, or strong waters, sweetened or mixed with any article so that the strength thereof cannot be exactly ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer, 12s. per gallon.

Timber, logs, 1s. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

Timber, undressed, 1s. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

Timber, dressed, 1s. 6d. per 100 superficial feet one inch thick.

2nd. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon the undermentioned goods when imported into the colony, whether by sea or land, the duties following, that is to say—

Machinery for manufacturing, sawing, and sewing; agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes; steam engines and boilers, 5 per cent. *ad valorem*.

3rd. That there be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon all beer brewed or manufactured within the colony of Queensland an excise duty of 3d. per gallon.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not much care to address the Committee on this question, but as the Colonial Treasurer has invited us to express our opinions upon it I will make a few observations. We do not care very much about dabbling in finance—at least ordinary members do not profess to know a great deal about the secrets of that science. I need not go through the whole of the speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer, and I will simply point out to him the matters that struck me as worthy of attention as he delivered it. The first thing that struck me in regard to his Statement was the particularly vague way in which the balances belonging to the Treasury were put before the House and the

country. It does not look at all well to have everlastingly corrections to make, and so many references to things that are apparent and which are afterwards explained to be not real. In the first paragraph of the hon. gentleman's speech he talks about "these appearances," which he says "if intelligently considered will be found to furnish no cause for present uneasiness," and so on. Then further on he talks about the large "apparent" excess of expenditure over revenue, and then tells us that this is only apparent and not real. Further down still he speaks of the "apparent" credit balance, and says it will be found that the actual credit balance is so-and-so. Then again we are referred to the "apparent" results in regard to the total expenditure for 1883 and 1884, and then we have the "apparent" excess of expenditure over revenue for the latter year amounting to a certain sum. Now, is it necessary that we should always be put off with this kind of "apparent" balances? What reason is there that we cannot have at once a proper and real statement put before the country?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Every Treasurer before gave it.

Mr. NELSON: It seems to me that this kind of procedure simply leads to a large amount of mystification. What is put before us is not what is real; and in order to arrive at the real state of things and ascertain what is the real balance, one would have to go through some kind of astronomical observation, and make many calculations and deductions. I do not see why that should be the case. I do not see why we should not have the actual balance published at the time the account is laid before us. One remedy for this matter which rather tickled me was given by the Premier last night. It was that the Treasurer should publish two statements—one for the information of the creditor in England and the other for circulation throughout the colony.

The PREMIER: I never said such a thing.

Mr. NELSON: I thought that was what the hon. gentleman said.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. NELSON: I thought it was. That might serve a purpose until found out. I begin to think there will be a third balance yet—one for the Treasurer, for his own use. But leaving this subject, expecting that what I have referred to will be remedied on future occasions, the next thing that struck me was the number of times that the Treasurer mentioned, by way of excuse for everything that was wrong, this drought that we have been suffering from lately. I will not attempt for a moment to minimise the effects of the drought on the whole colony, but yet it seems to me that the Treasurer is inclined to make too much of it. I counted no less than seventeen references to the drought in the speech, and got tired of counting, thinking there might be more. At any rate, the drought is brought forward prominently, at least, seventeen times. Whatever was wrong during last year—whether in the Railway Department, or in the Lands Department, or any other department—the drought was said to be accountable for the whole of it. There is no doubt that the drought has had a very serious effect on portions of the community, but it is rather interesting to find and difficult to explain that notwithstanding that the drought has disarranged the whole of the Government departments, the Colonial Treasurer is able to show us in these returns that the country is in a prosperous state—that the community at large, taken as a whole, are living in prosperity and contentment. I will not, however, pursue this subject further in the meantime. I will refer now to his statements

with regard to the relations of the colony with the Bank of England. At the beginning of the session we were somewhat startled by the announcements from the Treasurer and the Premier that we could have no better assurance of the financial stability of the colony than the fact that the Bank of England had spontaneously offered to provide us with a million of money. I must confess it struck me at the time as rather curious that, considering that the directors of the Bank of England have got to manage their institution very much on the same basis as other bank managers—namely, they have to work in such a way as to make a profit—that the governor of the Bank of England should go “touting” for business in this way. I confess it seemed to me incredible, because I could not understand how he could possibly go out of his way to try and get an advance taken up by the Queensland Government, as if he could not find customers for his surplus funds—could not find any other investment for them. I was very glad, therefore, when the correspondence was called for, and I look upon it as putting a very different complexion upon the whole thing. I do not think that this offer came originally from the Bank of England at all; I cannot see it in the correspondence.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: You have not read the papers; look at No. 7.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: No. 7 does not corroborate it.

MR. NELSON: I can understand Mr. Garrick, who is in connection with the officers of the Bank of England, having expressed his fears as to what might happen, considering the state of the money market and the probability of our not being able to float our loan; and it might have been mentioned then to him that if he was very hard up he could get an advance. He could have got that advance from any other bank on the same terms, and even on better terms than those offered. When I looked a little further on in the correspondence, I found that the Premier had wired to the Agent-General to apply to the Bank of England. He did apply, and asked them upon what terms they would give an advance. What did they say to him then? They tried to put him off with £600,000; and after a deal of negotiation, Mr. Garrick seems to have managed to work them up to a million. Besides that, in the same letter, you can see that they had considerable haggling over the rate of interest which was to be paid. Mr. Garrick offered them 1 per cent. over the usual rate of discount. But they would not have it. They insisted upon having 4 per cent., although, at the very time, money was cheaper in London than it has ever been known to have been since London was in existence. What Mr. Garrick offered the bank is nothing more than you could have got, or anybody else who had debentures waiting for sale. It is a common arrangement with all mercantile people. If I have wool lying in London awaiting sale, I can always get an advance upon it until the realisation upon it takes place, at 1 per cent. over the Bank of England rate. That is the commonest thing possible in commercial transactions. But the Bank of England would not even allow them that. They insisted upon getting 4 per cent., so that, taking the whole of these matters into consideration, I think the Treasurer was rather mistaken in bringing the matter so prominently before the country; and I think it will be so thought when his statements are read in the old country. I do not agree with the Premier in thinking that financial statements are not duly read and well considered in London as well as in the colony. I rather think they are more taken into consideration there than here, and anyone

who is accustomed to read the home papers and magazines must be well aware of that. I do not refer to the anonymous writers; I refer to financiers of standing—people whose writings, to a large extent, guide the public. I could easily produce, if it were worth while, standard books in the Library now where we can see financial statements of Colonial Treasurers. I do not know if I can produce references to the financial statements of our present Treasurer; but I can easily produce books upon trade, and so on, where the financial statements of the Treasurers of New South Wales are repeatedly quoted, and deductions drawn from them; and there is no doubt that, as this colony is now so much before the eyes of people at home, everything that our Treasurer says is well read and taken into consideration by our friends as well as our enemies in the old country. There are some people, I admit, in the old country who do not think our financial position to be a safe or a strong one; and from the very first time I listened to the hon. the Treasurer, I always have been impressed with the idea that he treated our financial position with perhaps a little too much indifference. The impression that he gave me was, from the very first, that he was not thoroughly imbued with that true sense of responsibility that a man holding the high position he does ought to be. His statements, as a rule, are very glowing. He is accustomed always to give very glowing descriptions of our financial position, and describes the state of the colony in the most roseate hues. He told us, in one of his very first speeches, although he was fresh in office, that the colony was now in such a position that we were able to treat on equality with the English investors, meaning, as I understood him, that he was in the position that he could go into the money market in London and say, “Well, if you want to lend money, I will take it to oblige you; but if you do not, I do not care.” There is a great downcome from that position in the present speech, which is very much more sober, although we have a great deal of what I may call “boasting” connected with the affairs of the colony. I do not think that that does us any real good. I think it would be far better for us to consider always our position as one in which we may be compelled to trust to the good feeling and good will of the English investors. With regard to the credit of the colony being so much damaged by newspaper writers, I think that has been very much overdone. When the subject of those letters was referred to at the beginning of the session, it was made to appear as if something awful and most frightful had occurred; but when we give a look at the letters there is really nothing. As for saying that they were not written by any persons connected with the Stock Exchange, I think the correspondence bears that upon the face of it. I do not suppose that any of those gentlemen would, or could, write such letters; nor do I think there is anyone in the colony here of any capability at all who would dream of writing such letters. They were so utterly weak, and for the most part so absurd, that I think if Mr. Garrick, and the Treasurer, and the Ministers generally, had taken the advice of the Bank of England and treated them with silent contempt, they would have very much improved the position of the colony, and their own position as well. It seems to me that they put themselves in this dilemma: either these letters affected the floating of our loan, or else they did not. If they did not affect the loan in any way, why make such a fuss about them? If they did affect it then it shows that our financial position has not

got that stability which the Treasurer would like to convey, because if such weak productions as these by anonymous scribblers in the London papers are enough to affect the floating of a loan of ours in the London market, that fact in itself would demonstrate that our financial position must be founded on a very weak basis. There is one other point I would like to bring before the Committee, and that is with reference to a statement which is often made by the Treasurer and which was published, not exactly in the prospectus, but in an official paper issued by Mr. Garrick to the investors in the home country. The part I refer to is this:—

“Although the debt of Queensland may appear large as compared with the population, it is important to bear in mind that it involves no appreciable burden upon the taxpayer, the territorial and public works revenue defraying more than the entire charge for interest.”

That is a statement I have heard frequently made, and when I got this balance-sheet of the Treasurer's I set myself to see whether the balance-sheet put before us would bear out that intimation. I see from this sheet that we are supposed to contribute by taxation £1,188,000. I find that we spend the whole of that—and, I think, in a very legitimate way—in providing for the Governor's salary, for the Ministry and others mentioned in the schedules, for Executive and Legislative, Colonial Secretary's Department, Administration of Justice, Public Instruction, and Colonial Treasurer's Department, and Auditor-General. The total expenditure on these accounts will amount to £1,111,029, which will leave us a balance of £76,971. Then again, from the land revenue we find we are to receive—if the estimate is a good one—£653,000, and on that account we have to spend £134,159, leaving us a balance of £518,841. But then come Public Works and Services. We are going to receive from them £981,500; and I find on the other side of the account that we are going to spend for Public Works, Mines, Railways, and Postmaster-General's Department £949,461, leaving a balance only of £32,039. So that this balance-sheet shows that all that is to be derived from public works and services is only £32,000; and even that balance is more apparent than real, because if you look at the item of harbour dues we are supposed to receive £22,000 from that, but on the other side the expenditure for harbours and so on does not come under the Department of Public Works, but under the Colonial Treasurer's Department, and the Colonial Treasurer told us in his speech that there was actually a loss on that account of £42,000. The result from that is that from public works and services, instead of receiving any revenue at all—because this loss of £42,000 would shift the balance to the other side—we have actually a loss of about £10,000. After an expenditure of £16,000,000 or £18,000,000 on public works the total result is that we run our Post Office and other public works and services, without reckoning anything for interest at all, at an actual loss of about £10,000. The real sources from which we derive enough money to pay our interest, as I make it out from this sheet, are these: We get £160,000 in interest from balances in banks and on moneys borrowed by local bodies, and from the Lands Department £518,000, the whole of which is not enough or anything like enough to meet the amount of our interest due, leaving us to contribute by taxation considerably over £100,000, in order to make up the balance due for interest by the public Treasurer. That does not seem to tally with the statement set before the public. If our territorial revenue is going to find the whole of the interest, why does not this sheet show it? It shows us that it only leaves us a balance

of £518,000, that we get nothing at all from public works and services, and that the balance required to make up the £811,000 due for interest is taken from the taxation of the people of the colony. One or two other things in the speech struck me with surprise. In the first place, there is mining occupation. It surprised me to find that we get such a very small revenue from that—£5,000; and “other receipts”—I do not know what they are—about £9,000. The whole comes to about £14,000, and the cost of the department for wardens, mining schools, etc., is over £30,000. It struck me that this is an argument to be set against the one so popular on the other side. Whenever the Premier or Minister for Lands talks about our land system or land alienation, it is held up as something monstrous to say that we should live upon our capital. What is this mining, I should like to know? Here is nearly a million of money, in the shape of our export of gold, sent out of the country every year, and yet the community has to sustain a loss of £15,000 in looking after it. Is not that living on our capital? Sending gold out of the colony on those terms is far worse than the alienation of our land. However much land you sell it cannot go away, while the gold is sent out of the colony—it is an exhaustive crop; there is so much less gold in the colony. If you alienate land it is still here; it is still as valuable to the colony, and is increasing in value as the colony progresses. I refer to this question of the alienation of land because I am certain that the anticipations of revenue to accrue under the new system will not be realised. The idea is a mere “fad” that has got hold of people from certain writings and agitations that have been going on in the old country and elsewhere for some time past; and I do not believe that it will last. I am thoroughly convinced that the leases we are granting for fifteen years or thirty years will never run out their term. We shall have fresh legislation long before those terms have expired, and the probability is that we shall have to come to some arrangement with the lessees to give up their leases.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: This leasing system, as we have it now, has all the disadvantages and all the evils of alienation without any of its advantages. No man, after his lease has run on for a certain time, will spend his money in improving that land. He will calculate how much he can spend that will give him a return before his lease expires, and not a single farthing more will he put into the land. If a man has a freehold he does not calculate so very nicely. He goes to work to improve his property, knowing that if he should be taken away by an untimely death or otherwise it will come into the possession of his children after him. I do not condemn the Act altogether, because I believe in leasing to a certain extent. But we make a great mistake when we give up alienation altogether. As to the revenue to be derived under the Act, I quite agree with what has been said on the other side that we cannot expect any revenue this year, or perhaps next year. I think, however, the Premier misled us last year. I distinctly recollect him making a calculation to the effect that in the first year he would dispose of, I think, 10,000 farms, which would yield a revenue of £50,000, and that there would be 100,000 square miles of leasehold—that is, squatters' leaseholds—which would be advanced in rent to the extent of £1 per square mile, bringing in a revenue of £100,000. There is one important fact that the Colonial Treasurer took no notice

of; I do not suppose he ignored it, but it does not seem to have occurred to him. With regard to the land being taken up during the next six or twelve months, there is this important fact to be taken into consideration—namely, that our staple product, wool, has lately suffered such a depreciation in value that there is really now little or no inducement to people to take up the land. I was surprised that the Colonial Treasurer did not take note of this, because it is a very serious matter indeed. It is a state of affairs that has been going on for some time, and has now, I trust, reached its climax; and there are people, whose opinions are well worth taking into consideration, who hold out no prospect of any improvement. This is not the fault of the Land Act or the leasing system. It is something altogether beyond the control of the Minister; still, it is there and we cannot afford to ignore it. It is a fact which demonstrates to me one great fault in the Land Act—it does not provide any means for a reduction of rent. I pointed this out when the Bill was going through committee, but everybody seemed perfectly certain that the land must rise in value. The Act provides that the rents must be increased whether the land increases in value or not, but it does not provide for the reduction of rent in the event of an enormous falling-off in the value of products such as the colony is suffering under now. From my own experience I know that during the last three years the fall has been about 25 per cent., and if you take the last ten years into the calculation the shrinkage in value will amount to very little short of 50 per cent. Last year the wool of 30,000 sheep, which I sent home, did not bring me as much as I received three or four years ago for the wool of 20,000, or a fall of 33 per cent. Allowing for the effects of the bad season the fall in value amounts to at least 25 per cent. I want to ask the Minister for Works to explain to me certain things with regard to the railway receipts. I do not know very much about them—in fact I am only in the position of an anxious inquirer. I want to find out how the department arrives at the estimated receipts, for instance, from railways; because, in looking at the last report from the Commissioner for Railways, I am immediately met on the threshold with the difficulty or mystification that the Commissioner for Railways makes up his accounts to the 31st December, and the Treasury accounts are always made up to the 30th June, so that there is really no means of checking them. If we look at the return of the Commissioner for Railways and see what the real receipts for the previous year were, I consider that the estimate of what will be received during the present year is altogether out of the way in excess of what we may reasonably expect. The Minister for Works estimates—at least I suppose it is his estimate—that he is going to receive from railways, taking them in the gross, £778,000. The Commissioner for Railways in his last report shows the gross earnings to have been £682,000, and comparing that with the estimated receipts—£778,000—the increase is a heavy one; I do not know whether it is justified or not. There is another matter that I wish to point out with regard to this £682,000—actual receipts for 1884—which I have no doubt is perfectly correct as far as the Commissioner for Railways is concerned, but I am quite certain that it is not correct as far as the Treasury is concerned, and for this reason: The Commissioner for Railways includes in his earnings a very large amount of non-paying traffic for which, I take it, the Treasury can never receive a single farthing. The amount for last year was certainly not less than from £50,000 to £60,000, which is included in this £682,000. The hon. member for Mackay stated last night that the

loss in the working of the Post and Telegraph Office was something like £180,000, but if he looks into this account he will see that it is about £25,000 more than that, because the Estimates do not provide for the carriage of mails on our lines at all. There is nothing allowed in our expenditure to be paid to the Commissioner for Railways for the carrying of mails; but still, to make his accounts look as well as possible—I do not blame him at all—I think he is perfectly right—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is quite correct. They are the earnings of the railway.

Mr. NELSON: To make it correct the Treasury accounts would require to be put in the same way as the Commissioner for Railways', and they should charge on the other side, in the shape of expenditure, the same amount that is taken credit for. But that is not done in the Estimates before us.

The PREMIER: The net earnings are put in the Estimates.

Mr. NELSON: The Estimates show the estimated earnings. It cannot be net earnings.

The PREMIER: Of course it is.

Mr. NELSON: It is impossible.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It shows the gross receipts.

The PREMIER: In cash. It does not include anything for work done for the other departments.

Mr. NELSON: That is why I say that the estimate is very much in excess of what may be expected, because if you take £50,000 or £60,000 off the return of £680,000, we cannot reasonably expect an income from railways of £180,000 more than last year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is estimated at £113,000 for the year.

Mr. NELSON: Above what the Commissioner reports as actually received?

The PREMIER: They are receipts for different periods.

Mr. NELSON: I have explained that; but still the actual receipts shown by the Commissioner for Railways ought to give a fair idea of what we may expect to get; and the difference is so very great that I have got a suspicion that there is an over-estimate here—that we are rather too sanguine as to the amount that will be received. There are a great many curious things in the Commissioner for Railways' report. His estimate with regard to interest on the cost of railways presents the matter in a very different way from that in which we are accustomed to look at it. For instance, in order to make the profits of our railways look as large as possible, he only reckons interest on £8,000,000. He does not reckon anything for the year that is going on. He is not supposed to provide any interest for railways during the time they are under construction, or probably for six months after that. The consequence is that the return gives one the idea that it is worked up to make everything look in the most favourable light. In fact, the Commissioner goes out of his way to direct attention to the indirect advantages derived from railways. One paragraph in his report for 1883 contains the extraordinary statement that one advantage derived from railways is that they employ a very large number of men, and that every one of those men is as good as £9 or £10 to the Treasury through the Custom-house. Did you ever hear anything so ridiculous as that? I think the Treasurer ought to interfere and prevent the Under Secretary of the department from publishing statements of that kind. Fancy paying £1

out of the Treasury to those men, and then getting it back through the Custom House, being a benefit to the colony! It is one of those things that I am sure I cannot understand. According to the Commissioner for Railways, if the Treasurer is hard up, and wants, say, £20,000, the way to get it is to double the number of railway employés, or to put on a sufficient number at so much per head, to make up the required sum of money. I should like to get a definite answer from the hon. the Treasurer with regard to these railway receipts, because I confess that they are beyond my comprehension. Did the whole of the money that is put down in the Estimates as having been received last year—1884-5—go into the Treasury?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: What paper are you quoting from?

Mr. NELSON: The Estimates, page 6. This, as I understand, does not include the non-paying traffic.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No; only gross cash receipts.

Mr. NELSON: Well, then, what I am trying to bring out is that the estimated receipts for this year are very much in excess of the receipts last year. Before I leave the report of the Commissioner for Railways, I should like to draw attention to the fact that we do not seem to know exactly what the railways have cost the country. There are so many different ways of looking at it. As far as I can make out, the Treasurer's value of the railways is the amount of loans that have been expended. He does not take into consideration any of the money that has been raised in the colony and spent on railways. What I want to know is, what the railways really stand the country in—how much money they represent to us? What I would like to see is an account made from the very start, as a banker or merchant would make out an account—so much money spent, so much interest on that for the first six months, giving credit for the net earnings on the other side; then the balance carried down, interest on that for the next six months, and so on. I am perfectly satisfied that an account of that sort would show, instead of £8,000,000 or £9,000,000, as the amount these railways have cost the country, probably £15,000,000 or £16,000,000. In fact this six millions odd that the Treasurer says has been extinguished by net earnings represents actually nothing more than money that has been taken out of our own pockets, and for which we have nothing to show except the railways. I am perfectly satisfied we have not extinguished any interest at all on our railways. There are some rather curious charges to Loan Account which I hardly know how to justify. For instance, the Commissioner gets paid out of Loan Account for all the haulage he does in taking material up to the various termini where extensions are going on.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We do not charge Loan with haulage.

Mr. NELSON: The Commissioner gets the money for it. Here is the charge down here. Last year he charged, and I suppose received from the Treasury, an amount of about £12,000 for cartage of material. That is one item that seems rather curious to me; and there are a lot of small things one would never dream the Commissioner would borrow money for. One of the first items I see is £51 16s. 9d. for collecting cast rails—that goes to Loan Fund. Then there is an item of £1,250 11s. 9d. for relaying the road from Dalby to Warra. That surely ought not to be charged to Loan Fund; it should come under the head of "Repairs." Then there are charges even for advertising. We do not seem to

be able to put an advertisement in the paper, if it is only 7s. 6d. or 2s. 6d., without borrowing the money to do it. I should not be at all surprised to find that advertisements in the *Government Gazette* were charged to Loan Fund, and that a direct transfer was made from the Loan Account to the Revenue. Now, there is another curious thing in the speech of the hon. the Treasurer. He has mentioned the drought so often that everyone must know we have suffered very severely from it. There has been a great depression all throughout the community, especially affecting the sugar and pastoral industries, and yet the hon. member, taking as his guide the Savings Bank and other returns of that sort, assures us that the people as a whole are happy, wealthy, and contented. From the way he boasts that they contribute willingly, you would think they were running to him with money—about £8 17s. 6d. a head for every man, woman, and child in the colony. Now, in the first place the taxation is taken from the people by guile, as you may say. Nine-tenths of them do not know they are paying taxes. If the Treasurer were to send round the tax-gatherer to demand this amount of money, and the officer went to a man with a small wife and big family, and asked him for about £40 out of his wages, I think there would be a row. But the fact of the matter is that the money is drawn out of the people without their being aware of it, under the disguise of *ad valorem* and other duties. That, however, does not afford us any solution of the problem. My solution of the problem is simply this: that we are getting a living to a large extent out of the Loan Fund just as I have shown that the Commissioner for Railways is doing. The people of the colony are obtaining their living, not from the products of the country or the industries of the country, but from the loan money the Government have in their hands to distribute, and which they do distribute for the construction of railways and other public works. If it were not for the Loan Fund I believe we should be very nearly in a state of collapse at the present time. The Public Works and gold-mining industries are the only two industries which are now keeping the colony going. The Minister for Works is the largest employer of labour in the colony; he even competes with private industry, and keeps up the rate of wages. It must, I think, be evident to many members of this Committee that when agricultural and pastoral products get so low as they are at the present time it is inevitable that wages must come down. They have already begun to fall, but the Minister for Works steps in and takes all the best men into his employment, perhaps not directly, but at any rate through railway contractors and others, and thus keeps up the price of labour; and it is the men so employed who probably contribute most to taxation. In point of fact, I may say in reference to that large amount the Treasurer has down for taxation—£1,118,000—when we come to look at it seriously and analyse it we find that a very large proportion of it is not the normal revenue of the country, but a transfer of loan to revenue. It is the loan money which after circulation through the country finds its way by the usual process into the Treasury. Hon. members can easily see it in this way: Suppose one-half the people in the colony were employed in making railways and constructing public buildings, or if we were all living on this public money, it would not affect the Treasurer's revenue, but would, as a matter of fact, increase it, because those who consume a large quantity of luxuries are the people who pay the highest duties. The Treasurer has this temptation before him, that the more money he spends from loan the better will be his revenue. I do not consider that this is

a wholesome state of affairs at all. I think we are in danger of going too far in this respect, and I am strongly of opinion that there ought to be a limit placed on the amount of loan money we should spend every year. When the Premier, in his remarks last night made a quotation from Lord Lytton, another quotation flashed across my mind from the same writer. I have not had time to look it up, but I think I can recollect the substance of it, although it is ten years since I read it. In speaking of the colonies, Lord Lytton always advocated that they should go slowly and surely, because, as he wisely pointed out, if they go on with a rush in the way we are doing now, and anything unforeseen occurs—which must certainly occur one year or another—to give us a check—such, for instance, as the state of affairs we experienced in 1866—it would take us years and years to recover our position. Lord Lytton referred to the well-known story of the athlete Milo of ancient times, and described how the subject of it acquired the immense power for which he became famous by a certain course of training. The man commenced when he was young, and walked round the stadium so many times carrying one of his father's young bull calves on his shoulders. I may here observe that everybody knows that all respectable people who have started in a country which has attained any size or importance have been squatters. Well, this young man went on with his training day by day, and as the calf grew he became stronger, so that when it grew to be a four-year-old bull he could walk round the stadium with it on his shoulder just as easily as when it was a calf. And Lord Lytton says that is the way the colonies ought to go. I think we are going on now with too much of a spurt. I think the pace is too dangerous. I imagine that if we could make up our minds to limit ourselves to an expenditure of, say a million a year, we should find it quite as much as we are justified in spending. I will not detain the Committee any longer on this subject. With regard to the new taxation proposed by the Government, I think most hon. members have spoken on that question, and therefore I need say little about it. I have no objection at all to see a tax put upon whisky and spirits—not in the least; nor have I any serious objection to see a duty put on colonial beer, but I do most strenuously object to a duty being imposed on timber and machinery. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the taxation of these articles will be injurious to the country, that it will stop enterprise, and prevent the improvement of the country going on as we would like to see it. If we expect men to go and settle upon the lands of the colony, surely it is an absurd policy to tax the tools and the machinery they require to work the land. It is monstrous to impose taxes like these, especially that proposed to be put upon machinery. Indeed, I think it ought rather to be the ambition of the Colonial Treasurer to rid the colony of the *ad valorem* duties altogether, because they are wasteful, and a hindrance and an obstacle to trade; and more than that, they cost a terrible amount of money to collect. And they are also wasteful in another way; for although we nominally pay a duty of 5 per cent., of which amount the Treasury probably gets £3 net, consumers really pay about 10 per cent. When there is added to the incidence of taxation all the other necessary charges connected with it, such as the cost of entries and re-entries, and one thing and another, and the interest on the money expended by the retailer, to which he is certainly entitled, by the time the commodity reaches the consumer its price is really increased by 10 per cent. I would rather see them try to do away with the

whole of the *ad valorem* duties and confine taxation to a few articles of general consumption as in the home country.

Mr. HORWITZ said: Mr. Fraser,—It is hardly right that I should not say something upon the important question which is now before the Committee. A great deal has been said about the taxation proposals brought forward by the Colonial Treasurer. In my opinion, Mr. Fraser, the Colonial Treasurer has hardly gone far enough. He should have gone a great deal further; in fact, we want a great deal more taxation than is proposed now. I think, after all that has been said about the tax of 3d. a gallon on colonial beer, there is more cry than anything else, and there is very little in it. I have made it my business to inquire in the city, and I have found that people do not so much object to that tax. With regard to the increase of 2s. a gallon on spirits, I think that is nothing out of the way. If the Treasurer brought forward a measure to make the duty on spirits 20s., instead of 12s., I should have been only too glad to support him. I look upon spirits as something little less than a luxury, and I am sorry that the Colonial Treasurer had not the courage to bring forward a measure to tax what I call luxuries—such as jewellery, silks, kid gloves, and other fancy goods—which pay at present only 5 per cent. Even pianos and carpets, which only pay 5 per cent., should pay a higher tax. I believe if the Treasurer had come forward and proposed to increase the 5 per cent. duty for what I consider luxuries, he would have met with a great deal of support. I feel inclined to propose even now that the duty should be made 20 per cent. instead of 5 per cent. The duty of 3d. a gallon on beer is hardly worth considering. It would be much better if the Colonial Treasurer had left the beer alone, considering that the brewer only pays 6d. a bushel for imported malt, and had raised the duty to 3s. a bushel. If the Colonial Treasurer had consulted me that would have been my advice. We can grow barley as well in this part of the world as they can grow it anywhere. What right have we to encourage the importation of malt, and thus send money home to Great Britain? We can grow it here. That is the reason I have, Mr. Fraser, for making these remarks. I would like to know how many glasses of beer go to the gallon? I have not taken the trouble to measure it; but I think that the duty of 3d. per gallon will make very little difference in the cost of a glass of beer. I do not think there is any harm in taxing imported timber. My experience is that we have any amount of timber here, and there is nothing to fear if we tax imported timber. One proposal I object to is the tax of 5 per cent. upon imported machinery.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That touches up the flour.

Mr. HORWITZ: I have a great objection to taxing machinery. It interferes with diggers and farmers, and we have no foundries in the colony able to make the machinery we are now obliged to import. If we feel inclined to go on with our industries we must have machinery. Those are the chief objections I have to the tariff, and I hope the Colonial Treasurer will see his way clear to withdraw the tax upon machinery, which would cause a great loss to the colony at large. I do not think I need say any more, except that I do not think it right to tax articles that cannot be produced or manufactured in the colony.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not wish that this question should go to a division without saying a few words upon it. I do not intend to criticise in any way the speech of the Colonial Treasurer. What I got up for

particularly is to protest against the taxation proposed by the Government in the resolutions before the Committee. I have had several telegrams from different parts of my constituency protesting against this taxation. There was a public meeting held in Rockhampton upon the subject. I have had telegrams from several quarters to the same effect; still I do not say that they will influence me in any way in opposing the taxation proposed by the Government at the present time. I do not see, however, any great reason for fresh taxation at this time. The Treasurer told us that the people of the colony were prosperous, and because of their prosperity would not object to taxation at the present time. I can only say that the Treasurer made that statement from a Queen-street point of view. If he had travelled a little more outside of Brisbane than he has done during the last two or three years he would not have made that statement. I say the people of the colony are not prosperous, and that they will object strongly to fresh taxation at the present time. I do not think that there has been any time during the last fifteen years when the people could less afford fresh taxation than at the present time; and I cannot see any reason for this taxation, seeing that there remains a balance of £167,000 out of the surplus accumulated by the late Government, and only a deficit of £23,000. Instead of making up that deficit by fresh taxation, I consider it might have been made up with the money proposed to be devoted to works not altogether required this year at all events. I find the sum of £100,000 on the Estimates for a rabbit-proof fence, and that is double what might have been put down for this year; in fact, £50,000 cannot be expended on that work for the next year or two. I have it on the best authority that one-half of the money will be sufficient to protect the colony from the invasion of rabbits during the next two years; that it will be enough to fence in a sufficient extent of our borders to keep back the rabbits for several years to come. Therefore that is an item that could at once be appropriated for the purpose of getting rid of the deficit without going in for fresh taxation. Then there is the sum of £50,000 on the Estimates for the purchase of central sugar-mills; but I cannot see why the whole of the people of Queensland should be taxed to provide £50,000 for the encouragement of one industry. I notice, too, that the very machinery which this £50,000 is intended to purchase is also to be taxed. The Government ask us to vote £50,000 for central mills in the sugar-producing districts, and at the same time ask us to pass a resolution levying a tax on the very machinery that money is intended to purchase. Five per cent. on the money to be voted for central mills will be £2,500. It is a wrong principle to vote money and tax the money voted. I strongly object to the taxation of machinery, because it will harass both the mining and the agricultural industry. The latter is in a very languid state, and I see no reason why fresh taxation should be imposed to harass a suffering industry. I also object to the duty on colonial beer, which is consumed by the working classes of the colony and not by the middle and wealthy classes. There is no doubt that in all taxation the consumer will be the sufferer in the end; therefore the proposed tax on machinery will fall on those engaged in mining and agriculture, and the tax on beer will also fall on the working classes. But the taxation proposals with regard to timber are the most unjust of all. Timber has been imported into this colony for the last three years, and before that time the building trade in the North was at a standstill

owing to the difficulty experienced in getting timber without paying enormous prices. The saw-millers in the South had a monopoly of the whole of the timber trade of the colony. They held meetings and combined to raise the prices till they were such as to prohibit the erection of buildings altogether. The result was that two or three towns in the North sent very large orders to New Zealand and other places for timber; and as soon as New Zealand timber came into the colony more houses were built in one year in the North than had been built three years previously. In Rockhampton, after the importation of New Zealand timber commenced, which was in 1883, there were 365 houses built in one year; and not one-half of that number could have been built had there been no importation of timber. Out of those 365 houses no fewer than 300 were working men's cottages. Before this New Zealand timber was imported three or four families had to live in one house, while a large number of people had to live outside in tents. Timber is now being imported at the rate of from 100,000 to 300,000 feet a week, and if it were now to cease, the prosperity of the town would receive a serious check. The result of this importation of timber was that the price was reduced at least 25 per cent. The immediate result was that a great number of low-class houses and humpies were pulled down, and quite a good class of houses took their place. If this fresh tax is imposed on timber, the consequence will be that the working classes will have to go back to their humpies again. As soon as the importation of timber is checked the sawmill proprietors of the colony will raise the price, as of old, and a stop will be put to the building trade as before. This I consider the worst taxation of the whole lot, for it will fall entirely upon working men. If the Government wish to raise a revenue from timber, why do they not adopt the plan that was once proposed by the late Government—that is, to put a duty on cedar exported in the log? If they did that they would raise a much larger revenue, and would not injure any of our colonists. There is an enormous quantity of timber in log going to the southern colonies at the present time for next to nothing. If an export tax of 12s. per 100 feet were put on cedar logs, the revenue would largely benefit and nobody in the colony would suffer. People in the southern colonies are taking away all our most valuable timber, leaving us only the scraps and the parts that are of the least value. Another effect of an export duty on log cedar would be to encourage the establishment of sawmills in our coast towns, and we should be able to send our timber away in a manufactured state instead of letting it go away in the log as at present. If the Government would tax log timber exported instead of taxing imported timber, it would be far more profitable to the colony, and would be to the general advantage of the people. I have not risen to attempt any reply to the speech of the Colonial Treasurer. I rose simply to protest against that fresh taxation which the Government are proposing to levy. I hope a division will take place upon the resolutions, and that the Committee will throw them out. I am satisfied the people of the colony will rise up in arms against it. They have not had time as yet to consider the matter thoroughly, but when they do, which will be in a very short time, they will be as dissatisfied with it as I am. It is the duty of this Committee to protest against the proposal and to prevent it from passing.

Mr. MELLOR said: After the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton, I feel bound to say a few words in defence of the proposed tax on imported timber. It is well known that the other colonies impose a duty on timber imported

from Queensland, and if we do the same on timber imported into Queensland it is only a matter of reciprocity. As to the injury to the poor man, I do not think it will affect him nearly so much as the hon. member for Rockhampton seems to imagine. The other colonies from which we get timber can produce it much cheaper than we can in Queensland. The distance our timber-getters have to go for timber, and the many difficulties they have in their way, utterly preclude them from competing with the imported article. I had the honour last year of presenting a petition to this House, signed by about 840 timber-getters, in which it was plainly stated that unless something was done in this direction by the Legislature they would not be able to carry on the industry. Since then another tax has been put upon them, and they cannot possibly stand it unless some protective duty is put on the timber brought into the colony. The matter will not affect Brisbane nearly so much as it will affect the Wide Bay district. Comparatively little of the imported timber comes into the Brisbane market; not one-fiftieth of it is used here. The industry in the Wide Bay district has had to depend considerably upon exported timber. Local timber is still supplied in the market, but it has to be sold at the same price as the imported timber; and they find they cannot possibly do it and make it pay. In fact, they are selling at ruinous prices. In my district the timber industry gives employment to thousands of men. It is a very important industry, and there are very large interests connected with it. I think, therefore, that the proposed tax is only a fair one. The hon. member for Balonne said last night, with reference to the tax on machinery and timber, that it was a Maryborough tax. I do not think it is altogether. Other parts of the colony will benefit from it as well as Maryborough and the Wide Bay district. Some hon. members have taken exception to the proposed tax on machinery. But the circumstances of the colony now, with reference to the manufacture of machinery, are altogether different from what they were formerly. At the present time we can, I believe, get anything manufactured in the colony that may be required. I do not know whether such farm implements as mowing machines and reaping machines are manufactured in the colony. It was stated last night by an hon. member that we could not make the machinery that is required for the sugar industry. I think, myself, that the foundries in Maryborough and in Brisbane can turn out as good articles as any in the world.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: No, no!

Mr. MELLOR: I certainly think they can. We have arrived at that state of perfection in that respect at the present time that we can produce almost anything. I know that we are in a very different position on Gympie now with regard to machinery to what we were when the tax was attempted to be put on some time ago. The greater part of the machinery that is used on Gympie at the present time is got in Maryborough. Anything that we want in that way for mining purposes can be got in Maryborough. I should be very sorry indeed to see any tax put on that would have the effect of crippling the industries of the colony, but I do not think that what is proposed by the Government is likely to have that effect. The hon. member for Northern Downs said something about gold-mining—that gold was a product that was rapidly being exhausted. I do not know that those are his exact words, but he said that it was an exhaustible product that was

sent away from the colony; but if it is sent away at any rate we get a *quid pro quo*. I think that anything that would further tax the mining industry would be a mistake. I do not think hon. members know really what the revenue is that is derived from our goldfields. The hon. member mentioned some figures in reference to the losses that are sustained in connection with those fields; but the revenue that is derived from dutiable commodities that are used on goldfields is very considerable. From the item of candles alone the revenue is, I believe, much more than a great many people are aware of. It is a very great charge upon miners. Then the mining industry is one that supplies a great deal of labour in the colony. It is a very hazardous industry; sometimes it is very prosperous, at other times it is not; to some people it is prosperous, to others it is not; but at all events it is an industry that I think in the future will be second to none in the colony. I believe that Queensland will yet become one of the most flourishing mining fields in the world. That we have all sorts of minerals in the colony everyone is, I think, ready to admit. In reference to what has been said by hon. members opposite with respect to the Land Act passed last year being at fault for the whole of the losses of revenue, while it may to a very considerable extent be at fault, I think, myself, that it is unjust to condemn it until it has had a fair trial. It has certainly not had a fair trial up to the present. What it may do in the future I am not in a position to say. Some hon. members seem to condemn it and say that it will be a failure altogether. I am not going to say that it will be a success altogether, but I hope it is going to be something better than some hon. members say it will be. I have a letter here that I should like to read to the Committee, with reference to the timber question and in connection with the petition I presented to the House some time ago. The writer says:—

"As to the merits of the question I need not say much; your own long experience in the timber trade and as a resident in this district renders any argument on my part needless. I will only mention that four large sawmills in and near Maryborough have been idle for many months past and are still idle, simply because trade here and to the northward is almost paralysed by the ruinous competition of other countries and colonies, who do not allow any sawn timber into their ports without paying duty. All the kauri pine (many millions of feet) shipped from Queensland to Sydney during the last twenty years paid a duty of 1s. 6d. per 100 feet. We protect nearly everything else in this colony, and it will be very inconsistent and unjust if the request of the timber getters is refused. I believe it is not so much felt in Brisbane, because there is a good local demand; but here the local market is small, and we depend mostly on shipping and the sea freight makes all the difference. The tariff shows that the present policy of the colony is highly protective, though many public men seem to ignore the fact. I often hear it referred to as a freetrade colony—in fact, I have lately been astonished to find how widespread that fallacy is.

"We have already 94 per cent. of protection to about 6 per cent. of freetrade. Surely it is not unreasonable to ask Parliament to go one step farther and protect those on whom the outside competition presses so heavily now. There are some thousands of people whose living depends on the timber trade in this district, and many hundreds of them are at present obliged to seek some other means of living, in consequence of the stoppage of the four mills above referred to and the shortening of hands at the remainder."

Mr. NORTON: Who is the writer?

Mr. MELLOR: Mr. Edward Armitage. I know that it is very unpalatable for any country or any colony to have to accept new taxation. Proposals for new taxation are always very unpopular, but I think it must be admitted that under the circumstances in which the colony is placed we must resort to fresh taxation. Of all

the proposals for taxation that I should like to see brought before the House a property tax is, I think, the most fair and just that could be introduced. It would give a very large revenue, I believe, and would affect everyone alike.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Fraser,—I had no intention of speaking on this matter if the debate had closed earlier, but I think that after the speeches that have been made this evening and yesterday evening—speeches which seem to me to encourage a feeling of unwarrantable fear as to the position of the colony and a feeling of distrust as to the capacity and ability of the Government—it is incumbent on any member who, on the whole, agrees with the policy of the Government to say what he can in defence of their action. From the speeches that have been made it would be gathered that there has been a very serious falling-off in the prosperity and revenue of the colony during the past year. If that were so, it would be a matter for very serious consideration; but instead of that there has simply been a falling-off of about £27,000 from the Treasurer's estimated revenue. He has been over-sanguine to that extent; but I notice, on comparing the revenue with the revenue for previous years, that the increase has been about the same as formerly. Last year there was an increase in the revenue of about £155,000; the previous year it was £182,000; the year before that, £281,000; and the previous year again, £78,000. Taking the average of those years we find that the increase has continued steadily and without interruption. The thing we have to regret is that the revenue was not so elastic or so large as the Treasurer anticipated. If in consequence of this, and of what was really necessary and unforeseen expenditure, there is a deficiency now I think it is to the credit of the Government that they are taking prompt and effectual measures to stop the leakage. It would not redound to their credit, it would not strengthen their position in this House or the country, if they did not take proper precautionary measures to make up this deficiency. Now, one way of remedying the evil is to increase taxation; another way is to reduce the expenditure. If the Government think it wise and necessary to increase taxation, then, whilst regretting the necessity for the measures they have taken, I think them on the whole right and satisfactory. I have no sympathy with the hon. gentlemen who perpetually appeal to the farmer and the poor man and the working man when they speak of a tax on machinery. It is not the working man, it is not the poor man, it is not the farmer, whom this would seriously affect. The farmer and the labouring man have now to pay taxes on the utensils and tools they use in their craft or labour. The men who use machinery are generally wealthy men, men who can go in for large enterprises, or men banded together in corporations and companies—mining companies, milling companies, and what not—that have neither bodies to be kicked, nor the other. They are as well able to bear taxation as any class in the community. Taxing machinery is not a thing that ought to raise any outcry or dissatisfaction on the part of the farmer, or the working man, or the poor man. I need hardly say that I have every sympathy with the proposed increase of taxation on beer and spirits—that will not touch me; and it seems to be the general opinion of the Committee that the persons who drink those articles are well able to bear additional burdens, and must bear them. I have also every sympathy, even if there were no deficiency, with the proposal to tax imported timber. It would be an injustice and an anomaly for us to impose burdens on the men in our own colony engaged in the industry, and not levy a tax on the imported article. The hon. member for Rockhampton alluded to the monopoly which

used to exist, and which would exist again if there were a tax on imported timber. But times alter circumstances. There was a time when the sawmilling business of the country was in the hands of very few; but sawmills are multiplying, and competition is the soul of business. I know a great number of the smaller mills are not nearly so fully employed as they might and ought to be, and if a tax is put on imported timber we are not likely to have the monopoly and the ring business that is said to have existed before. There are now so many men engaged in this trade, and there are likely to be so many more, that the monopoly will be practically broken down. The meeting we hear of in Rockhampton was not a very appalling affair. We are told that Rockhampton was up in arms against this, but someone has told me it was a meeting of eight persons.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Eighty.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I was told it was eight. But, Mr. Fraser, we should not be doing our duty as representatives of the people if we were to impose taxes on our own timber-getters and let the imported article come in free. I think we may easily account for the deficiency in the anticipated revenue. Even Ministers themselves admit a mistake with regard to their anticipations under the head of revenue from land. They put down an anticipated revenue of £75,000 from sales of land by auction, and instead of that they only received from that source £43,000. There is an item of about £30,000 to begin with. I do not think we ought to be continually snarling at them, and expressing suspicions about the Land Act, until it has had some show of fair play. No one can rationally expect a Land Act of that sort, inaugurating an entirely new system, to get properly into the swing in so short a time—only a very few months. At any rate, let us members on this side of the House, who gave it our support, who believed in it, and who believe in it, give it reasonable time. It will not tend to increase its efficiency or its popularity with the people, if we are continually criticising it before it has had a fair opportunity of showing what is in it. I have never lost an opportunity of expressing my opinion on this Act to my constituents and others who have spoken to me about it. I think a great deal of the prejudice against it arises from sheer ignorance of its provisions, and that it only requires to be known, and that there should be favourable weather, for us to have a different story to tell, and be singing in a very different tone all over the colony. As it is, we are passing through a continuance of the trying circumstances we have had for some time past. In spite of this, however, I maintain that the colony, as a whole, is in a wonderfully prosperous condition. The returns of all kinds, Customs returns and Savings Bank returns, and other returns showing the condition and monetary powers of the people, indicate that we are enjoying a prosperity which, if we had favourable seasons, would have been something unprecedented in the colony in which we live. I think the Government are to be commended for taking prompt measures to stop the leakage, and if taxation is necessary I am of opinion that these articles which it is proposed to tax in the resolutions before the Committee may fairly bear the additional burdens it is intended to put upon them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Fraser,—I think it is necessary for me to say a few words upon the Treasurer's speech as well as the other hon. gentlemen who have spoken, but before entering upon the main question of the debate I would remind the Premier how dangerous it is to play with edged tools. In the early part of this session we were told in the

most significant way about the gentlemen in London who attempted to injure the floating of our last loan, and looking across to this side of the House the Premier intimidated by his nods and by his actions that he considered some hon. members on this side had been aiders and abettors of whoever tried to injure that loan. But the hon. gentleman has now formed a different opinion, as last night he said it was the syndicate who wished to construct the transcontinental railway in this colony, and not the members on this side of the House, who tried to injure the floating of the last loan when it was put on the market. Has he not, since he made the first statement, read of the conspiracy against the New South Wales loan? And we know that there was no proposal to construct a transcontinental railway in that colony. But has he heard of the Ministers of New South Wales attempting to fasten the blame for that action on their opponents? No; they have not done that, although they were so frightened of the conspiracy that they actually withdrew the loan. But although the hon. gentleman has read about the matter he still persisted in trying to insinuate last night, though only slightly, that they were Queenslanders who were responsible for the attempt made to injure our loan. The statement made by the hon. member for Mulgrave last evening ought to be a caution to the hon. gentleman that it is very easy to make charges, but not so easy to refute them. The hon. member for Mulgrave stated then that a gentleman in Glasgow, who had written a letter to a home paper on a previous occasion with the view of injuring the floating of a loan placed on the market at that particular time, informed him that he had got his information from the then leader of the Opposition—the present Premier. I do not think that is true; I believe there must be some mistake. But nevertheless it shows how easy it is for a charge of that kind to be fastened upon any person who may not be able to refute it even when it is brought right to his face. Having said so much about this, I hope we shall hear no more about the gentlemen, whoever they were, who attempted to injure the Queensland loan, and that there will be no more insinuations that their acts, in any way whatever, can be attributed to any person sitting on this side of the Committee, or to any connection of any members sitting on this side of the Committee. Now, sir, I shall come to the Treasurer's Statement. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government last night, in answering what I consider to be a very straightforward charge made against the Government, and a very clear analysis of the Treasurer's Statement, summarised the speech of the leader of the Opposition in a very few words. I would like to give the words exactly as they are reported in *Hansard*. The Premier said:—

"The hon. gentleman's speech mainly consisted of accusing the Government of having, by their extravagance and incompetence, brought about an unsatisfactory result in the finances of the colony—extravagance in the expenditure of money and incompetence in the administration of the land laws."

Well, sir, that is the charge that is made, and that is the charge which I now reiterate. But how did the hon. gentleman meet it? He met it by asking hon. members on this side of the Committee to point out the particulars in which extravagance had taken place and to reduce the expenditure if they could. Now, does the hon. gentleman intend to shirk his own responsibility by asking members on this side to reduce the expenditure? Does he not know that it is his duty to reduce the expenditure if it can be reduced? And I say positively that I believe it can be reduced far and away beyond the amount which the Treasurer expects to raise by the increased taxation

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proposed in the resolutions before the Committee. The Premier asks us, in the face of the speeches which we have heard from hon. gentlemen on that side of the Committee, to reduce the expenditure. One hon. gentleman who supports the Ministry says, in reference to the resolutions, "It is a bitter pill for me to swallow, but I suppose I must swallow it and that I must vote for the Government." Another hon. gentleman on the same side of the Committee on a recent occasion said, "If the Ministers do not consider the question before us a serious matter I will be inclined to vote against it"—that is, if the Ministers would give him permission to take the rope from around his neck he would give the Opposition his vote. And this is the tone of the speeches of several hon. gentlemen who spoke this evening and last night. There is one hon. gentleman on the Government side of the Committee who spoke so strongly last night on the subject of borrowing and was so determinedly opposed to borrowing money, that he said he would like to see a loan fail entirely, and concluded by saying he would give his vote to the Government and would vote for anything the Government may bring forward. Yet the hon. the Premier asks us, in the face of these speeches, to reduce the expenditure. Have we not tried and tried again, and, unfortunately for the country, without avail? Every time that we attempted to reduce the expenditure last year by going to a division we were ignominiously defeated by the Government supporters. Once or twice an hon. gentleman on that side tried to assume an independence which he does not possess—an independence which he possesses in words only and not in deeds. The Premier asked this side of the Committee how the expenditure could be reduced, and he went over the Estimates—holding them in his hand, going over the different departments one by one—beginning with the Executive and Legislative, and coming down, comparing the Estimates of this year with the Estimates of last year, and asking us to point out where there was any extravagance. That is, he compared a bad set of Estimates with a preceding bad set of Estimates. Now, I shall show where there is extravagance before I sit down, and I shall show it so clearly that the duller intellect in the Committee will not be able afterwards to say that he does not understand it; but I shall not show it by comparing one bad set of Estimates with another. I will compare them with something else, and, not to weary the Committee too long, I will put it in bulk. The estimated expenditure for this year is set down at £3,006,000. My hon. friend, the member for Mulgrave, corrects me by saying I must add £150,000 to that. That is the estimated expenditure for the year from the 1st July. What was the estimate asked for the last year of the late Government's term of office, under which they administered the Government of the country until they left office, and, I presume, the succeeding Ministry administered the Government under the same estimate until the end of the year? The last estimate asked for by the last Government amounted to £1,000,000 less; that is that in two years—in fact in less than two years, because the hon. gentleman has not yet been two years in office—the expenditure of the colony has been raised one-third the total amount, or £1,000,000 will be asked for and added. I have not the slightest doubt, by the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: That is absurd.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman, last night, certainly said once or twice, in answer to a charge of a similar nature which was made, "But has not population also increased?" Yes; no doubt population has

increased; but the population has not increased in the same ratio, and a much larger increase in population would not warrant anything at all like that expenditure. If we had new districts entirely opened up with a new population, there would be a demand for increased expenditure. But will an increase of 500 to the population of Brisbane cause that increase in expenditure? Or will an addition of 100 or 150 to the population of Maryborough or Townsville cause it? When the increase to population takes place in dribbles all over the colony, the increase in expenditure is almost infinitesimal. But though the increase to population in that time was something like 25,000, there actually is an increase of a million of money in the expenditure. It is an increase of nearly £30 per head. I will show the extravagance in another way. I will take the Estimates as they are asked to be voted, without the interest; and the amount asked for without the interest is £2,194,649. Now, what was the amount asked for, without interest, on the last estimate of the late Government for the year 1882-3? It was £1,457,198, or a lesser sum by £737,451. That is without interest. It was simply for the work of administration. I am quite willing to admit that under this system of borrowing we have dropped into, year after year, there has been a continual increase in the amount of interest, and a continual drain upon the population. But the cost of administration does not stand in the same category; yet, in two years' time, it has increased £737,000.

THE PREMIER: That is absurd.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is a fact. It is absurd, no doubt. It is very extravagantly absurd on the part of the hon. gentleman to spend so much money. It is extremely easy to spend other people's money, and the party opposite to us have always had the knack of spending other people's money too easily, when they have been in power. It is a way they have.

THE PREMIER: Where did you get your figures?

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: From the Estimates.

THE PREMIER: They are not to be found in the Treasurer's tables, at any rate.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They are to be found in the Estimates. If they are not in the Treasurer's tables, so much the worse for the Treasurer.

THE PREMIER: The Treasurer's tables give the actual expenditure.

MR. MOREHEAD: This is what we call turning the tables.

THE PREMIER: It is ridiculous to say it has increased in that way when it has not.

MR. MOREHEAD: Don't get excited.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I will give the hon. gentleman another way of looking at the extravagance. These are the "Votes and Proceedings" for the year 1873, and the amount asked for by the Colonial Treasurer for the year 1874 to carry on the work of administration in the colony, with a population, say, of 140 odd thousands, was within the increase which the hon. gentlemen have added to the expenditure of the colony in two years.

THE PREMIER: That is not so.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is so. I hold in my hand one of the estimates of the late Sir Joshua Peter Bell, which is dated June, 1873. The amount asked for for the year 1874 in 1873, without interest, was £700,327. At the end of

that year he asked for a different estimate, I know, but then it was only a very small sum over the figures which I have spoken of. It was £780,000; and the amount voted for the previous year was only £583,000. The work of administration was carried on quite as efficiently as it is at present, and the population was only one-half of what it is now, and yet the total expenditure on administration was just about the same—or at least a little more, taking the second estimate, than the amount of increase in the last two years. The population, according to the Registrar-General's return on the 31st December, 1874, was 165,000. On the 1st of January—that is, up to the end of the year 1873, or the beginning of the year for which the estimate was asked—it was 146,000, or an average of 150,000 for the year. The population at present, I believe, is somewhere about 312,000, or a little more than double what it was then. I will deal with the Treasurer's proposals of taxation after I have dealt with one or two more statements made by the hon. gentleman last night—I do not mean the Treasurer, but the gentleman at the head of the Government—the Premier. In the course of the debate a question arose which was disputed here by the Colonial Treasurer some time ago with the hon. member for Mulgrave, about what the gentleman at the head of the Government calls "an imaginary surplus." The hon. member for Mulgrave maintained that there was a surplus of some £700,000 when he left office. I will not take the amount of £700,000 when he left office; but I will take the amount at the end of the month of October, just as near to the time of his leaving office as figures can be obtained correctly; and I think the Colonial Treasurer will admit—I am quoting the words of the hon. member for Mulgrave—that the amount then in the Treasury was £691,000. I think that is not disputed. That was fifteen days before the termination of the administration of the McIlwraith Government. This the hon. gentleman, in speaking of it last night, once called "a supposed surplus of £777,000," taking it to the end of November. I do not mean to take it at the end of November, as the hon. member for Mulgrave was out of office then. I take it at the end of October—£691,000, according to the figures published by the Under Colonial Treasurer. The hon. gentleman in referring to this question last night gave some figures which I shall take as correct. For instance, he said that the sum of £382,000 was transferred from the Railway Reserves Fund to the consolidated revenue. I take that to be correct. He also stated that the amount of £586,000 was raised by auction and pre-emptions during the term of office of the McIlwraith Government. I take that as correct also; but I will not take another statement he made as correct, and I will give the Committee good reasons for not doing so. He said, "Supposing there was £777,000 surplus at the end of November"—he admits that and takes it to be correct, and from that he deducts £349,000, the amount which was due for interest at the end of the year. If he had intended to deal with the figures in that way he should have taken the whole of the surplus to the end of the year, and not have taken five months' surplus and six months' interest. I give him credit for having overlooked that; it was a mistake, and I will not, therefore, follow his figures in that respect. I will take the surplus to the end of October and the interest to the end of October. The total interest for the six months he was £349,000, and for the four months to the end of October—there is a day more or less, some of the months having thirty and others thirty-one days—that is, two-thirds of six months,

the interest would amount to the sum of £233,000. Taking that amount of interest up to the 31st October from the £691,000 cash balance in the Treasury on the same day, it leaves a sum of £458,000. Another little item which the hon. gentleman overlooked in his hurry last night was the surplus appropriation, which was made in 1882, of £245,000. He forgot that in his calculations. Add that to the £458,000 already got, and we have £703,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That surplus appropriation was expended at the time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am not talking about what was spent; I am talking about the general question of surplus—the amount saved during the term of office of the McIlwraith Government. Then I will go on to show how it was raised—I will not shirk that part of the question. To resume—that makes £703,000 saved during that period. Against that there is the £382,000 which was in the Treasury at the time the McIlwraith Government took office. That was transferred from the Railway Reserves Fund to the consolidated revenue; but hon. gentlemen must bear in mind why it was transferred. It was not transferred to increase the revenue, but to fill up a gap in the revenue which hon. gentlemen opposite left behind them. It was transferred to make up a deficit, and to do away with that deficit, and make the expenditure of the year meet the revenue of the year. That deficit, then, I contend, has to be accounted for when dealing with this £382,000. The total deficit for the two years—1879 and 1880—legacies left us by hon. gentlemen opposite—was £278,000. Take that from the £382,000, and it leaves a sum of £104,000 against the McIlwraith Government as money having been transferred to consolidated revenue. Then I take that £104,000 from the £703,000, and, in round numbers, it leaves £600,000 saved during the five years of office. Now I come to how the money was saved. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and the Colonial Treasurer have repeatedly spoken of this money as having been raised by abnormal sales of land, by pre-emption, and by auction. Talking in this House and elsewhere, I may say—because the hon. gentlemen have not ceased to talk about it elsewhere, and, I may say, not always as correctly as they have spoken in this Committee, although, as I have shown to-night, the hon. gentleman has not been quite correct, even in speaking in the House—still he has not always been as correctly reported in his speeches outside of this House as he has been in the speeches he has delivered inside of it. It was stated last night, and without contradiction, by the hon. member for Mackay—that the whole of the land revenue raised during the period of the existence of the McIlwraith Government was 21 per cent. of the total revenue raised, and during a similar period of the existence of the party at present in power, when they were in power before, the land revenue raised by them was 20 per cent. of the total revenue raised; so that the actual difference was only 1 per cent. between the two parties in spite of these very abnormal sales of land. But in addition to the 20 per cent. as stated by the hon. member for Mackay last night, we must remember that there was a very abnormal sale of land which took place around Roma, and which raised the percentage to 25. Now I will leave that, and I will take the hon. gentleman at his own word. In talking about this question last night, the hon. gentleman said that if the McIlwraith Government had raised an average sum of £100,000 a year from land he would not have found fault

with them. Well, I think my figures show that they raised very little more than £100,000—they raised £600,000 in five years.

The PREMIER: £600,000 in three years.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is the surplus stated to have been raised during that time.

The PREMIER: No; it is £600,000 in three years.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The McIlwraith Government were in office for five years.

The PREMIER: They raised a great deal more besides, but they raised £600,000 in three years.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am talking of the surplus. £600,000 was the amount saved during the time the McIlwraith Government were in office. The deficit was filled from the Railway Reserves Fund and left a balance of £104,000. I have taken that from the surplus of £703,000, and it leaves £600,000 actually saved in the five years. I repeat, that the hon. gentleman said that had the McIlwraith Government raised £100,000 a year from land by auction sales and pre-emptives he would then have found no fault with them; and the total amount raised by his own figures last night was £586,000.

The PREMIER: The facts are that that sum was raised during the last three years of their term of office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I am taking the hon. gentleman's own figures, as he has been reported in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER: You are mistaken; you will find I am not so reported. I said that that amount was raised during the three last years. That is what I am reported to have said.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is not what is here.

The PREMIER: Yes; it is what is in the copy I read this morning.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think I got the same copy; or, at least, a similar copy.

The PREMIER: The figures are in Table L. There can be no mistake about them.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: This is the surplus which has been designated as imaginary—as a supposed one—a mythical surplus. A great many figures of speech have been applied to it, but it is a reality. It was raised, and the hon. gentleman tries to make out that it was raised by abnormal sales of land; but after all, as shown by the hon. member for Mackay, those sales proved to be only 1 per cent. more than the sales of the present Government, and less by 4 per cent. than the abnormal sales of the party represented by them. Now, I ask any member of the Committee, is it a fair thing in political debate, when a party has thought fit to radically change the policy of the State, to bring a charge against their predecessors who have simply acted up to the current policy of every Government since Queensland became a colony? I say the thing is absurd, and would never have been stated were it not for party purposes. Three gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches were members of the Government which held office from 1874 till the beginning of 1879, and they carried out a policy exactly similar to that of the McIlwraith Government. They sold land for the purpose of revenue—a thing which every preceding Government did; and if previous Treasurers who had a deficit, like the present Treasurer when he was in office before, could have made sufficient sales of land to compensate

for that deficit, there is not the slightest doubt they would have done so, because it was the acknowledged policy of the country. But immediately these gentlemen change their policy they decry the action of their predecessors as if they had done something new in the history of the colony. But the sales of land have not been given up yet. There is a sum of £100,000 upon the present Estimates in connection with expected sales of land, and it is not a sale by selection. It is a sale by the very means for which the hon. gentleman condemned his predecessors—by auction—and I maintain that is a far worse species of sale than the sale of country lands. If hon. gentlemen had given up entirely the sale of land by auction, they might indeed with some countenance—though indeed very little—criticise the action of their predecessors. Having still stuck to that remnant of the policy of preceding Governments, and thrown overboard the other portion of the policy to suit the chimera of the Minister for Lands, they did their very best to decry the gentlemen who sat on the Treasury benches before them, thinking that by so doing they would lower them in the estimation of the general public. But I think the public have too much common sense to be deceived in that way, for they know very well that the late Government were no more guilty than their predecessors. I have dealt with the extravagance charged home by the hon. member for Mulgrave last night and not replied to by the Premier. The only reply was a demand to reduce the expenditure—to point out opportunities for reducing expenditure, which it is not his place to do. But when the Estimates come on for discussion, no doubt we shall make the same attempt this year, as we have done before, to reduce the expenditure, and with the same result. Having restated the charge, which any person can understand, I shall now come to the maladministration of the Lands Department, and that is a very simple matter indeed. I maintain that the only necessity there is—if there is a necessity, which I deny—for an increase of taxation, comes from the extravagance and maladministration of the Government, and their incompetence in dealing with the land. We all remember the grand flourish of trumpets with which the Land Bill was spoken of first. The Treasurer admitted on the second reading that it was quite true that both himself and his colleagues laid great stress on the increased revenue to be derived from the measure—an increase which would justify them in going in for a big loan and a vigorous public works policy. I will not deny the right of the hon. gentlemen to adjust the land laws of the colony, because they have the power—they were sent here with a large majority. But as statesmen, as competent administrators—not only of the land laws, but the whole government of the country—they were bound before they made such a sweeping radical change in the land laws of the country—a change reducing the land revenue—to have refrained from asking for a loan until they had the means of paying the interest. But that they have not done, and that in itself was incompetence enough to condemn any administrators in any part of the world as well as Queensland. Having laid such great stress on this Land Act, and having raised the expectations of the people to the pitch of believing that we were to have a revenue of £1,000,000 a year at once, it was easy to obtain a large majority by such means; and the majority will be kept by the same means as long as a penny of the ten-million loan lasts. We have heard that the ten-million loan hangs like a millstone round the necks of hon. members opposite, depriving them of the liberty of action. And so it has been from the day the Land Act

was initiated and the ten-million loan first mentioned. When the Land Bill was introduced hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches believed—though they had no right to believe—that it would be the means of producing a revenue of £1,000,000 a year. Neither the Premier nor the Treasurer will deny that they expected it to produce sufficient, at any rate, to pay the interest on the loan about to be raised.

The PREMIER: This year?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps not this year. But we will see what the hon. gentleman said last year. It may be in the recollection of hon. members that last year, in speaking on the second reading of the Land Bill, I pointed out what I considered to be its glaring insufficiency in financial matters, and showed distinctly, according to my point of view—which I am sorry to say is turning out correct—that there would not be a revenue from the Act as expected by the hon. members opposite, but a deficiency in the revenue instead. When I made that statement the Treasurer was present, and I made it on figures which I scraped up the best way I could, independent of some public offices where I was refused the information I required. The Treasurer took a week to consider the question before he answered the statement. I made the statement on the 20th August, and the Treasurer made his answer on the 27th August. I do not intend to weary the Committee by wading through *Hansard*, but I will give the conclusions to which the hon. gentleman came. In answering me he takes my own figures; and I freely admit that in some of the items he was right in doing so, although others, through the want of direct information, were a little exaggerated. Still, he took them and dealt with them, and this is what he said:—

“That produces, in his own figures—though I might fairly enlarge on them, seeing the manner in which settlement is continually expanding—that produces £3,000 per annum, in addition to the amounts I have already named; so that we have a revenue of £158,000, or nearly £160,000, produced above our present pastoral rents under the operation of this Bill, against which we lose, as I have pointed out, in 1884-5, an estimate of £32,352.”

Does not this prove that the hon. gentleman expected to get £152,000 less £32,352 last year? I admit that he then expected the Bill to become law on the 1st January, two months earlier than it actually did. Then he goes on to tell us how much less the revenue would be, from the Act which was being repealed, every year for three years, making no correction as to the amount he expected in the first year. Let us see what the Premier, who spoke a little more clearly, on the same night, said, after having heard me speak again in reply to the Colonial Treasurer. The hon. gentleman traversed my figures considerably, but I believe he was very unfortunate in doing so, as he seemed to have misunderstood the whole gist of the argument.

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: At any rate here is what he said in reply:—

“We estimate, therefore, that, as the results of the first year's operation of the Bill, we shall get a new revenue of £150,000.”

The PREMIER: With selection before survey?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: £100,000 of that amount had no connection with selection before survey; it was for pastoral rents. I ask if gentlemen are competent to administer the law of the country who are capable of making such a patent blunder as this? It is their blundering and extravagance that have compelled the Treasurer to make the propositions which I

shall now deal with. I ought to have said that the Premier, in speaking of the deficit last night, spoke of it as a deficit of £6,000. I ask any hon. member—Does the Treasurer believe that his deficit at the end of the year will be only £6,000? If he did, would he have introduced these propositions? Would he not have waited till the end of the year to see, like Mr. Micawber, what would turn up? I think he would. He does not believe in his own Estimates. He does not believe he is going to receive £262,000 more this year than he did last year from revenue, because the circumstances of the revenue of the two previous years do not warrant it, even with abnormal increases. Let us see what his propositions are. The hon. gentleman begins by deprecating any claptrap about the working man. There was never a more glaring piece of claptrap than that. In the name of Heaven, of whom do we speak in this colony but of the working man? Are they not the men who put the hon. gentleman into power, and are we not to speak of them when we bring forward proposals to tax them? We must not speak of the working men now, but when the gentlemen opposite meet them on the hustings it is, "You are a fine fellow, Bill." He then goes on to say that reduction of expenditure is the only alternative to increased taxation. That would be a terrible alternative for the hon. gentleman to undertake. It is what he never knew how to do since the day he first became Treasurer. He says—

"Reduction of expenditure, which is the only alternative, cannot at present be resorted to without entirely dislocating the machinery of administration, without retarding the course of most necessary judicious preparations, and without, in short, disturbing and hindering the public works of the country, the early prosecution of which the people look forward to with confidence."

I say the whole of that is mere claptrap, every word of it. The Colonial Treasurer, if he understood his duty, would take the alternative and reduce the expenditure instead of so enormously increasing it. His first proposal is to add 2s. to the duty on spirits. I have not very much to say against that, not on account of blue-ribbonism—which hon. members on the other side indulge in so much—but because I believe that spirits can stand a little more taxation if necessary. Hon. gentlemen must understand that I do not approve of the proposals at all, or in any sense whatever, for I believe they are not wanted; but as they are to be proposed by the Colonial Treasurer, and as we are powerless to prevent them from becoming law, I have no great objection to the increased duty on spirits; therefore, I let that pass. Now I come to what is called the working man's drink—beer. Hon. gentlemen on that side seem to be under the impression that this tax will not affect the price of beer in any way whatever—that the cost of the taxation will come out of the pockets of the brewers. They were never more mistaken in their lives. In Victoria, only two or three years ago, Mr. Graham Berry put a tax on beer of 2d. per gallon. The Government received a pretty large revenue from it—larger than our Colonial Treasurer expects to receive—but it had the effect of increasing the price of beer from 3d. a pint to 4d. a pint. Hon. members at all acquainted with the actual practice in the retail trade know that there is no taxation put upon any article which increases the cost of that article to the consumer only by the amount of the taxation. It increases the cost two, three, four, and even five times the amount to the consumer. Anyone who knows anything of political economy knows that; and the brewer will not have to pay this tax on beer. But even if the brewer did have to pay it, what

would be the result? Indeed, what will be the result, even with the working men paying it? It will be the same as in Victoria—the small breweries will be extinguished. In the fourteen or eighteen months that the tax was in existence in Victoria, twenty-one small breweries were shut up—twenty-one out of ninety. Hon. gentleman may calculate what percentage that was. We have about nineteen breweries in this colony; I think nearly all of them are small ones. There are only three in Brisbane, and I do not know whether they can all be considered to be large breweries; but I am quite certain that the tax will not affect the large ones one single iota—it will benefit them instead of being to their detriment. That the tax will be to the detriment entirely of the men who consume the beer and the small brewers who brew it I have not the slightest doubt; and I do not think that the Colonial Treasurer could have possibly selected any worse form of taxation. I do not think he would have selected it if it had not been that he was pandering to a number of his followers who object altogether to the consumption of beer. The tax upon timber seems to be extremely gratifying to one or two members, but not so much so to some who object to it but who are yet prepared to vote for it. I can only understand, however, one sense in which it can be gratifying, and that is because the Minister for Lands has blundered. He blundered in the first instance, and to compensate for that blunder the general consumer has to pay the piper. That is the result of the timber tax. He blundered in the way in which he imposed the royalty. I know the hon. gentleman's intentions are good, but that is not sufficient. We know that the way to a certain place is paved with good intentions, but that does not prevent people going there; and a man in his position ought to have known it is not sufficient to say "I did not know," and "I did what I thought best." The man who attains to the position of a Minister of the Crown should have attained to sufficient knowledge to know what is for the good of the country. I come now to the tax on machinery, which appears to me to be worse than anything else. I do not refer to it because I am a miner, but because I know what mining is, and how a small item will prevent what would otherwise become payable from being payable. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said last night that he did not recollect how he voted in 1874 when the 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty was taken off machinery. I will tell him how he voted, and I will tell him where he can find the record. He will find it on page 394 of the volume for 1874 of the "Votes and Proceedings." He will there see how he voted; and he voted in the same illiberal way as he is going to vote to-night. He voted for the retention of the tax, and on the same flimsy grounds. I am certain if he understands anything about mining now he did not in 1874, and I am inclined to think that he voted then simply in opposition to the then Attorney-General. He spoke strongly according to his lights in favour of the retention of the tax.

The PREMIER: The Government did not propose the abolition of the tax.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The then Colonial Treasurer proposed the abolition of the tax. Does the hon. gentleman think that he proposed it?

The PREMIER: My impression was that it was an amendment proposed in committee.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not at all! An amendment was proposed by Mr. Stewart in committee, but it was to retain the tax—to omit

all the words after certain words, leaving machinery, quicksilver, and another article to come in free. Quicksilver and machinery were to come in free in order to foster the mining industry. I think the Colonial Treasurer scarcely understands the injury that he will do the mining interest in different parts of the colony by imposing a tax upon machinery. I admit at once that it will not affect such fields as Gympie or Charters Towers very much, for two reasons: first, because each of these goldfields has a railway connecting them with the seaboard; and secondly, because they are goldfields thoroughly well established on a sound foundation, and therefore a slight matter of this sort will not have the same effect upon them as upon the outside goldfields. Take the Palmer, Maytown, Hodgkinson, or, worse than all, the Etheridge. I say that this tax on machinery will have a deadly effect upon these places, and I speak with knowledge. The Colonial Treasurer says £14,000 will be gained. It is not the amount we have to consider, but it will deter men who would otherwise be willing to engage in putting machinery on the ground from doing so. Look at the enormous amount of taxation which a man importing machinery to the Etheridge has to pay. He has to get his machinery from Melbourne or Ballarat. To argue, as the hon. member for Wide Bay (Mr. Mellor) did, that they can make as good machinery in Maryborough as they can elsewhere, shows that he is speaking either from a Maryborough point of view, or else that he does not know what he is talking about. There is not a miner in the colony who understands quartz-crushing machinery who will go to Maryborough for his machinery. He will go to Ballarat or Melbourne; that is where they make machinery that is capable of saving gold. They are able to do rough work in Maryborough; but to get good machinery you have to go where I say. It has to be brought from Ballarat or Melbourne; it has to be shipped to the Gulf to get to the Etheridge; and it has to pay £10 or £15 per ton to reach its destination: and yet, in addition to that, the hon. gentleman proposes a tax of 5 per cent. I say it is a most pernicious tax, and one which I hope the good sense of this Committee will not allow to pass. I know more about this tax than about the other. I know, also, it will have a very deterring effect on the importation of agricultural machinery as well. As if the agriculturist has not enough to struggle against, the Colonial Treasurer proposes to add to his burdens! As to sugar machinery, I am very much afraid that, tax or no tax, it scarcely matters to the planters. The £50,000 which the Colonial Treasurer has placed on the Estimates will not require him to go outside the colony for the purpose of purchasing machinery, for if machinery is wanted it can be got in the colony out of the huge stock that is lying idle. Now I believe that I have shown that the extravagance of the Government has raised the difficulty, and that these taxation proposals are the outcome of it. The interest on the ten-million loan must be paid and all other interest as well, and I do not think that even within the time the Colonial Treasurer has allowed for the Land Act to come into operation he will receive what will be required. I do not say that the Act is a failure, and I agree with the hon. member for Port Curtis that it is premature to say that it is a failure, but it is a failure as far as the expectations of the Treasury benches are concerned. They expected a revenue sufficient to carry on the ordinary government of the country until such an enormous revenue would come from it that we would be able to do something more than ordinary. In that sense it is a failure, but in the sense of

being an Act it is not so, because it has not been long enough in operation. But it is evident that it will be a failure in the sense that the hon. member for Port Curtis said last night—that even if the revenue estimated to be derived from it is realised it will be more than swallowed up by compensation which we shall have to pay at the end of fifteen years. The revenue that will be derived from the Land Act will not be so very large. I know that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has reduced his expectations very much, judging from one of his expressions last night, which I shall read to the Committee. He said—

“I believe in three years at any rate”—

Last year it was one year, now he wants three—

“I believe in three years—at any rate, by the time that loan is raised—the additional revenue from the land under the Land Act, in addition”—

Mark this, Mr. Fraser—

“in addition to the revenue that would have been derived if it had not been passed, will be at least equal to the £400,000 interest upon that loan.”

That is, the revenue that he expects from the Land Act, in addition to the revenue that we are losing now, would amount to £400,000. But the interest by that time will be over a million, and where is the million to come from out of land? It must come out of extra taxation—certainly not from the Land Act. I say, sir, that nothing can be plainer than the incompetence of hon. gentlemen opposite in dealing with the land laws of the colony as shown in this matter. They are not competent to deal with such a great question. They never have been competent to deal with that question. Hon. members will remember very well the number of fads they had when dealing with the land question. One time they would not borrow money; they would sell the land and make railways. Then they would saddle the cost of making railways upon those who were benefited by them—a very good principle, but where is it to-night? The cost of constructing our railways is now to be saddled upon the working men of the colony and not upon those who have been benefited by the making of them. I say that if the Treasurer brought forward any taxation proposal at all it should have been a tax upon property. That is the only consistent and true tax in a case of this kind. Up to the present time the land revenue has borne the interest payable upon all the different loans. That is now taken away, and I say that in the meantime—until the land revenue arrives at the same position it was in before, paying the interest on loans—the working men of the colony should not be taxed. The tax should be upon property holders who have received the whole benefit from the making of railways—from them and from them alone. I leave that for the consideration of the hon. the Treasurer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: I imagine, sir, that the charges of incompetency, extravagance, and all other “deadly sins” which have been formulated against the Government have now culminated in the speech of the hon. member for Townsville; and I desire, before these resolutions are submitted for the decision of the Committee, to make a few remarks in reference to the two main speeches attacking the Financial Statement—namely, those delivered by the hon. member for Mulgrave and the hon. member for Townsville. It has been said, sir, that Ministers have been unable to reply to those speeches, but the silence on this side up to the present time has arisen, not from any inability to reply to the speeches or charges that have been made, but simply from the impossibility of finding any solid ground upon which those charges can be made against us. They have their existence

merely in the imagination of hon. gentlemen opposite, and, as formulated in the way that we have heard them expressed by the hon. member for Townsville, they consist of representations of such a character that any member of this Committee, or any intelligent member of the community outside, who has addressed himself at all to the consideration of financial statements or figures will at once see that they bear their own refutation upon the face of them. I am not content to allow those statements to pass unchallenged, and with every desire to address myself briefly to the refutation of them I shall be compelled to take up a short time in doing so. I shall glance chiefly at what has been said, in the first place, by the hon. member for Mulgrave in the course of his criticisms upon the Financial Statement. He has, as usual, attacked the manner in which the Treasury accounts are kept—that is to say, the change which I have introduced to consolidate the expenditure on account of revenue proper, and also on account of the surplus appropriations, being a trust fund which was created in January, 1884; and from his remarks I infer that he imagined that I was disappointed with the present system of book-keeping. But I repeat, sir, that the system of book-keeping that is now pursued at the Treasury in regard to this matter has my entire approval, and I can only say that I am glad that I have been the means of introducing it. The views of the hon. member are entirely fallacious in that respect. I know that the policy of the hon. gentleman has always been to exhibit as small a balance as possible of the consolidated revenue. He always wanted to show the poverty of the country—that it had neither credit nor money, and that we must therefore go and get a large syndicate to build our railways. That policy he still persists in. Anything that will show the revenue of the country to be in an impoverished condition will commend itself to his approval for the time being for political purposes. I have not submitted to the country, sir, a Financial Statement with figures to be made the vehicle of any political views.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition Benches: Oh! Oh!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have submitted a plain unvarnished tale in the shape of figures, of which I challenge any honest refutation from critics either in this Committee or in the country. These figures are not compiled to be the means of showing the able administration of the present Government, nor yet to show the profligate administration, if any such line of action existed; they are not formulated to show any wasteful extravagant administration on the part of the preceding Government; but they have been submitted with a view of showing honestly and straightforwardly to the mind of any intelligent man the financial position of the country; and so long as I have the honour to remain in the Treasury I shall always maintain that the funds which have accrued in the Treasury shall remain at the credit of the consolidated revenue and be shown to the public creditor, and not diverted in our yearly balance for any purpose or with any desire to deplete the balance at the credit of the consolidated revenue at any particular time. My hon. colleague, the Premier, suggested that perhaps the accounts in the Treasury should be kept in an alternative form. I imagine he referred to the Treasury tables published in connection with the Financial Statement; but I would point out that that is not necessary, because if hon. gentlemen will look at the *Gazette* returns they will see for themselves, clearly and unmistakably, the amount of expenditure proper out of the consolidated

revenue, and also the amount of expenditure out of trust funds on account of special surplus appropriation. But I believe, sir, if whole tons of statistics were launched against hon. members opposite—that if the whole staff of the Treasury were employed from the 1st January to the 31st December in preparing statistics for the satisfaction of hon. members opposite—they would shut their eyes to such portions of those statistics as did not support their own peculiar views. They have no desire whatever that any information should be given except the one class of information which will be in accord with their own particular views. They wish to show the vast benefit their policy has conferred upon the whole colony, and the wretched effects—to use the words of the hon. member for Townsville—the wretched effects arising from the incompetency and extravagance of those who are at present charged with the administration of the affairs of the colony. Now, sir, I hope I shall be able completely to dispel from the minds of hon. members who choose to address themselves honestly to the consideration of our present financial position any idea either of the wasteful extravagance of the present Government or their incompetency to deal with the affairs of the country since they took office. I am tired of going over the same ground so continuously. I believe on every occasion on which I have had to speak of our financial position I have had to defend my action in connection with the consolidated revenue from renewed assaults and attacks made upon it by the hon. gentlemen opposite. The hon. gentlemen will persist in attacking a system which I think is undoubtedly the best for the Treasury to pursue, and which, I am sure, will be pursued by any Treasurer who succeeds me, unless he should be imbued with the feeling of the hon. member for Mulgrave, and not want to show too good a credit balance. I hope the hon. gentleman who succeeds me in the Treasury will not share in that feeling, but will be anxious to show our honest position to the creditors of the colony, and will be gratified to find the credit balance in the Treasury gradually increasing instead of decreasing. The hon. gentleman, in referring to the statement made with respect to the condition of the special revenue appropriation, charged the Treasury accounts with being cooked and falsified; and from his remarks one would imagine that those remarks had been made use of by the Auditor-General in his report. That officer did not use any such expression, and I at once enter my protest against such indiscriminate condemnation in that form being addressed to me in connection with the manner of keeping the accounts. It is true, the Auditor-General expressed his opinion that the old method of withdrawing from the consolidated revenue a certain amount of revenue which had been specially appropriated and placing it in a trust fund was the better course of procedure. I hold the contrary opinion—that until moneys are withdrawn for expenditure they ought not to be withdrawn from the consolidated revenue any more than we would withdraw from the consolidated revenue the salary of every officer of the service voted for the year and place it to a special trust fund to be operated upon by the recipient. That, I maintain, is a system no Treasurer could approve of, unless he desired that the credit balance of the colony should periodically present itself in a depleted condition. I trust I have said enough upon this for tonight. I do not want to dilate upon it; but at the same time I do not want the hon. member for Mulgrave, or any other hon. member, to think that I have receded in the slightest degree from the position I took up. I have considered the matter in all its bearings. I am fully impressed with the advantage

to the State and the Treasury of the line of action I have adopted, and I am determined to persevere and carry out the system in its integrity. If this House approves of the special revenue appropriation of £100,000 for rabbit prevention, and £50,000 for sugar-mills, I intend to carry out that special appropriation in precisely the same form as I did the special appropriation of January, 1884. I hope this will be thoroughly understood, so that I shall not be charged with approving by my silence of a change of action which I deprecate. Now for this old bogus story of the £700,000 with which the hon. member for Mulgrave delighted his constituents. The hon. gentleman has raked up this story as an important episode of the present debate, and I have no doubt it has enlivened the proceedings very considerably. It certainly diversifies his speech and allows him to pose as the grand financier of the colony, who retired, leaving a plethora of wealth in the Treasury of £700,000—which has been entirely dissipated by the wasteful extravagance and gross incompetence of the present Administration. This is the text upon which the hon. member for Townsville has introduced his farrago of statistics, which I trust before I sit down I shall be able to dissipate. The hon. member, whose statistics I shall deal with presently, takes a fresh starting point from that of the hon. leader of the Opposition. Evidently the hon. member has been trying what position would suit him best—the 10th November or the 31st October. Now, I do not intend to take either of those periods, because there are no published returns showing the actual position of the Treasury at the date of this alleged £700,000 being left there. But I am quite content to take the 31st December, 1883, which was the termination of the first half of the financial year during which the hon. member for Mulgrave—that is to say, the hon. member's Treasurer—administered the finances of the colony. I refer hon. members to the *Gazette* returns, so I need not apprehend a charge of cooking the statement, or falsifying it, to use the elegant and polite terms which have been addressed to me in connection with the Financial Statement. The *Gazette* returns of the 31st December show that at that date, after deducting the semi-annual interest, there was a credit balance of the revenue of £529,883. I am quite content to give the hon. member credit for that amount being in the Treasury at the end of the last financial half-year of his administration. But, sir, we all know that out of that £529,000 a special revenue appropriation of £310,000 was approved in January, 1884, and that money we have since been operating upon. Deducting that, there is a sum of £219,883 to the credit of the consolidated revenue on the 31st December, 1883. Now, instead of having dissipated the legacy which the hon. gentleman says he left us, I shall show the Committee and the country that we have improved upon that position. On the 30th of June, 1885, just past, we had £267,104, of which amount £100,043 belonged to the special revenue appropriation of 1884, leaving an actual balance to consolidated revenue of £167,061. Hon. members at once will say, "Well, by your own admission you have gone to the bad £52,000, inasmuch as on the 31st December, 1883, you admit you had £219,000, and now on the 30th June, 1885, only £167,000." But, sir, those hon. gentlemen entirely ignore this most important fact—that £78,000 was pre-emptive money they had accumulated during the first four months of 1883. That sum was entirely withdrawn from the consolidated revenue after the hon. gentleman left the Treasury, and placed to a trust fund, where the greater portion of it now lies awaiting the

claims of certain rejected pre-emptive selectors. And if we take that £78,000 from the £219,000, we shall find that we have improved our position by £26,000 as compared with the position of the hon. gentleman when he retired from office. Now, these are plain incontrovertible facts—hard facts; and however unpalatable they may be, I feel bound to press them before the attention of hon. members. There is no disputing that, after deducting the amount mentioned, our position on the 30th of June last is improved by £26,000, and therefore, instead of working on the savings effected by the hon. gentleman, as he claims, we have—in the face of adverse seasons, seasons of such severity as he never knew, and I am glad he never knew during his term of office, and such as I hope the colony may never experience again—largely improved our position, and are at the present time working, not on the savings made by the hon. gentleman, but on the accumulated savings made since he retired from office. I hardly care to take up the time of the Committee in dealing with these matters, which are really worn threadbare. I had thought that the good sense of the hon. gentleman would have rendered it unnecessary to refer again to this alleged balance of £700,000, because he must know that the men of this country are too intelligent to give any prestige to a gentleman who by accident happened to leave the Treasury at a particular time of the year when a large sum of money had accumulated in the Treasury, but against which there was a large liability—not charged. The same fault as that to which I have alluded applies to the statement of the hon. member for Townsville. He takes October as the period for adjusting accounts, and as I say, the same fault attaches to his remarks, because in the October quarter no interest is charged. But I take a period when the interest is charged, and show the true financial position of the country.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You make it better by doing so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, I want to prove that we have nevertheless improved our position. The statement I have made is, I think, intelligible—namely, that after having refunded £78,000 for rejected pre-emptives, although we do not boast of having a balance of £700,000, we show clearly that we have effected an improvement in the finances of the country, since the hon. gentleman retired from office, to the extent of £26,000. Without unnecessarily occupying the time of the Committee, I can show that the sales of land made during the administration of the hon. gentleman fully account for any savings he claims to have effected. I do not know whether the money realised from the sale of land is to be called a saving from a financial point of view. As I have already pointed out in my Financial Statement, the year when the Opposition retired from office was one of great apparent prosperity, resulting from unusually large sales of land, which form a striking contrast to the small sales made by my hon. colleague the Minister for Lands during the time he has administered the Lands Department. The party now in opposition were in office from 1878 to 1883. During that period of five years there was realised from auction sales without pre-emptives—purely auction sales, hon. members will bear in mind—the sum of £542,117, while in the preceding five years, 1874-8, the auction sales, exclusive of the land sold under the Railway Reserves Act, amounted to £165,393; so that £380,000 more was realised by auction sales during the time the hon. gentleman was in office than was obtained by his predecessors. It is perfectly true that we realised from the land disposed of under the Railway Reserves Act a sum of £446,006, which,

added to the amount of auction sales—namely, £165,000—shows a larger revenue from landsales than was received during the five years the hon. gentleman held office, but—and this is a very important “but”—although we got the credit of having forced large sales of land at the time, it should be borne in mind that we got a larger price for the land than was obtained by the hon. gentleman in his sales—the amount received being at the rate of 30s. per acre—and that the hon. gentleman has reaped the benefit of those sales. Although his statistics do not show that he had sold the land he pocketed the proceeds. I hope the hon. gentleman will understand that I do not use the words “pocketed the proceeds” in an offensive or individual sense, but that I mean his Treasurer got these proceeds into his possession, although he did not appear to have sold the land. Therefore I think it is most ungenerous on the part of hon. gentlemen to blame us for having sold the land when they benefited from the proceeds, and now make the boast to the country that they made those great savings which were actually contributed to by the sale of that land for which we were blamed. It is a most ungenerous act of criticism. If hon. gentlemen condemn us for the system initiated by the Railway Reserves Act, that would be a question for honest and full criticism, but they have no right to blame us for selling a large quantity of land at a high price when they had the benefit of the proceeds of those sales and also the proceeds of the large abnormal sales which they conducted during their administration. I notice that the hon. member for Townsville has left the Chamber and I regret that he has done so. He has made some extraordinary statements which, if true—and that is a very important thing—would show that the present Administration has certainly not been as watchful of the expenditure of the country as we contend we have been. The hon. gentleman alleged that since 1882-3 the increased expenditure of the country has been augmented by nearly £1,000,000, but the hon. gentleman takes his figures from the period preceding that in which the party of which he was a member retired from office. I wish to point out to the hon. gentleman that I accept the challenge he has thrown out if he will start from the year on which his party relinquished the reins of office. The late Government did not retire till well on to the end of the first half of the financial year 1883-4—they did not retire till the middle of November—and the proposals for expenditure during that financial year had been formulated by their Treasurer. In fact the Estimates were brought down to the House, although they were not printed on account of their defeat. But the financial proposals for expenditure for the year 1883-4 were all formulated by the late Government in the year they retired from office. I will meet them on their own ground, and take their own financial proposals—those which were adopted by the House in the short session of 1883-4. These financial proposals show that the expenditure for the year 1883-4 amounted to £2,511,651. Our proposed expenditure at the present time, necessitated by a very large increase of population and the altered circumstances of the colony, has attained to the dimensions of £3,006,214, showing an increase, Mr. Fraser, since the late Government left office, of £494,563 gross—not nearly a million, and not even half-a-million, and I use the word “gross” for this reason: that it includes the inexorable charge for interest which is not to be confounded with the ordinary departmental expenditure, inasmuch as the interest charged cannot be reduced by any proposals of this Committee for the time being. It must be met, and therefore

I say it stands distinct from the requirements of the departments of the colony. The interest during that time has grown from £677,050, in 1883-4, to £811,565, which is required for the current year, or an increase of £134,515 for interest alone—which, if deducted from the apparent increase in expenditure, represents an increase departmentally required of £360,048 only—not nearly a million, as the hon. gentleman stated. Now, Mr. Fraser, I regret that the hon. gentleman, whose utterances command the respect and attention of every intelligent man in the country—who naturally would receive from such an authority a statement such as he made to-night without investigation—should commit himself to such statements which cannot stand the light of the smallest investigation, which are so supremely exaggerated, that they carry with them, in my mind, their own refutation. I think the hon. gentleman should give very special attention to this: that while we are represented to have increased our requirements by nearly a million since the time the late Government retired from office, that increase actually stands at £494,563, of which £134,515 is for interest alone. I need not follow the hon. gentleman with regard to his remarks on the Land Act. He could hardly have proceeded one step further to have increased the absurdity of the situation, except to have charged us with the inclemency of the seasons. It is possible that if this season continues without rain for very much longer the revenue to be derived from land may be found to be purely conjectural. Nothing at present has shaken my confidence to any extent whatever as to the beneficial results of that land measure as soon as it is fairly started. As my hon. colleague the Premier said last night, my estimate for 1884 was framed when it was expected that the Land Act would come into operation at the beginning of this year, on the 1st of January, and it was framed before the clause imposing survey before selection was introduced, or considered, or accepted. Those two factors have greatly interfered with the operation of that measure. None of us can say that the Land Act is fairly yet in operation, nor will it be in operation until there is a return of more congenial seasons, and the ordinary course and current of settlement upon the lands of the colony will be encouraged and facilitated. I listened with very great attention to the speech of the hon. member for Northern Downs, who opened the debate this evening, and I must say that I should imagine, from what he said, that he cannot be in sympathy with hon. gentlemen on the other side unless they have receded from the political opinions they have generally expressed. Why, the hon. gentleman went into a jeremiad, not only over the condition of the colony, but over the unsatisfactory remunerativeness of our railway system. The whole of his remarks pointed to one thing, and that was that we should discontinue railway construction—that we should be cautious for the present time, and that we should cease to progress. When I heard such statements come from the hon. gentleman, I could hardly understand how he was cheered by the hon. member for Mulgrave and other members on the other side who profess—and I believe they are sincere in their professions—to lead the van of progress, and to be equally anxious with us to compete in the race of progress in this colony. At the same time it seems to me that any statements made by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber in opposition to the views of the Government, however absurd, for the time being commend themselves to the indiscriminate approbation of hon. gentlemen, who, without analysing or criticising the character of the

charges made against us, are glad to receive any support whatever. I for one sincerely trust that no Government of this colony will adopt the advice of the hon. member for Northern Downs, and consider our railways as unprofitable, or that the colony should now rest and stop the public works, or that we have at the present time to halt upon what I have described to be "this march of progress." I certainly think that the revenue of the colony should be enlarged, and I shall be glad to see it enlarged, not only for our present requirements, but in view of the uncertainty of the revenue for the present year; I should like to see it permanently enlarged for this reason. I am thoroughly in accord with the hon. member for Northern Downs, that there is a very large expenditure in connection with railways that should be charged to the revenue. I should like to see a great many of the salaries and other expenses, which are periodically debited to loan, provided for, as they ought to be, by the people of this colony, and that the work of construction of our railways pure and simple should be charged solely to the money that we borrow from the public creditor. The hon. gentlemen opposite have not encouraged that view of the case, for I will remind them that in January, 1881, they inaugurated a very pernicious precedent in dealing with the arrears for haulage of material upon the Central Railway, amounting to something like £14,000, accumulated for several years back—from the time the Central Railway was commenced. They allowed that charge to be debited to loan and credited to the revenue of the colony for the purpose of increasing the apparent revenue for the year. I pointed it out at the time, but I find that the system has since been perpetuated. I sincerely trust that with the enlargement of the revenue the haulage of material for the construction of railways and all other kinds of expenses shall be provided for out of the current revenue of the colony. Now we come, sir, to the taxation proposals, and it is very evident that no Treasurer can please everybody in increasing his tariff proposals, or, indeed, even if he were to revise the tariff generally. From the expressions of opinion we have heard on both sides of the Committee, I see clearly it would be a very difficult task to revise the tariff to the satisfaction of everyone, unless we were in a position to impose a tax the incidence of which would fall upon no one. I must first of all express my satisfaction at being so well supported in the proposals I have made, and I am glad to see them so intelligently discussed and considered. Notwithstanding the multitude of advice I have received, I do not think any proposals suggested would commend themselves to very general acceptance. I do not think, for instance, that the views of my hon. friends the members for Darling Downs and Warwick, who suggested that the duty on spirits should be raised to 20s. a gallon, will commend themselves to general acceptance; nor do I think the heavy protective duties which my hon. friend Mr. Isambert suggested, nor his proposition to abolish the excise duty upon colonial lager beer, will commend themselves to the approval of the country. I have more sympathy with the opinions expressed by my hon. friend the member for Bundamba, who suggested the omission of the duty on wheat and the reduction of the duty on colonial wine; but when I intend to increase the revenue I cannot increase it with one hand and reduce it with the other. Although there is a great deal to be said in favour of that hon. member's views, I think that at the present time we are precluded from the consideration of them. The resolutions which I have submitted are not framed either with a protective or a freetrade view. In fact, I consider that

in the condition of this country, which is so dissimilar from our great mother-country, the application of strictly freetrade principles is not applicable to our present condition. They are framed with the express purpose of providing revenue from those sources which will feel the least change by their incidence. I have heard no solid objection.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No liquid objection.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have heard no objection of a serious character against the proposed increase of duty upon spirits other than brandy, nor is there any serious objection raised to the excise upon beer. I believe the excise on beer will not fall upon the consumer, as has been said. I do not desire, nor is it necessary for me now, to go into statistics as to the profits of that industry; but I may say that it is one of the most profitable industries in the colony, and I believe the imposition of a tax amounting to a fraction of a farthing per glass upon that beverage will not seriously affect those engaged in its production. It is certainly not likely to effect the ruin of this industry. It is right that it should be under the control and regulation of the Government, and even if the evil should occur that one or two small breweries in the country be extinguished, I do not think the class of beverage that will be withdrawn from consumption will be any great loss to the country. I think these proposals have not really met with any tangible objection. No doubt there is a sentimental objection over the timber duty; but as I have pointed out already it is a complement to the royalties. Again, hon. gentlemen in discussing it seem to ignore altogether the fact that it is not a new duty. The duty has existed in the shape of an *ad valorem*, and we merely propose to add to that *ad valorem* duty the value of the royalty imposed upon our own timber. This is by no means a new tax, and I maintain it is perfectly justifiable, in the face of our obtaining, as we have a perfect right to obtain, a revenue upon our own natural products. To hear the hon. member for Rockhampton, one would imagine that the poor man, as he was pleased to call him, was the only man in the colony who uses timber for the construction of a dwelling. I believe that a very large quantity of timber is used in the construction of every dwelling in this colony, and I have no hesitation in saying that the wealthier classes of people here use quite as much, if not more, timber than the poorer classes do in the erection of their dwellings. I do not think it is a tax which will in any way be oppressively felt. It is a lower tax than is proposed in the freetrade colony of New South Wales. There they charge 1s. 6d. and 2s. upon timber, while I propose here to charge but 1s. and 1s. 6d., my object being, not to impose a heavy duty upon the article, but simply to add to the existing impost of 5 per cent. an equivalent to the royalty which has to be paid upon our own timber. The hon. member for Rockhampton asked why we do not impose an extra duty upon cedar, and said he had no doubt we would get a revenue which would be quite equivalent to the money we expect to get by this tax. The answer is an obvious one; it is because there is already an export duty upon cedar amounting to 2s., which only produces £900 per annum—and that would be an amount altogether out of proportion to what is required, and what will be furnished by the increased timber duty.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: It would stand 15s.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not think that with the dry weather, we are likely to have a large export of cedar this year. It is

altogether uncertain as a source of revenue; besides, such a tax would not have the counteracting effect of protecting our own lumberers and timber-getters, who have to pay the royalty, from the competition of foreign timber. A good deal has been said respecting the proposed tax upon machinery, and, so far as I can see, hon. members view this tax in relation to the industries in which they are more particularly interested. I maintain this tax upon the broad basis that if we do not impose a duty upon machinery it is but right to remit all duties whatsoever upon implements used in agriculture and mining. How does it stand at the present time? The farmer has to pay duty upon his spades, shovels, axes, grubbers, hoes, wheelbarrows, drills, cultivators, and scarifiers. The whole of those are implements upon which the farmer has to pay duty now, and because we propose to add a duty upon a few corn-shellers and corn-crackers there is a great outcry about our injuring the poor struggling farmer. Let us consider the position of the miner. He is taxed for his picks, drills, candles, fuses, and, in fact, for all the implements he makes use of in carrying on his occupation; and because we propose an impost upon quartz-crushing machinery, which belongs to proprietors who are men of some means, and who, at anyrate, are likely to be in a better position than the individual miner, there is again a great outcry against us, and it is said we are injuring the miner. I say the objection is one which is altogether more sentimental than substantial. If the revenue could afford it, and if it were deemed a desirable thing, I should say that we should adopt one of two courses, either to omit the duties upon all agricultural and mining implements whatsoever, or else to impose a duty upon that class of machinery which belongs more particularly to the men who will be able to pay the duty upon it. It is like all fiscal proposals hitherto made in this colony. There has been no attempt whatever to relieve a man commencing an industry—struggling with a new industry. This Chamber—I do not speak of the present members of the House—but I say that in this Chamber there have been repeated and successful attempts to obtain immense concessions for wealthy capitalists; and the exemption of a duty upon machinery is a forcible illustration of what action has been taken before in this direction in the colony. I trust, therefore, that we shall discard the idea that it will press on any struggling industry. I have had various suggestions as to the means of increasing the tariff, from time to time—a duty on aerated waters, a heavy tax on Chinese fire-works, a tax on Chinese furniture—but I think the four heads of taxation I propose will commend themselves to the country, and will be levied and paid without any oppression whatever being felt by those who have to contribute. Hon. gentlemen are aware that the resolutions will have to be followed up by a Bill in which the different items can be more distinctly discussed than at the present time. I may say that the proposals submitted have been carefully considered by the Government. They are not the outcome of an impulse. The position of the colony has been carefully weighed as requiring a further increase of revenue, and it only shows prudence in administration to provide for that increase. The proposed heads of taxation have been considered to be those from which the most direct and largest benefit to the colony will accrue without any great accession to the cost of collecting.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Fraser,—The hon. gentleman was very warm when he accused me of glorying in seeing the Treasury depleted, because then I could work out a particular object of my own.

But if I am a Treasurer who worked consistently to keep the Treasury in a depleted condition, he must acknowledge that I was singularly unfortunate in attaining my object, because hon. gentlemen opposite acknowledge that I always left a good surplus at the end of the year to the credit of consolidated revenue, and then attempt to prove that I did not get that surplus in a proper way. The surplus is a matter of fact. The hon. gentleman, however, makes this accusation to account for having taken £310,000 out of revenue at the end of 1883. I took sums from surplus revenue consistently, but the hon. gentleman never had a surplus to take away. One year I took out £245,000, and another year £310,000—because I had a surplus. I do not want to say any more about this surplus, except to remind the Treasurer that when I used the words “cooked statement” I did not use a harsher term than the official language used by the Auditor-General himself. Referring to this transaction, which has confused the accounts ever since, the Auditor-General said:—

“During the last session of Parliament the sum of £310,000, being a portion then standing to the credit of the consolidated revenue, was set apart under a special clause in the Appropriation Act for the following works and services.”

I will not trouble the Committee with the different items.

“These sums were submitted to Parliament as usual in a special Supplementary Estimate and designated in the Appropriation Act of 1883-4 as “surplus revenue.” In the absence of any intimation to the contrary, it was no doubt understood by honourable members that, in accordance with former practice, the total sum appropriated would be transferred from the consolidated revenue to the credit of a special trust—i.e., “surplus revenue”—account. This, however, was not done; but with a view to being enabled to temporarily exhibit a larger revenue balance than would have appeared if the ordinary course had been followed, the above special appropriations have been treated as ordinary revenue votes, so that the amount from time to time remaining unexpended appears in the Treasury statements as a portion of the available revenue balance.

“I respectfully submit that the result of this alteration is unsatisfactory. A well-considered system of dealing with an important Parliamentary appropriation has been departed from; the Treasury revenue balance as now shown is apt to mislead, and the usefulness of the published statements for purposes of comparison is impaired.”

I think hon. members will agree that the language of the Auditor-General was quite as strong as mine. The only difference is that the Auditor-General was making an official report to Parliament and I made a statement on the floor of the House. The fact remains, as was conclusively shown by the hon. member for Townsville, that during the McIlwraith administration, after making full allowance for the amounts received from the Railway Reserves Fund—after putting them back—I had an actual surplus of £600,000; and the Treasurer admits that two months after I left the Treasury—and after paying six months' interest—there was a balance of £529,000. But the whole controversy arose over a statement made by me at Bundaberg to the effect that when I left the Treasury there was a credit balance of £700,000. The Treasurer, however, tries to confuse the great point in the controversy as to how we managed the finances of the colony. Hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches are never weary of trying to make the House believe that we made our large revenue by the sales of land. We can only find out how much land revenue we got during the year by taking the percentage of land revenue to the general revenue, and I have taken the percentage during the whole of the previous administration.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Including railway reserves?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Not including railway reserves; I will come to them by-and-by. I find that the land revenue during those five years was 20 per cent. of the whole revenue, and during my administration the land revenue was exactly 21 per cent.; therefore there was a difference of only 1 per cent. Hon. gentlemen must not forget that it is not a question of who got most revenue from the land, but who violated the principle by selling wholesale the lands of the colony? Therefore I have a right to take into consideration the whole of the lands sold during the time the Government were in power. In addition to the amount represented by 20 per cent., half-a-million acres were sold by auction during their administration, making up the gross amount to 27 per cent. of the revenue.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: You enjoyed the proceeds.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: If the hon. gentleman had listened to the hon. member for Townsville, he would have seen that the proceeds were made to fill up a hole made in the revenue by the hon. gentleman himself, but that the gross saving during the time we were in power was £600,000. I do not want to criticise in detail the items on which it is proposed to levy duties, because we shall have sufficient time to discuss them when the Bill comes before the House. But some remarks were made by the hon. member which I cannot allow to pass. The hon. member says the duty on timber is the complement to the royalty. I say the complement was not wanted, because the royalty ought never to have been put on. What did the Minister for Lands do, and what did he give as his sole reason for doing it?—I speak of him as one of the Ministry. He put a royalty of 1s. per 100 superficial feet on the Maryborough pine, and his avowed object in doing so was that the State ought to be paid something for the use of the timber. That object would be accomplished by a royalty, and the royalty that was levied would be an actual payment by the people who got the timber for the privilege they enjoyed of cutting it down. However, when an equivalent duty is put on all timber imported into the colony the transaction alters its character altogether. The Government are no longer compensated for the timber that is taken off, but there is a general tax put on the timber of the colony. The timber that comes into the colony is to pay 1s. per 100 feet. That is what the user of the timber pays. It is a duty levied by the State, and he pays the same for the Maryborough timber—not for the privilege of cutting it. It is simply a duty on all timber, whether cut in the colony or imported. It is not a royalty in any sense of the word. The man who cuts the timber does not pay it, because he is put in exactly the same position as before. He pays no royalty that is not balanced by the money of the public. The hon. gentleman must see that the character of the transaction is entirely altered. But the case is even worse than that. Seeing that public opinion was completely against him, the Minister for Lands receded from his position, and reduced the royalty from 1s. to 6d., and now he proposes that foreign timber should be charged double that amount, or 1s. per 100 feet. The consequence is that the Government, so far from being paid for the timber that is being cut down in the colony, are actually giving the people of the country a premium for cutting down the timber, instead of charging them 6d. per 100 feet as was proposed before. People must see that as plainly as possible if they look into the matter at all. There is another view that people ought to take of it. We are not going to allow the Colonial Treasurer to have a monopoly of the poor man, and I am going to bring in another "poor man" argument.

By putting an import duty on timber the hon. gentleman is giving about the finest lift to the landed interest that they have got for a long time. The great bulk of the land that contains the timber is sold, and the owners will have the benefit of it. We are giving 1s. per 100 feet to the proprietors of the land. Surely that was not intended. We come to the result that we have a protective duty which is paid by the working classes of the colony. I do not think hon. members on that side need be afraid to follow the example of Mr. Griffith, the hon. member for Oxley in 1874, and exercise their judgment in differing from the Government. At that time the hon. gentleman was a private member, and used to sit where Mr. Foote sits now. A 10 per cent. duty on machinery existed, and the Government proposed to abolish it, which they succeeded in doing. But that proposal was resisted by several members—two of them being on that side of the House and four on this—and one member who voted against it left his party, and that was Mr. Griffith himself. I have another word to say about the strictures which the Colonial Treasurer made on our administration in the Railway Department. He said that a pernicious precedent was set by us that had led to abuses since—that in 1880 we took £14,000 from loan and put it to the consolidated revenue. That amount of money had been spent on the carriage of railway material for the construction of lines. The hon. gentleman admits that he has perpetrated the same offence constantly himself, and if he has read the reports of the department he will see that it is referred to in the most open way. So far from its being a mistake, I think it was a piece of good business. If we borrow £100,000 for making a line, the cost of carrying the materials for it over the Government railways is just as much a portion of the cost of that line as the wages of the navvies, and the Government have as much right to be paid for their work out of the loan as anybody else. It is the only way in which the accounts can be kept properly, and I am astonished at anyone taking any objection to it. If the hon. gentleman thought it was wrong, why did he not alter it? The Commissioner's report shows plainly enough that he has charged to Loan Fund the haulage of material for railway contracts during the present year. I will point out to him one reform he might have made. He claims as part of the revenue of the railways last year £500 for running special trains for Ministers. That is a part of the sum that makes up the 4 per cent. which they say our railways are actually returning at the present time. If a Minister takes a special train to Dalby he is charged £14 10s., exactly the same as I should be charged; only, I should have to pay for it while he does not. This amount is put down to credit, and so we have this anomaly: that the more extravagant Ministers are, and the more they travel by special train instead of going by the ordinary train, the better the railways pay. I do not know that I need say anything further now. I will take a division because we intend to express our opinion on the attempt of the Government to levy additional taxation at this time. We say that additional taxation is not wanted, and that if it is wanted the incidence of the taxation has not been properly developed in the propositions put before us by the Colonial Treasurer in the motion now before the Committee.

The PREMIER: I should like to say just one word with reference to the quotation read by the hon. gentleman from the Auditor-General's report for last year, which I do not remember to have heard or read before. I do not think that any officer of this House, any more than a member of this House has any right to impute improper motives to

the Government for what they do. I was not aware of the statement made in that report. It is said the accounts were arranged with a view to make the credit balance of the revenue appear larger than it really was. We did nothing of the kind. It was done because the other way of doing it was contrary to law, and it was thought desirable to revert to the proper way of doing it. The Auditor-General also states in the same report—I am following the hon. gentleman's quotations from memory—that it was supposed the sum would have been transferred to a trust fund and charged under that heading. Now, as a matter of fact, there was no legal authority for transferring those votes to a trust fund; and in the second place, it was not brought in as "surplus revenue," but was described as a special supplementary appropriation, and dealt with specifically in the Appropriation Act in a particular manner. So that the strictures of the Auditor-General read by the hon. gentleman are founded on a mistaken notion of the facts, and I differ from them entirely.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: So far from differing from the Auditor-General, the hon. gentleman ought to have read his Treasurer's speech before he made the statement he did just now. He will find that his Treasurer speaks about £167,000 as the true balance over and over again, ignoring the balance that the Premier says now is the legal balance.

Mr. HAMILTON said: It is not my intention to add to the number of those who have waded through the Financial Statement, but I intend to confine my remarks to the question which is immediately before the Committee—that of taxation. I regret exceedingly that the sanguine anticipations of the Colonial Treasurer as to the revenue which would be obtained from various sources have all lamentably failed, and that he now has to resort again, through his own incapacity of administration, to levying the burden of taxation on the people. That is the invariable resort of that party when through maladministration they bring the colony into difficulties. It is within our present recollection that during their previous administration, when they held office for five years, they landed the colony in debt, and the only thing they could propose in order to save the colony was to tax the people. How also, when the reins of power were then torn from their grasp by the people, and the present leader of the Opposition proposed to extricate the colony from the position which the incapacity of that side had landed it in, the party now in power said it was impossible without taxation. However, it was done. The colony was not only extricated from the position in which it had been landed, but a large surplus was left to its credit when Sir T. McIlwraith left office, which has been again expended by the present Government, and again they come down with a taxation scheme. The Colonial Treasurer states that, before proposing his new scheme of taxation, he had a multitude of counsellors, but from that multitude he has not derived much wisdom. The poorer classes are specially selected to bear all the taxation. For instance: With regard to machinery, the Colonial Treasurer states that the miners are more heavily taxed than any other section of the population; they are taxed for everything they work with—ropes, powder, picks, candles, etc.—and yet he proposes to increase their burdens. In my electorate there are many goldfields where men far away from the coast, year after year, waste their time and health in the attempt

to develop claims. They have everything to contend against—climate, carriage, and want of resources; but now, in addition to that, this additional burden is going to be placed on them. This is the manner in which the present Government fosters one of the first industries of the colony. With regard to the sugar industry, all must acknowledge that it was never in a more depressed state, and yet this is the time chosen for imposing additional taxation. Although, as the member for Townsville said, 5 per cent. is a small tax, yet taken in connection with the passing of entries and other accompanying charges, the imposition will be a very serious burden. Then with regard to timber. The Treasurer stated that the wealthy classes are taxed equally with the poorer classes, but that is not the case. The wealthy classes certainly use in the construction of their houses a certain amount of timber, but the houses of the poorer classes consist entirely of timber. Why, then, should the labouring man in the North be taxed for the benefit of a few mill-owners who are sitting on the Government side of the House? The hon. member for Rockhampton showed how in Rockhampton, many years ago, the present mill-owners were getting a large profit; how each successive year their profits increased, and had it not been for the imported timber the people would have suffered, as the mill-owners would have dictated their own terms. Now, with regard to beer. Here we have another instance of how the poor man has been selected for taxation, as the price of an article, which is regarded by him actually as a necessity, is raised, and raised for unjustifiable purposes, one of which I may mention is for the purpose of paying members. Certain gentlemen have contracted with their constituents to perform certain services in this House for nothing for a certain time, and now they wish to tax the people of the colony in order to pay themselves for that which they promised to do for nothing. I have heard many members on the Government side state that they disapprove of these fresh taxation proposals; but, at the same time, they expressed their intention of voting for them. In other words, they are sacrificing their consciences and convictions for fear of offending their leader. As the hon. member for Townsville said, the ten-million loan hangs like a millstone round their necks; it is being used by the Premier as a scourge with which to lash them into subjection. I consider it unjustifiable that any Government should be in a position to handle such a large amount of money. *Apropos* of this loan I wish to comment on the action of members of the Government in attempting to excuse the low rate at which the loan was floated, owing to their own incapacity and indiscretion. They asserted that the floating of the loan was prejudiced by a letter which appeared in some paper in England, and which they, without one tittle of evidence, insinuated most persistently was written by some member of the progressive party. Their insinuations, which no evidence has been produced to justify, and which are utterly untrue, have, however, been met, not by insinuation but by a direct straightforward charge made by the leader of the Opposition that the Premier has actually been himself guilty of the conduct of which he has accused others. And his charge is supported by strong and reliable evidence. The President of the Chamber of Commerce of Glasgow is the witness who volunteered the evidence that during the administration of Sir Thomas McIlwraith letters appeared in the English papers for the purpose of damaging that loan, and that those letters were instigated by the present Premier, Mr. Griffith

The Premier has denied that, but anyone who is capable of such conduct is capable of denying it. We can only take the evidence that is before us, and we find that we have the statement of a gentleman in high position—as high a position as that of the Premier—who was not biased by politics and had no reason to say it, that the Premier did give that information. A man may forget a thing that happened very easily, but no man can recollect what never occurred; and this gentleman states that he recollects that that statement was made by the Premier. In addition to that, anyone who reads the letter can form a very good impression as to where it came from. We have also other corroborative evidence. We know very well the manner—the vindictive manner—in which that hon. gentleman tried to hound his opponent down on every possible occasion; and although he may possibly be speaking correctly when he says he has no recollection of the matter, we know that there have been many occasions when he has denied charges where, on subsequently being proved, he has got out of the difficulty by simply saying that his memory was a blank. His memory may be a blank in this instance, but we have the statement of a reliable witness that the hon. member instigated those letters for the purpose of blocking the loan. We have corroborative evidence of it. I regret that there should be such strong evidence in support of the grave charge, that a gentleman holding such a position had been guilty of such conduct in order to damage the prospects of his political adversary.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Fraser,—At this late hour I am sorry to detain the Committee, but as the representative of a mining district—I suppose the largest in the colony—I have waited patiently to hear whether my senior colleague would say something about it, and as he has not done so—I am sorry that he has not—it is my business now to solemnly protest against the taxation that is introduced by the hon. the Treasurer. I have not yet reached that pitch of diplomatic parliamentary warfare to be able to get on my feet and say what I do not mean; and the few words I have got to say I do mean, and that is that I am really very much surprised that the Government, after such a great deal of “blowing” about how well they are getting on, how much prosperity we have got—everything except the sugar-growers and the squatters is in splendid condition—how the Land Act will bring about such a flourishing state of affairs that, as the Minister for Lands told us, they will be able to take the duty off rum and tobacco, so that the miners may live in comfort. I say that I am very much astonished when, in the face of all this, we find the hon. the Treasurer coming down and proposing an additional duty first of all on grog. To save the country from ruin they must increase the grog score. There is any amount of revenue got from it at present. Now, my constituents are working men—miners; I do not say that they are all teetotallers; they are not, or at any rate very few of them. Mr. Booth has not had any effect on them, as he did not pay them a visit; but I know that they like their beer and their whisky, and if this extra duty is put on spirits I suppose the working man will get worse whisky—more water in it—and that he will have to drink oftener. That will be the effect of it in mining communities. But I do not care so very much about the duty on spirits. I suppose we can get over that; but with regard to beer, I know working men, and especially Cornishmen, like large quantities of it. It seems to me that if this tax is imposed the colonial industry is likely to go down, because we can now get a hogshead of English beer almost at the same price as colonial, and if the

Government do not increase the duty on English beer the colonial will have to go to the wall. The hon. member for Townsville has said that only small breweries will be affected by it; but I think that large breweries will also be affected by it to a considerable extent. However, that is nothing. The principal protest I wish to make here to-night, before the question comes to a division, is against the erroneous measure of putting an *ad valorem* duty on mining machinery. It is all very well for hon. gentlemen representing farming districts or living in the city, where they have corner allotments and all sorts of nice speculations to make money from, to agree to this, as they do not look upon it as a matter of very great importance. But I am something like the hon. member for Townsville—I have had some experience in mining, having followed it for about twenty years in the different colonies; and I know that 5 per cent. imposed all at once by a Liberal Government comes with a very bad grace from them—as far as the miner is concerned—the working man, the idol of that party. The Government promised all sorts of advantages to those men when they came into power; but, sir, a tyrannical Government never proposed what the Liberal Government now propose—to charge an extra duty of 5 per cent. upon machinery. And why is it to be imposed? For the benefit of Maryborough or Brisbane firms. I can assure you, Mr. Fraser, that we cannot get the machinery that is required on the gold-field I represent either in Maryborough or in Brisbane. A great deal of machinery comes by the British-India steamers from home to Townsville. That is the machinery we generally want as far as Ravenswood is concerned. And even if we could get it in Maryborough it would not suit us to get it from there, because it would cost a higher price, and the freight from Maryborough to Townsville is equal to that from London to Townsville by the British-India Company's steamers. I do not wish to detain the Committee longer to-night. I know some hon. members want to get home to their wives and children; but before I sit down I certainly must protest against the introduction of a duty upon mining machinery, because I know that it will affect that industry injuriously; and I feel sure that if the Government force the measure through they will have reason to be sorry for it hereafter. It is not a merely local complaint that I make. I am not standing upon narrow ground; there are other gentlemen here who know that what I say is correct. I believe my hon. colleague knows all about it; but I suppose he will sacrifice the interests of his constituents to sticking to the Government in this matter. However, I hope he will vote with me on this occasion. I have nothing more to say, but shall certainly vote against this tax.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Fraser,—I had hoped that after what had fallen from the hon. member for Kennedy the Attorney-General would have got up and justified himself—at any rate, to his constituents—for the vote which I assume he intends to give to-night if a division is called, in favour of putting a tax upon machinery; but apparently the sweets of office and the emoluments attached thereto are preferred by him to his duty to his constituents. That duty has been clearly pointed out by his hon. colleague, but he seems to utterly ignore his constituents, and prefers, as I have said, the sweets and emoluments of office. I am sorry, sir, that I should have to speak at this late hour of the night, because I have reason to believe that some hon. members who reside in Ipswich are anxious to get home; but that is no reason why legislation should be delayed. We hear the Govern-

ment crying out night after night to push on the business, and I know that the hon. members for Ipswich—the bulk of them, I observe, Mr. Fraser, have disappeared, and have evidently hurried away to catch the 10.35 train. It is evidently of much more consequence to them that they should get that train than that they should remain and vote for the infliction of a heavy impost upon their fellow-colonists or to prevent such an impost being inflicted upon them. Now, I think it was a very fortunate thing that this debate was continued in committee, and not in the House—as was originally intended by the leaders of the two sides—because the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has shown, like the proverbial monkey, that the higher he climbs his pole the more he exposes—not his tail—I would not think of using the word “tail” in connection with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer—but his caudal appendage. The higher he climbs the more he exposes the truth of the Darwinian theory. Now, Mr. Fraser, this country has suffered a great deal owing to the Ministry. I believe myself the drought is to a great extent owing to them; at any rate, it and the Ministry came in together, and I hope they will go out together. The sooner that comes the better. Not content with giving us a short supply of water, they now propose to tax our grog. We are to pay more for our liquor and be short of water. Now, I think that is unkind. No doubt it is true, as the hon. member for Townsville said, that the Government have provided an immense amount of paving in a locality which, no doubt, they will occupy at a future time. After listening carefully to the debate, I think only one opinion can be formed with regard to the resolutions proposed by the Treasurer, and that is this: that in order to get at the feeling of this House, these resolutions must be taken *seriatim*. They cannot be taken *in globo*, as the Treasurer proposes, because we have heard a great divergence of opinion with regard to them expressed by hon. members on both sides of the Committee. There are some members opposed to the whole of them, I being one of those. A certain number of members agree to the first two proposals but object to the last two. A large section of the Committee are not indisposed to vote for the increased duties on spirits and the excise on beer, but some who agree to that are opposed to the import duty on timber; others are opposed to the duty on machinery. Therefore, I think that in order to get at the real sense of the Committee with reference to the proposals of the Colonial Treasurer the resolutions must be taken *seriatim*. I therefore move that we take them *seriatim*.

Mr. KATES said: I quite agree with the hon. member who has just sat down. I myself am opposed to two of these resolutions—the duty on imported timber and the duty on machinery. I cannot understand how the Government can be so blind as to introduce a tax on machinery, especially agricultural machinery. There is a saying that those whom the gods wish to destroy first become demented. I believe it is the duty of every member of this Committee to press the Government to drop the idea of taxing agricultural machinery. Every year there are imported into the colony threshing machines, reapers and binders, and other machinery which cannot be manufactured in this country, and even if they were they could not be sold at the same price as the imported ones, because there is not the same demand for them here as in Melbourne. I really hope the Government will accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Balonne, and that these resolutions will be taken *seriatim*. I am prepared to support them as regards beer and spirits, but I shall certainly oppose the other two.

Mr. JORDAN said: I sincerely hope the Government will not adopt any such suggestion. It is the policy of the Government before the Committee, and even if I did not approve of the resolutions *in globo* I should support them. I do approve of them myself; not because I think there is any necessity for taxation perhaps, but because I believe in protection of native industry. It was said in this House not long ago that I was once an advocate for freetrade. I never advocated freetrade in my life. I took part in that mild protectionist policy introduced in 1869, imposing a small duty for the protection of certain kinds of farm produce. It is on that ground I am going to support these resolutions, not that I think there is any absolute necessity for increased taxation as far as revenue is concerned. I trust the Government will adhere to the programme they have placed before the Committee, and that hon. members will have the good sense not to lend themselves to the machinations of hon. gentlemen on the other side by accepting the suggestion of the hon. member for Balonne.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Of all the contemptible speeches I have ever listened to in this Committee that of the hon. member for South Brisbane is the most contemptible. Here is a man who has held high office at home, who now, in his old age—his dotage, I hope—gives up his conscience, and when he has a smart reprimand, like a naughty child, comes up and promises to be a good boy. He is prepared to swallow everything, although admitting he is voting against his conscience. This is the high-minded member for South Brisbane! Bah!

Mr. JORDAN: I should like the hon. member to point out how he arrives at the conclusion that I am voting against my conscience.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I do not believe you have one. I withdraw that.

Mr. JORDAN: The hon. gentleman asserts I am voting against my conscience, although I have just now said that years ago I supported a protectionist policy, and have never said anything to the contrary. He dares to say that though I held high office in England as Agent-General of the colony I am now base enough to get up in my place and say in this Committee I shall vote against my conscience. That is a statement that is entirely unwarranted. I say I vote conscientiously in the matter. I challenge the hon. gentleman to point to anything I ever said or did contrary to the views I now express. I believe in a protective policy to a certain extent, and I am voting certainly in accordance with my conscience. As to reproof administered to me by any Minister, I am not aware that I have had any reproof. When I think proper to differ from the Ministry I shall say so; I am man enough to express my opinions on all subjects, and that the hon. gentleman knows. He has just as much respect for me as he has for any man in the House. He knows I am an honest man, and that as far as my intelligence permits me I act conscientiously.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr Fraser, I quite admit that the hon. gentleman is right to a certain point. He says a thing but does not do it. He makes a speech on one side of a question, but because the Premier tells him it is a party question he votes on the other side with the Government. The hon. gentleman was quite right in saying that he held a high position in England at one time, but he made a mistake in saying that he was Agent-General; he never was Agent-General. I again assert that the hon. member submitted and was subjected to the flouts and jeers of the leaders of the party that he supports the other night for having dared

to speak against them. I am glad, however, that he has got back into the tram-groove, and that, though he may jib a little, when the whip is applied to him he votes as the Premier pleases.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Fraser,—I have just a word or two to say in reference to what has fallen from the hon. member for Darling Downs. I claim to represent an agricultural constituency just as much as he does, and I think I shall be doing no wrong or injustice to my constituents by voting for this proposed tax on machinery, including agricultural machinery. The position the hon. member takes up is this: that while a farmer is in the position that he must use a hoe or a scythe or a spade he must pay a tax on the implements that he uses, but when he gets into the position that he can use a reaper and binder or steam plough he should be exempt from taxation. Even if there were no need of additional taxation to make up a possible deficiency, I think this tax is one which ought to be imposed, and ought to have been made long ago, to increase the revenue. I have also something to say in regard to a remark made by the hon. member for Townsville. I do not know whether it was intended to apply to me or not. The hon. gentleman alluded to some members on this side of the Committee, and said they had made some show of independence in attempting to reduce the expenditure of the Government and in resisting increases, and then, being very submissive, were whipped back into their places. I maintain that it is just as much the duty of the hon. member for Townsville to show that he is independent as it is my duty, and I do not think there has been much exhibition of independence on the part of the hon. gentleman. He has been a steady, persistent, loyal supporter of his party ever since I knew him. There is no show of independence about him. As I have said, I do not know whether his remark was intended for me or not, and I maintain that I have done all that I could do in these matters with decency and modesty. If it is my duty to act independently in these matters or in any matter, it is just as much the duty of the hon. member for Townsville to act independently, and if that is his duty, judging by the consistent party vote he has given, he has failed in his duty.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Fraser,—I happen to represent another farming constituency, and I look at this matter in an opposite light from the hon. member for Fassifern. I certainly do not believe in the tax on machinery, especially upon farming implements, because most of them cannot be made in the colony and are not produced here. The hon. gentleman who has just sat down says that we have already a tax on spades and shovels, but I do not believe in a duty being placed upon those implements any more than I do in a tax on machinery, nor do I approve of the proposed duty on timber. At the same time, as these resolutions will be taken *in globo* I shall vote for them, but when the Bill embodying them is before us in committee I shall do my best to have the tax on both timber and machinery eliminated from it. I believe perfectly in the extra tax on spirits. I do not think it would matter if spirits were taxed 15s. a gallon; it would do nobody any harm, and I think we should all drink just as much as we do now and there would be more revenue realised from the impost. I think it is quite right also that there should be an extra tax on beer, and do not think it will hurt the poor man as has been stated. He will not pay a farthing more for his beer than he does now. Such articles as spirits and beer may, in my opinion, be fairly taxed for

the purpose of revenue. Under these proposals colonial beer will still have an advantage over imported beer, upon which three times the duty has to be paid. I think it is quite competent for any hon. member, who may believe in some of these proposals and not in others, to vote for the resolutions as they stand, knowing that he will have an opportunity of voting on them again when they are finally dealt with in committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: As it is evident that this question will be dealt with *seriatim* when the Bill comes before the House, I do not wish to push the matter to a division at the present time.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Fraser,—At the risk of being considered troublesome at this late hour, I desire to protest, on behalf of the very large mining community which I represent, against the proposed tax on machinery. I have received two telegrams—one from Etheridge, and the other from Cloncurry—strongly protesting against the imposition of this duty. These two goldfields are the two largest in the colony, except Gympie and Charters Towers. In the case of the latter a railway runs through the field, but there is a long land carriage of 250 miles to the Etheridge, as well as a long sea carriage; and if to the present heavy expense of freight is added the proposed tax, the mining industry in the places I have mentioned, and at Maytown also, will be injuriously affected, and the small amount of revenue which the Colonial Treasurer expects to receive from the imposition of this duty—namely, £14,000—will not compensate by a long way for the hindrance that it will be to progressive settlement on mining fields. The men who will suffer by this tax are the wages men who are employed working the machinery erected on those fields. It is all very well to say that we can get the machinery in Brisbane, but people in the North do not want to have to come to Brisbane to get their machinery, as they import a great deal direct from Melbourne or England. Two thousand pounds' worth of machinery costs another £2,000 before it is erected, and I think the addition of £200 by way of a tax will be the last straw that will break the camel's back. The Government have deprecated the separation movement, but I think they will supply, by their action in this matter, one more argument in favour of it. I protest, on behalf of the miners against the proposed impost, and I have also much sympathy with the farmers and consider their case equally difficult to get over.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not wish to detain the Committee much longer; but I wish to correct the hon. member for Balonne. That hon. gentleman said I claimed to hold a position which I had no right to claim. I was appointed Agent-General for Emigration by an Act of Parliament, and I held that office for some years.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Fraser,—I think it is my duty before I vote to say a few words upon this question. I have had heavy pressure brought to bear upon me to do certain things, but I will act independently and not be dictated to. What was said by the hon. senior member for Rockhampton about a number of houses that were built in that town of imported timber is quite correct; but I really cannot see where the poor man gets any advantage. The timber merchants bought allotments of land in Rockhampton, built small houses upon them, and then sold them to poor men at an advanced rate; so I ask—Where does the poor man get any advantage? I say let us encourage our industries here and the taxes will

be more than recouped by the greater prosperity and larger number of hands employed. I shall vote for the tariff that is proposed.

Question put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 24.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Brookes, Aland, Mellor, Jordan, White, Bailey, Campbell, Buckland, Wakefield, Foxton, Beattie, Foote, Wallace, Midgley, Higson, Horwitz, Kellett, and Sheridan.

NOES, 16.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Palmer, Morehead, McWhannell, Jessop, Macrossan, Govett, Lissner, Nelson, Lalor, Stevenson, Black, Ferguson, and Hamilton.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Fraser,—I now beg to move the following resolutions, which are subsidiary upon those already passed, and are merely formal, and the discussion upon them will be more properly taken when the Bill is introduced. I beg to move—

That there be raised, levied, collected, or paid upon any wines, spirit, cordial, compound, or other liquor containing a greater proportion than 30 per cent. of proof spirit, a duty at the highest rate chargeable on spirits.

That there be raised, levied, collected, or paid upon goods imported, which have been partially converted into goods which would be liable to a higher rate of duty, a duty at a rate equal to one-half of such higher rate of duty.

That there be raised, levied, collected, or paid upon goods imported which are substitutes for known dutiable goods, a duty at the same rate as that payable upon the goods for which they are substitutes, or such less rate as may be fixed by the Governor in Council.

That it is desirable that brewers be registered, and that a fee of £25 be charged for such registration.

Question put.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not understand why there should be put before us at this time of night four resolutions about which not a single word has been said. The Treasurer simply said that they were subsidiary to the others; but take the 3rd clause—

That there be raised, levied, collected, or paid upon goods imported which are substitutes for known dutiable goods, a duty at the same rate as that payable upon the goods for which they are substitutes, or such less rate as may be fixed by the Governor in Council.

There is not a single thing in that connected with the resolutions we have just passed. It applies to the whole tariff. Again, take the last resolution—concerning which not even the Treasurer has said a word, nor has it been discussed in any way—it is not in any way subsidiary upon those passed. The Treasurer has moved them without any discussion upon them, and says he will take the discussion when the Bill is brought in; but the discussion should be taken now, before they are approved in committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The motion is made only with the desire of pushing on the business.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Pushing on the business without speaking to it. It is a trick.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The first resolution—dealing with liquors—is, I may say, a direct transcript of what appears in the present Customs Duties Act of 1870. It will be found to be an exact transcript of the Act of 1870, which is altered to the altered tariff. The other clauses are introduced with a view of dealing with certain articles which appear in the tariff under the head of substitutes for other known articles. The only new feature in 1885—2 H

the resolutions is that of the £25 license to be charged for the registration of brewers. It is with a view of getting these resolutions before the House so that the Bill to give effect to them may be introduced as early as possible that the motion is made to-night, and the discussion of them can be taken upon the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: There is no such dreadful hurry to put this Bill through. We are asked actually to put these resolutions through without considering them. These are special resolutions which have nothing whatever to do with those passed, and upon which there has been no discussion yet, and we are asked to pass them through simply in order that the Bill may be introduced the sooner.

The PREMIER said: There is one word I should like to say about the last resolution as to the registration of brewers. A provision as to that requisition might be introduced in a Bill, the desirability of the introduction of which had been affirmed in Committee of the Whole House, and it is only because it relates to a certain extent to a resolution already considered and passed in Committee of Ways and Means that it must be introduced in the same Committee, otherwise it would be dealt with in an ordinary Committee as a formal matter. Under the circumstances I have pointed out it must be introduced in the same Committee of the Whole House which affirmed the other resolution. With respect to the other resolutions here, there are some anomalies in the present Customs laws, under which attempts are made to evade the law. They must be dealt with, and a nice question might arise on a point of practice as to whether they really amount to the imposition of a fresh duty must, therefore, originate in Committee of Ways and Means, or not. In order that that difficulty may be removed and no technical objection may be raised to their being introduced in the Bill, we propose to introduce them in Committee of Ways and Means. Whether they need or need not be introduced here is another matter that need not be discussed, because it is so much simpler to introduce them here, and that is how they come to be here. If it is the desire of hon. members to discuss these matters in a preliminary manner in Committee of Ways and Means the Government have no objection to their doing so, but if we pass them to-night the resolution can be reported this evening and adopted to-morrow, and the Bill to give effect to them dealt with next week. If that is not done we shall not be able to deal with the Bill next week.

Mr. MOREHEAD: We are not prepared to go on with a trick which the hon. gentleman has tried to play upon this Committee. We have had put into our hands this evening these resolutions, which are moved by the Colonial Treasurer without any comment whatever, and which we are told by the Premier involved a nice question—so nice a question that I, for one, will not discuss it to-night, or if I do discuss it to-night I will discuss it all night.

The PREMIER: You need not talk like that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member cannot point to one single instance in the history of this Parliament where an attempt has been made to play such a trick upon the House as this.

The PREMIER: What do you mean?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I mean what I say.

The PREMIER: Then you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I do know what I am talking about. The hon. gentleman and I very often differ. I say this is a deliberate trick

attempted to be played on the Committee by the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer. It is putting into our hands new matter.

The PREMIER : He read them last night.

Mr. MOREHEAD : I am aware of that ; but was there any speech made about them ? Was there any interpretation given to them ? The Treasurer put them into your hands, Mr. Fraser, and you read them deliberately and with great feeling, but we have had no explanation from the Treasurer and I am not prepared to accept them.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said : I cannot understand what the Government mean by the course they have adopted. Last night I wanted some information on this subject, and this is what I said : "Do I understand that this new tariff is an addition to the one before us, and that we shall have to carry on a debate on it to-morrow night ?" The Colonial Treasurer said, "They are merely subsidiary to the tariff proposals." But that is not correct ; they are new tariff proposals altogether—substantial resolutions outside the other resolutions. The information asked for should have been given if the Government had any intention of getting the resolutions through committee to-night.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said : The first and last resolutions are strictly consequential on the tariff proposals made in the first instance, the first being an increase in the duties of compounds of wines containing a greater percentage than a certain strength of proof spirit, and the registration fee on brewers consequential on the tax on beer ; but it may be a question with regard to the connection of the others. They are brought forward merely to get legislative sanction for what has been a matter of custom. If, however, hon. gentlemen object to allow them to pass the preliminary stage, I move, Mr. Fraser, that you leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION ACT CONTINUATION BILL.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council did not insist on their amendment in this Bill.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS BILL.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council did not insist on their amendments in this Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : I move that this House do now adjourn. There is only one motion on the paper for to-morrow besides one which is formal—the motion of the hon. member for North Brisbane ; and after that is disposed of we propose to take Government business. The paper will be arranged in this order—first, the two Bills which have come from the Legislative Council—the Charitable Institutions Bill and the Local Government Act Amendment Bill—and afterwards as the business stands on the paper to-day.

Mr. MOREHEAD : It will be convenient if the hon. gentleman will let us know whether he will support his junior colleague in the motion that hon. member has to move to-morrow ?

Question put and passed.

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