

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 9 September, 1885.

Expenditure Incurred by Elections and Qualifications Committees. — Petitions. — Question. — Question without Notice.—Customs Duties Bill —committee. —Local Government Act of 1878 Amendment Bill.—Charitable Institutions Management Bill.—Adjournment.

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

EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEES.

The SPEAKER said : Pursuant to an order of the House made on the 3rd instant, I have caused to be prepared a return showing all expenditure incurred by the Elections and Qualifications Committees of the 7th, 8th, and 9th Parliaments respectively, in connection with disputed elections, and I now produce the return and hand it to the Clerk to lay upon the table.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) : I beg to move that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

PETITIONS.

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from the members of the Congregational Church, Brighton road, South Brisbane, in favour of the Licensing Bill, especially those parts relating to local option and Sunday closing ; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from the Young Men's Christian Association in favour of the Licensing Bill, especially the parts relating to local option and Sunday closing ; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from the members of the Congregational Church, Grey street, South Brisbane, in favour of the Licensing Bill, especially the parts relating to local option and Sunday closing; and moved that it be read.

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

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

QUESTION.

Mr. CHUBB asked the Minister for Works—

1. Has a report been received from Mr. Jack on the progress of the coal-boring operations at Bowen Coal Fields?

2. If so, has he considered the same with reference to proceeding with the construction of the authorised railway to the coalfields?

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

A report has recently been received from Mr. Jack upon the subject, but there has not yet been time to consider the matter.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. BLACK said: I beg to ask the Colonial Secretary, without notice, when the promise he made a fortnight ago—that the Statistics for 1884 would be laid on the table in a fortnight's time—will be realised?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: I have not made any inquiries since I last gave the hon. gentleman an answer on the subject. I have no reason to suppose they will not be ready. I know the Printing Office is overflowing with work at the present time.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL—COMMITTEE.

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

On the schedule to the Bill as follows:—

Articles.	Quantities.	Dute.
Machinery for manufacturing, sawing, and sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes, steam engines and boilers	5 per centum <i>ad valorem</i>
Brandy and other spirits or strong waters, of any strength not exceeding the strength of proof by Sykes's hydrometer, and so in proportion for any greater strength than the strength of proof	per gallon ...	12 shillings
Spirits, cordials, or strong waters, sweetened or mixed with any article so that the strength thereof cannot be exactly ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer	per gallon ... per 100 superficial feet	12 shillings 1 shilling
Timber, logs	per 100 superficial feet	1 shilling
Timber, undressed	per 100 superficial feet	1 shilling and 6 pence
Timber, dressed	per 100 superficial feet	1 shilling and 6 pence

The duty on timber to be estimated as on a thickness of one inch, and to be in proportion for any greater thickness.

be considered *seriatim*. It would be consulting the wishes of hon. members to adopt that course, as some members might wish to direct special attention to a particular item, and might not be favourable to all the items comprised in the schedule. The first item was the duty of 5 per cent. on "machinery for manufacturing, sawing, and sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes, steam engines and boilers." He did not know that it was necessary for him just now to open up the arguments in connection with the desirability of imposing that tax. Since the introduction of the resolutions on which the Bill was founded into Committee of Ways and Means, he had given the matter the fullest consideration, and he could see no reason whatever to depart from the views he then expressed. A great deal of what had been said concerning the tax upon machinery partook, to his mind, of an unnecessary sentimental character. The arguments advanced would possibly be good substantial arguments if machinery and implements of all classes were exempt from taxation; but if hon. gentlemen would consider the articles used by the industrial classes, their tools and implements of trade on which taxation was paid at the present time, he thought they would clearly see that there was no reason whatever why machinery of a more costly character ought to be exempted from *ad valorem* duty. Not only did he contend that a tax of 5 per cent. was justifiable on the ground that all classes of the community ought to contribute to the necessities of the State, but also on the ground that the exemption of certain articles of machinery had led to very grave abuses and irregularities. It had been found almost impossible to define what were and what were not a part or parts of machinery for manufacturing, sawing, sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes. In the case of sugar machinery, it had been claimed that lead piping coming with the plant for a sugar-mill should be admitted free, whereas if the same lead piping were introduced by itself it would be subject to a duty of £2 per ton. And that was only one instance. He had on a previous occasion mentioned that importers had even claimed exemption for animal charcoal when it accompanied a sugar-mill plant. And there were many other articles to which the same remark would apply. As he had said, the number of claims which were made for the exemption of machinery coming in under the head of machinery for manufacturing, sawing, sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes was indefinite; and at the same time the present law could be made so elastic that he believed a considerable loss of revenue accrued to the State from the omission of the duty on that article. However, he went on the broad ground that at the present time all classes of the community ought to contribute to the necessities of the State; and especially when tools of trade and implements of manufacture which were used by artisans, and the working classes generally, were all liable to taxation, he saw no reason to exempt the more valuable classes of machinery in favour of manufacturing and industrial associations. He moved that "machinery for manufacturing, sawing and sewing, agricultural, mining, and pastoral purposes, steam engines and boilers, 5 per centum *ad valorem*" stand part of the Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Treasurer had just told the Committee in a complaining tone that there was a good deal of argument of an unnecessary sentimental character in the objections taken to the tax on machinery. He thought that charge would lie against the hon. gentleman, for the whole of the speech that he had just made was entirely of a sentimental character, and a great deal of what he said was

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said he presumed it would be the desire of the Committee that the various items should

untrue. What was the argument he used just now in favour of machinery being taxed, but an argument of an extremely sentimental character? The hon. gentleman said in effect, "See, the working man's tools are taxed: why should the poor man be taxed in this way and the men who require machinery be exempt from taxation?" Was that not claptrap? It was the purest kind of claptrap, or, to use the hon. gentleman's own words, it was "of an unnecessary sentimental character." But, in addition to putting a tax on the instruments of working men, the hon. gentleman now proposed to tax the instruments of working women, one of the first items in the schedule being sewing-machines. The hon. gentleman's argument ought to have been that, seeing that they had been taxing the male part of the community, they had just in the present stringent times a right to tax the female part. The argument of the hon. gentleman was untrue that heretofore they had been taxing the tools of the working classes. The hon. gentleman was carrying the evil a great deal further by taxing the other sex. There was, no doubt, a good deal of truth in one part of the speech made by that gentleman. He said that all classes of the community ought to be forced to come forward and assist in contributing to the necessities of the State. But, as he had said before, it was the present Government who had made those necessities, which were growing greater every day. They could see before them a long list of taxes, of which the present were simply the commencement. They had commenced upon articles upon which they could lay their hands most readily at the present time. The proposed tax upon machinery was a most obnoxious tax to the community, and one that would be most hurtful to the industries of the colony. The position of the colony now was one of great danger. They were spending an immense amount of money that might be stopped at any time—money which was borrowed in England for the construction of public works. The spending of that money was the greatest industry of the colony just now, and that money might be stopped at any time. There was a danger of its being diminished very much every month from causes outside of the colony, and in that case they would be thrown entirely upon their own resources. And what were those resources? The ordinary producing industries of the colony, every one of which would be touched by the proposed *ad valorem* duty on machinery. It had always been admitted, even when they had an *ad valorem* duty of double the present amount on other articles, that machinery should be admitted free. It was admitted in the tariff of 1870, it was admitted in the tariff of 1872, and in the tariff of 1874 it was admitted. It had always been admitted that it would be only dire necessity that should force them to go to the extent of taxing machinery. The Treasurer, on a previous occasion, had used the argument that it would be to a certain extent a protective tax, and would be an aid to colonial industries. There was nothing whatever in that. The men engaged in manufacturing industries said that the tax could not in any way have that effect. It would not give £1 to the machine shops that existed at present. The machinery that had been imported before would be imported again, so that it would simply be a tax upon the imported article. Seeing that the Treasurer had proposed the items *seriatim*, he would not move an amendment, but confine himself to attempting to negative the clause.

The PREMIER said he did not rise to discuss the question of the tax upon machinery; but his object was to take notice of a statement which had been made by the hon. gentleman opposite

a great many times that session—namely, that the greatest industry at the present time was the spending of borrowed money. The hon. gentleman was sometimes very unpatriotic in his remarks, and one would think that it was his special desire to injure the credit of the colony as much as possible. He need not refer to the many occasions in past times when the hon. gentleman had told them that they were on the brink of a volcano, that their credit was exhausted, and so on. Probably he said that in the hope that it would be repeated and go abroad. But the only effect of statements of that kind, if they had any at all, was to injure the credit of the colony. What were the facts of the case? The expenditure of borrowed money did not exceed £1,500,000 per annum, except one year when the hon. gentleman himself was in office. Did the hon. gentleman mean to say that that amount was more than was earned by any industry? Any person listening to the hon. gentleman would think they were living altogether upon borrowed money. They were spending about £1,500,000 borrowed money every year, of which a large proportion was spent in England for railway material and immigration. The hon. gentleman spoke in a manner which was calculated to create the impression that they were living altogether on borrowed money—at least, if his words had any meaning at all that was the one they would convey. Their exports amounted to about three times that amount; and their industries were not altogether represented by exports. How did all the artisans in the colony live—what proportion of them lived on the amount of money spent in railway construction or the construction of waterworks? The statement was utterly without foundation, and ought not to be allowed to be brought forward without being distinctly challenged.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not take the slightest notice of the charge that had been reiterated a dozen times by the hon. Premier—in fact, it was one of his stock speeches. He did not care what the hon. gentleman thought of his patriotism. He had stated many times that the course the hon. gentleman was pursuing was driving the colony into a worse position every week. He would not withdraw the expression he had used some time ago that they were on the brink of a volcano. The hon. gentleman ought to know that their credit was then so bad that had it not been for the patriotism of some of the banks it would have been gone, and it might go again at any time. Surely the hon. gentleman did not take the credit to himself that their credit was good! The hon. gentleman must know that it was due to some influence outside of them, and that influence might cease at any time, and it probably would before long. It was, therefore, only right that they should be forewarned, so that they might be prepared for such an emergency. Any talk on the part of the hon. gentleman about want of patriotism was outside the question. He should be wanting in his duty to his constituents and the colony if he did not warn them of what he considered would be the effects of the policy of the Government. He repeated that spending borrowed money was their chief industry at present; it did not matter whether it was spent in the shape of paying for material or for labour—the colony had to pay the interest. He showed clearly enough, by statistics, the other day, when he answered the Treasurer, that not only was it the greatest industry of the colony, but it actually equalled the product of two of their greatest industries. The hon. gentleman had never met that argument yet, and it remained a fact. What the hon. gentleman had said did not touch the point.

He wished to warn him and the country. The hon. gentleman said they were only increasing taxation that was inevitable—while the present Ministry were carrying out their ideas—increasing expenditure, and it would increase so as to make it perfectly certain that they would require additional taxation next year. That was what he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was saying now, and he warned the Treasurer at the same time that it was a wrong thing in principle to tax industries the progress of which would be crippled by such taxation. There was no tax that would have that effect more than a tax upon machinery, because it would cripple the producing industries of the colony. Most of them were now in a bad state; in fact there was only one that was not in a bad state, and that was the gold-mining industry. He supposed, according to the Premier, he was making an unpatriotic statement in mentioning that fact. People had lately been spending a good deal of money in prospecting for gold; and he said it was an unpatriotic thing to put a tax upon machinery just when people showed a desire to speculate in mining. Nothing did more good for mining than that the general public should go in for it; and at the present time for the Colonial Treasurer to go in for a tax upon machinery was not only unwise, but unpatriotic, to use the Premier's expression.

The PREMIER said he only rose to correct one statement made by the hon. member. He had said that what he called the industry of spending borrowed money was greater than the export of wool and gold together. It would be an alarming thing if it was, he confessed—a very alarming thing indeed; but what were the figures? The value of gold exported last year was £923,000; the wool exported was—clean £682,000, and greasy £1,206,000. A very small sum in addition showed that the value of those exports was over £2,800,000, or very nearly double the borrowed money they were spending, not only here, but in England as well.

Mr. NORTON said it occurred to him that the discussion which had taken place was got up to divert the attention of the Committee from the fact that new taxation was proposed. It was all very well for the Premier to raise a discussion about the unpatriotism of the leader of the Opposition, but they had nothing to do with that at present. The question before the Committee was that the Government proposed to tax machinery. From what they had heard during the last few days, the policy of the other side appeared to be to divert the attention of the Committee from the fact that new taxation was being proposed. He opposed the tax upon machinery, and had always done so, because he believed it to be the greatest obstacle they could offer to the enterprise of the people; because he believed it would prevent people from entering into new industries, and would interfere with those already established, and its results must be bad. In every place where meetings had been held to discuss the taxation proposals of the Government, the proposal to tax machinery was utterly condemned. He had read the different reports of the meetings which had taken place, and in no single instance had anyone stood up to support the tax upon machinery, though it had been an open question at some of the meetings as to whether the tax upon spirits and beer and those things should be supported or not. The Government must see that they were proposing an unpopular tax, and he considered that it was not only unpopular but wrong. It would have a bad effect both in agricultural and mining districts and on every industry in which machinery was used. The Colonial Treasurer had told them that machinery ought to be taxed because

the implements used by miners and farmers were taxed, but if his speech convinced him of anything at all, it was, not that machinery should be taxed, but that the tax should be removed from those implements.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We cannot afford to remit it.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think they could afford it whilst the present Government were in power. So long as the Colonial Treasurer sat in the Treasury there was not the slightest chance of their being able to remit any taxes whatever, and he believed—as the leader of the Opposition had pointed out—that the present proposals were only the beginning of the taxations. They were only laying the foundation stone now and having a little holiday and picnic about it, but by-and-by the big erection would be built up on the top of it. So far as protecting the machinery-making industry of the colony was concerned, there was pretty strong evidence in yesterday's paper that such protection was not wanted. One of their leading manufacturers had pointed out in yesterday's *Courier* that such protection was not wanted, and that a tax of 5 per cent. was simply ridiculous as a protection to the industry. At the same time, combating some of the statements made by members of the Committee, he offered to compete, both in respect to cheapness and good workmanship, with any of the foundries in Victoria. When their own foundry proprietors came forward and offered to compete, not only in quality but in price, with the foundries of the other colonies, it was clear that they did not look forward to or expect protection; and the mere statement of that fact was a denial of the Colonial Treasurer's argument that protection was required in their case. He hoped hon. members on both sides would oppose that tax upon machinery as fairly as they had indications they intended to do. The Colonial Treasurer must know that almost every supporter of the Government, with one or two exceptions, who had spoken upon the subject was opposed to the tax upon machinery.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. NORTON said he was afraid the hon. member must have been rather inattentive, as, with one or two exceptions, every member who had spoken upon the subject at all had spoken directly in opposition to it. He hoped that when the question came to the vote those hon. members would not do, as they had so often done before, go back upon what they had previously said.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that when he answered the Financial Statement he attempted to show that the spending of borrowed money was the great interest of the colony at the present time. The Premier had the opportunity of controverting that statement at the time, but he did not choose to do so, and now the hon. gentleman came forward with his usual arithmetical puzzle to show that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was thoroughly wrong. His argument on the former occasion was that the industry—if it might be so called—of spending borrowed money was equal to the gold-mining and squatting industries combined. The Premier's answer now was that the produce of those industries last year amounted to £2,705,000, whereas the whole of the borrowed money spent was only £1,500,000. If the hon. gentleman thought that was an answer to him he was very much mistaken. The hon. gentleman was quite wrong in taking the expenditure for last year, for the question under consideration was the expenditure for the present year,

during which, if they were to take his colleagues' utterances in public for truth, would be, not £1,500,000, but £2,500,000; and from the efforts the Government were making in that direction it was very evident they would succeed. He would take their own words, therefore, that they were going to spend £2,500,000 this year. To take the exports of last year was as misleading as to take the expenditure for last year, because, while the expenditure for this year would be a great deal more, it was positively certain that the exports would be a great deal less. Gold would be about the same, but wool would be immensely less. The export of wool last year was put down in the Customs return at £1,900,000 roughly, and everybody knew that that was an exaggeration. They estimated the value far too high—in fact, it was notorious that the value put upon it was 30 per cent. too high. Proof of that was shown in the large amounts that had to be remitted to make up short drafts that had not been sufficiently remitted for in the shape of wool. That had been the experience of everybody connected with the industry. He took it for granted that everyone would admit that that estimate was 30 per cent. too high. Taking £600,000 from the estimate for wool reduced it to £1,254,000, and adding to that the value of the gold exported—£923,000—they arrived at a total for the two industries of £2,177,000. The hon. gentleman made another mistake. It was evident that the exports of wool and gold were merely indications of the actual amount of money that was spent on the industries of gold-mining and squatting. There was not only the cost of labour to be taken into consideration, but the interest on capital—a great deal of which had been borrowed from home. Did the hon. gentleman think that the £923,000, which was the gross produce of the mines, was all spent in gold-mining?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Surely the hon. gentleman must think that there were some men engaged in gold-mining who were able to lay by some portion of their profits, and that it did not all go back into labour! Besides, how much of the amount went to pay dividends out of the colony on capital invested? And how much went to pay for machinery? It was nonsense to say that the whole amount was spent on labour in the colony. Allowing that 30 per cent. of the gross exports of those articles went towards the employment of labour in the colony, that left the amount at £1,400,000. Taking 30 per cent. also as a fair proportion of the £2,500,000 that would be spent elsewhere than at home, that would leave a balance of £1,700,000 as against £1,400,000 from the two industries which he named the other day as the two principal industries of the colony. The hon. gentleman should analyse his figures and explain what they meant, otherwise he was sure to lead the Committee to false conclusions, as his little arithmetical puzzles were only too apt to do.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was uttering the most transparent fallacies. On the principle on which he was arguing, figures might be made to prove anything. A man had only to make his own statistics and the thing was done. The hon. member reduced some figures and increased others. But the statistics on which his (Mr. Griffith's) argument was based were actual statistics, and he had no reason to believe they were wrong. Of course the value of the exports did not represent the money spent in wages in any particular industry, and he never said they did. The question was the amount the industry produced to the colony; it was not a question of wages. If the hon. gentleman took as his basis the

amount spent on wages in the colony, he must see how his argument would at once fall to the ground. How much of the loan money was spent on wages in the colony? The hon. gentleman must know perfectly well that not more than one-half of it would be spent on wages in the colony. The other half would be spent in London. Surely the hon. gentleman did not call the subsidy paid to the shipowners for carrying immigrants wages spent in the colony? He did not include money paid upon railway iron as spent in the colony. If the same basis were taken for both, what it meant was wages spent in the colony which were paid out of borrowed money; and it also meant the amount of wages spent in the colony from the proceeds of wool and gold. Then they were arguing on common ground, but they had no definite data for making any such comparison. The hon. gentleman took one basis for one side of his argument and an entirely different one for the other side. That, however, was not of much consequence at the present time. What he rose chiefly to say was that the statement repeated so often by the hon. gentleman about the principal industries of the colony being carried on by means of borrowed money would lead people abroad to believe that there was no substantial basis of prosperity at all in the colony—that they were merely living by means of loans, a position which he emphatically denied. It was without the slightest foundation. Every man who took a reasonable view of the condition and prospects of the colony must admit that there was no ground whatever for holding such pessimist views.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. the Premier had run away from the point altogether. At his (the Premier's) own invitation he tried to confine his argument as much as possible to expenditure in the colony, although he did not see why they should be limited to that at all. The hon. gentleman now said that so much borrowed money was spent in London, and he (Sir T. McIlwraith) would take the matter on that basis. They got from the gold industry, £923,000; from their wool industry, £1,882,000; and what did they get for their borrowed money? They got railways, which, according to the expenditure for this year in the Financial Statement, were worth £2,500,000. That was what they got from borrowed money as against the two biggest industries of the colony, which, taking into account the reduction of 30 per cent. were under £2,000,000; so that, on the argument now brought forward, the Treasurer was completely defeated. When that hon. gentleman replied, as he seemed intending to do, he would say, that the item of £1,882,000 was very greatly exaggerated, for the reason that the amount was always exaggerated, and because wool had fallen about 20 per cent. since those figures were given; but if he considered the matter he would see that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was quite right in reducing the estimate by 30 per cent., allowing for the artificial exaggeration and the fallen price. He took wool, therefore, at its real value, and gold at its actual value; and the hon. gentleman would find that the great spending interest of the colony—borrowed money—was something like 15 per cent. more than the combined interests of gold and sheep produce.

Mr. BLACK said in considering what was most important for the interests of the colony—whether that of spending money borrowed or encouraging the reproducing industries—he must say that this was a very badly timed occasion to impose any additional tax, such as that proposed, on the machinery required to develop those industries. The hon. the Treasurer might think that any objection that was raised was based on purely

sentimental grounds; but he (Mr. Black) believed that he was expressing the feelings entertained by certainly two of the chief producing industries of the colony—namely, the agricultural and mining industries—when he said that this was a measure that was not likely to add to the prosperity of the country. They all knew quite well that in order to encourage the agricultural industry they must, as far as possible, reduce the cost of production. He referred now especially to the agricultural industry as embraced by the sugar industry. They had been told over and over again that if they wanted to produce sugar in the way in which many people thought was the proper way, and which would benefit the country, they must dispense as much as possible with the so-called cheap labour element and introduce machinery to take its place; and he believed that it was the wish of those who were most competent to judge—who had spent years of their lives in endeavouring to bring that industry to a successful issue—that it was really their wish, if possible, to adopt the views which obtained favour throughout the colony—namely, to try, and if possible, to employ only such labour as was of the same colour as themselves, and supply any deficiency in the labour necessities of the industry by the introduction of improved machinery. He knew that that was the aim of a great many of those who were engaged in that industry. They were on the look-out to get improved machinery which was in use in other countries, especially in America, and which was being yearly introduced on the continent of Europe—chiefly brought about by the competition with beetroot sugar. On all sides they found that the agriculturists of the North were doing their utmost to meet the altered conditions of the times, chiefly by the introduction of improved machinery, which would reduce the cost of labour. Hon. members knew well that the cost of the production of the chief agricultural product of the colony—namely, sugar—was within a fraction of what the produce realised when manufactured; and he considered that it was a most depressing view for the agriculturists of the colony to have to take when—notwithstanding all their efforts to achieve what he believed to be the wish of the country in that respect—they were met by an additional tax of 5 per cent. on their machinery. The industry could not afford it. It was just hanging in the balance now; and, as hon. members well knew, it was a question whether that industry was to be snuffed out or whether, in endeavouring to carry out the wishes of the people of the country, it would be able to survive by the introduction of some means of economising the cost of production. Of course, on that aspect of the question he spoke from a personal point of view, he admitted; but he understood the conditions that appertained to it, and was quite willing to take the industry under the altered circumstances which the people of the colony seemed to demand. But, apart from that, he would now come to another branch of machinery which was to be taxed under the proposition of the hon. the Treasurer, and that was sewing-machines. He thought that the manhood of the colony might be able to fight their way and hold their own, no matter what despotic taxes the Treasurer might impose upon them, but he did think it a paltry mean way of endeavouring to increase the revenue by taxing the female portion of the population, especially when the necessity for increased taxation was undoubtedly brought about by the maladministration of the Government. This was not mere sentiment. He certainly thought that the hon. the Treasurer had not realised what he was doing when he proposed to tax

the female portion of the colony in order to supplement the deficiency in the revenue. He was glad to refer to figures that showed the extent to which that valuable piece of machinery had been introduced into the domestic economy of the people. In 1880 the value of the sewing machines introduced into the colony was only £9,600. In 1882 it had increased to £39,900; in 1883 it decreased to £34,000; and he was sorry to see that last year, owing, he supposed, to the altered condition of the working classes, it had fallen to £22,000. Now, if the Treasurer got 5 per cent. on that, the revenue of the colony would be increased by £1,100, while every sewing machine used in the domestic economy of the houses throughout the colony would be taxed from 6s. to 10s. He hoped the majority of the Committee would at all events have that item struck out. They ought to do all they could to relieve the burdens of the female portion of the community. Owing to the high class of education given in the schools, it was utterly impossible to induce the young people to go into domestic service; and it was the duty of the House to do all they could to ameliorate the condition of a class which could not express its wishes except through members of the House.

Mr. ISAMBERT said he was aware that he held peculiar views on the financial position, but he had the satisfaction of seeing that when hon. members addressed themselves seriously to those difficult questions they all became peculiar. The Government had taken up a position they could not conscientiously defend. The leader of the Opposition had never done better service to the colony than when he tried to make the people believe their credit was exhausted. Unfortunately, at that time he tried to frighten the people into acceding to his scheme of building railways by grants of land; and nothing would be more dangerous to the colony than that. The next most dangerous thing was to build them by means of borrowed money. He (Mr. Isambert) had asked the Colonial Treasurer a series of questions with regard to loans, and he found that out of the first £16,500,000 borrowed only £1,900,000 had come to the colony; the last £8,000,000 was reduced to £6,000,000, because £2,000,000 were applied to the payment of debentures; and of that £6,000,000 only £100,000 came to the colony in actual cash. All the rest had been spent in England in the encouragement of English industries. English economists had pointed out that so long as the colonies spent the money they borrowed in reproductive works they ought to be encouraged to borrow, because the money did not leave England in cash, but in the shape of manufactures. Could anyone pretend to prove that the railways were built with borrowed money, so long as the money never came to the colony? The hon. Colonial Treasurer had told them that of the last loan there would come to the colony "probably about £1,000,000." The hon. member sheltered himself behind two words—"probably" and "about." How was the money got? He was quite aware that the banks paid the Treasurer's drafts in cash; but the banks got the money from the importers, the importers got it from the smaller storekeepers, and they extracted it from the pockets of the people. It was only the diggings that enabled the colony to go on in that foolish way. He could not agree with the leader of the Opposition as to the great danger that would arise from the borrowing of money being stopped. The reason he found fault with the Government was because they did not go far enough—because they did not bring in a measure providing for sufficient taxation to do away with borrowing, and to replenish the Treasury to overflowing. If that were done they would be able to carry

out their works with their own means. It was better to get the money required for the purposes of Government by indirect taxation than to be robbing the people by means of loans, for he contended that those loans were nothing else than a license to rob the people. He did not object to borrowing money entirely, but he objected to borrowing so long as their imports exceeded their exports by nearly £2,000,000 annually—so long as they did not pay for their imports with their exports. Continual borrowing was a great cruelty to the colony. The loans obtained were simply a means of making up the difference between their imports and exports, and that difference had been nearly £2,000,000 for the last three years, and it was a balance on the wrong side. At no time was it higher than when the British-India Company facilitated importation by the running of cargo steamers direct from England to Queensland. The position of this colony was not exceptional, but a similar state of things prevailed in other places where borrowing was encouraged. The same thing was found in New Zealand. That colony had borrowed about £30,000,000, and had to pay £1,250,000 per annum interest. If hon. members asked anyone from New Zealand what was the condition of trade he would tell them the times were bad, that the market was overstocked with goods, and that money was very scarce. Now, if the spending of borrowed money in the colony was a good thing the people would be prosperous, and there would be plenty of capital in the country. But the contrary was the case. People were drained of their metallic resources by the continual borrowing in which the Government indulged. It was very evident that they must adopt a different financial policy, and revise the tariff in such a way that their industries would be improved to such an extent that when the colony went into borrowing they would get the money. How was Victoria situated? Why, her industries had been so improved by the financial policy in force there, that when she went into the money market for a loan she really got the money she borrowed. A little more than a year ago, Victoria, when she obtained a loan from English capitalists, had sent out to the colony over a million of sovereigns, and moneyed people in England became quite alarmed. Queensland, however, actually exported gold and silver in bullion and specie to the amount of £930,962. Some people were so sensitive that they greatly feared lest the credit of the colony should be spoiled. If their credit were spoiled what would they do? Why, they would simply apply themselves to their own resources, and they would do far better than they would in carrying on their borrowing policy. All they could do would not ruin their credit. Lending money was a regular trade in England. The money-broker lent money to Egypt and Turkey, but those countries did not get much actual money from England. If Egyptian patriots were sensible they would keep up just enough turmoil to keep the British army in Egypt, and so secure the spending of money in the country. Turkey and Egypt had ceased to be profitable customers of the English money-lenders, who were now turning their attention to the colonies. If Queensland tried to cease borrowing money the money-brokers would soon come to start some scheme by which the colony would be induced to go into borrowing again. He did not approve of the action of the leader of the Opposition or the Government in reference to borrowing money. They had seen how little of the borrowed money really reached the colony, so that they could dismiss from their minds the great calamity which it was said would happen to the colony if their credit ceased. If their credit were crippled or stopped they would do much better than

now, and would rely altogether on their own resources. The market at the present time was blocked; the stores of merchants were full of goods—were, in fact, overstocked in consequence of their borrowing propensities—and they could keep the market well supplied for some time to come without any further importations. But what was more dangerous to the colony than this overstocking of warehouses was, that owing to their policy of borrowing the people did not apply their energies profitably, and they would never do so as long as the colony was subjected to the inundation of its markets with goods produced by cheap labour in foreign countries—so long as colonial industries were harassed in the way they were at the present time. It had been said that nothing was so perishable as human energy. If they did not apply their energies in providing articles required for home consumption they were gone; unless their energies were applied in that direction they were lost, and the loss was far greater than the human mind could conceive. He hoped the Government would see the advisability of submitting to the House next year a sensible reform of the tariff, that would put the industries of the colony in such a state that when the Government borrowed money they would get the money. Until that was done borrowing money was a cruel deception.

Mr. KATES said he thought that after the eloquent speech of the hon. member for Rosewood they ought to get back to the subject before the Committee—namely, the tax on machinery. His (Mr. Kates's) opinion was that the tax on machinery was a mistake at the present time, when success in the development of their industries and resources depended so much upon labour-saving implements. He thought it was an unwise and injudicious step to tax machinery. There was a great deal of machinery which could not be manufactured in the colony, neither could it be manufactured in Sydney or Melbourne. While at Ravenswood, in the month of June last, the managing director of the Gold Smelting Works told him that he had to send to California for some parts of his machinery, and for other parts he had to send to the Continent, as he could not procure it in the Australian colonies. He had also been informed that some machinery at Gympie had to be imported from Cologne.

Mr. SMYTH: A pity it ever was, for the good it is.

Mr. KATES said it could not be obtained in the Australian colonies. The Treasurer had stated that this was a tax on the wealthy portion of the community—the capitalists. That was a very wrong view of the case. In many instances people came to the colonies to invest their money, and did not know what venture would pay them, and the proposed tax would prevent them investing at all. Those people ought to be encouraged to come to the colonies and bring high-class machinery with them, as they generally provided work for a great many labourers and their families. He would rather go in the other direction, and encourage the introduction of machinery by a reduction in the railway freights. At the present time the classification was very high, and it would be a good thing for the agriculturists and the miners if it were reduced. They required now the latest improvements in machinery connected with sawmills, flourmills, reapers and binders, steam threshers, strippers, steam ploughs, and all kinds of mining machinery which could not be made in the colony, and it was a mistake to put a tax upon it. It was not the 5 per cent. duty alone that the farmer had to pay when he got machinery from Melbourne,

but he had to pay an agent, interest, commission, and several charges which raised the tax to about 8 per cent. or 9 per cent. The Colonial Treasurer said that the working men's implements were taxed; but two wrongs would never make one right, and, after all, these smaller implements could be made in the colonies—such as shovels, ploughs, pickaxes, and spades—whilst the higher class could not be made. As he said last week, when the Bill was read a second time, he should, in the interests of the community, oppose the tax upon machinery.

Mr. SMYTH said he had a few words to say on behalf of the miners of the colony with reference to the tax upon machinery. The miners were quite willing to pay a fair share of the taxation, but they did not wish to be singled out for any special taxation. He recollected that some few years ago there was a tax upon mining machinery while sugar machinery was admitted duty-free. Afterwards that was removed, and now they were going to impose it again. The miners had to pay 2d. per pound duty on candles, of which they were the largest consumers in the colony. There was a factory down the river—the Apollo Factory—and if it made an article they could use they would use it. But it made a candle so bad that it could not be used. If that tax was imposed to encourage local people it was a failure, because they never turned out a serviceable article. The next tax by which miners contributed a good deal towards the revenue was the “scrip” tax. He knew a very small claim upon the gold-field where he resided, where the scrip tax had amounted to £90 for transfers of scrip from one person to another. It did not matter whether the scrip were valueless or not. They had to pay 2s. 6d. for amounts under £50, and 2s. 6d. for every other £50. He would like to have a return showing the amount of stamp duty paid by the miners for scrip. If a miner were unfortunate enough to be on a bad claim—and there were many such—he had to pay calls, and when he paid his call he had to put a penny stamp upon the receipt. If he were in a paying claim he would not have to pay it. He could understand a business man putting a receipt upon a bill, because he had made a profit out of the goods sold. But in the case he referred to there was no profit at all. It was a tax for not being in a good mine. Then the miners had to pay £1 per acre per year for their land, which was rather excessive; if it were made 10s. it would be a fair thing. It was not right that the Government should charge so much for the land. They should charge less and have the conditions fulfilled, so as to prevent monopolies and prevent the land from lying idle. The miners were taxed right and left in every way. They had to pay in this colony twice what was paid in Victoria for a miner's right; in Queensland they paid 10s., and in Victoria 5s. With reference to the remark made by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, about some machinery that was imported from Germany, that machinery was a failure, and a better article could be made in Victoria. Machinery made in the colonies was working far more profitably than imported machinery. The machine in question was a very costly arrangement, and it took a great deal of steam to work it. Imported machinery was used at Ravenswood and at Charters Towers, and it was of a kind not generally used in the colony. Nearly all the machinery used at Gympie was made in Maryborough. They did not care about importing machinery, for the reasons that they could get a more suitable class made locally, and that, in case of a breakage, they could easily have it repaired, as the original patterns could be obtained. He did not think that a piece

of imported machinery went to Gympie once in twelve months. He did not wish to praise up Maryborough, but the Gympie people preferred getting their machinery from there. They had obtained it from Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, but had found that they could get a better article made at Maryborough, where there were good foundries and first-rate workmen; and it was more suitable than that used at Charters Towers or Ravenswood. Hon. gentlemen who had visited Gympie and seen the machinery would be able to judge for themselves. The miners were willing to pay 5 per cent. for machinery coming into the colony, but he should vote against it unless some other unjust taxes were removed.

Mr. PALMER said the hon. member who had just spoken said the miners were not averse to being taxed, and he then gave a list of articles which they would like to see exempt from taxation. It was, therefore, hard to say which argument the hon. member was using. There was no doubt the taxation of the colony fell unequally upon those engaged in the producing industries of the colony. When he spoke upon the subject the other day he quoted an instance in the North, where the tax would fall more heavily than in the place which the hon. member who last spoke represented, or in Charters Towers, where there was railway communication. He would read a few words from the report for 1884 of the Department of Mines. There the warden of the Etheridge Field used almost the same words that he had used the other day. After referring to boring machines and rock drills, and the great saving they were in time and labour, he referred to the great want of machinery on the field. After enumerating the great number of reefs being opened up, and which were proving themselves payable even under those adverse circumstances, he said, at page 33 of the report:—

“But machinery is the thing wanted; without machinery the richest reef in the world is no good here. There is a lot of trouble and risk, with heavy expense, in getting machinery on to this field—300 miles from the coast—and an immense amount of courage and patience has been shown by various companies in this matter. However, there is scarcely a reef on the field but what, if it is properly treated, will pay for all.”

That showed the amount of courage and patience required under those adverse circumstances to carry on any class of producing industry. The question which had been mooted once or twice was of national importance, and that was—Should the money now being expended out of loan on wages—should that collapse through any accident—and it was the unexpected that happened—in what state would their producing industries be then? The number of men employed by the Government must be something like 10,000, directly and indirectly, in the public works going on in the colony. What would happen if all those men were cast adrift to earn their living the best way they could? With such a body of men adrift, and their producing industries at a low ebb through unjust taxation and various causes there would be a very sad state of affairs in the colony. They were going to spend £2,500,000 a year, according to the Minister for Works, and the Premier acknowledged that one-half of that would probably be spent in wages. £1,250,000 taken from the wage-earning classes of the colony would really mean a collapse of their producing industries, and unless they were in a prosperous state and able to absorb the released labour they would certainly have a most extraordinary state of things. The plant that would be used in dam-making and water-boring, and in machinery connected with the pastoral industry, would also be of great importance in relieving the labour

market should such a crisis arise—to say nothing of crushing machines that would be used—and the less they hampered those producing industries the better it would be in view of such a time as that approaching. There was not the slightest doubt the tax would pass. Even members who had spoken against it would vote for it, as they had hitherto done on all occasions. No doubt if the tax was passed things would go on seemingly in the same state as before—the world would revolve upon its axis every twenty-four hours—subject of course to a Liberal Government and the Colonial Treasurer. Things would go on in the same way to all appearance for the present. There were other things the Colonial Treasurer might have imposed a tax upon. He might think their producing industries should bear a tax, but there were a lot of useless and effeminate articles introduced which should bear a tax more easily than articles necessary to make the producing industries of the colony staple and strong. They had only to take up a newspaper and they would see the enormous amount of patent medicines used in the country, and many of them deleterious. “St. Jacob’s Oil,” “The Elixir of Life,” and hair dyes and washes, he was sure would, if taxed, produce far more than the proposed tax on machinery would ever produce. Then there were the vanities of dress which might be taxed—all the laces, silks, and satins that came into Brisbane.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Ostrich feathers.

Mr. PALMER: Yes; ostrich feathers. All those things might be taxed, and if the women said they would have them they would have them, cost what they might. He was surprised the Colonial Treasurer had not used his imagination in another form, and not have taxed machinery when such luxuries as those he had mentioned were coming in at an *ad valorem* duty. There were many other things in the tariff which might bear a more just tax than to tax the men who were going to make the colony pay its way in the world and pay the interest upon the enormous loans they were borrowing now.

Mr. ISAMBERT said there was a delusion which had taken hold of the people and of members of the Committee, which it seemed almost hopeless to attempt to remove. He would adduce some facts, and if facts could tell, then there was hope. The hon. member for Gympie had stated that the machinery made in Maryborough was better than any machinery imported. That was not a far-fetched argument, but a statement of solid fact which nobody could disprove. He had yet to learn that there was anything in the atmosphere or that the sun rose in some peculiar way in Queensland which would make it different to any other country. They could make better what they wanted in the colony than anywhere else, as they made things here for their own and not for foreign consumption. If the hon. member for Gympie had investigated the matter he would have proved that the machinery made in Maryborough—after everything was calculated—was cheaper than the machinery imported. Having got hold of that fact, the hon. member could not see the fallacy of the statements he gave utterance to. He said they had to pay 2d. a pound on candles, but that was nothing. Nothing cheapened an article so much as local manufacture. The candle manufactory at Bulimba might not be quite up to the mark, but the manufacture of candles here had caused a reduction in the price of candles which amounted to more than the difference of 2d. a pound.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No!

Mr. ISAMBERT said he would advise the Premier to look out for a Treasurer who could do without taxes, and as soon as he discovered that wonderful being to dismiss the present one. But until that wonderful Treasurer was forthcoming they must have an ordinary Treasurer, who could not take £1 out of the Treasury without paying 20s. in. There was another fact he would mention. In 1883 there was collected £10,346 8s. 2d. on 2,483,188 lbs. of jam. After the manufacture of jam had commenced in the colony one would have thought that the importation would have seriously fallen off. But the very opposite was the fact. In 1884 there was collected £12,051 16s. 7d. on 2,892,439 lbs. of jam; while the price of the article had fallen about 20 per cent. through local competition. Even if a few shillings should be lost to the revenue by manufacturing articles in the colony, the people, as a rule, profited doubly. Although the price of jam had been lowered, there was a far larger consumption. Such facts as those ought to address themselves to the minds of hon. members, and then they would not come before the Committee and the country and give utterance to such fallacies as they were in the habit of doing.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it might be too early as yet to tax such luxuries as ostrich feathers, satins, silks, and so on; but it was certain that the Colonial Treasurer would have to do it before he was two years longer in office. He had hoped that the Treasurer had seen fit to alter his mind about the tax on machinery. It was condemned by almost the entire population of the colony; even those who partially or wholly approved of the tax on spirits and beer deprecated the tax on machinery. He thought that would have been sufficient to have induced the hon. gentleman to change his mind on the subject, but seemingly it had not. He did not intend to discuss the question, as it had been discussed very well already; but he would say he was perfectly confident that the tax on mining machinery would have the effect of raising the price of quartz-crushing on the goldfields. Competition in quartz-crushing was so keen that the tax on the machinery must inevitably raise the price. The hon. members for Mackay and Darling Downs had also adduced very good arguments why no tax should be put on agricultural machines; and for all those reasons he should vote—and he hoped they would be able to carry the division—against the Government.

Mr. ANNEAR said certain hon. members seemed to consider that there was only one industry in the colony, and that was the gold-mining industry. But other industries had been started throughout the colony, and a large amount of capital had been invested in them, and it was the duty of the Committee to help those industries and the people they employed in every way. His own regret was that the Treasurer had not seen his way clear to put a tax of, at the very least, 15 per cent. or 20 per cent., instead of 5 per cent., on machinery. Queensland, like Victoria, was a young community, and they were setting up what in time would become a nation. They had held out certain inducements, and people—especially skilled mechanics—had come to the colony from all parts of the world. What inducement would there be for them if the colony continued as it had been going on up to the present time? The makers in England of every “Brummagem” article for mining or any other purposes had only to send an agent to Brisbane, and orders poured in upon him, with the result that the money was sent out of the colony. There were now thousands of mechanics in the colony employed in the

manufacture of machinery, and he maintained that, if necessary, every bit of machinery required for any purpose in the colony could be manufactured in the colony itself. He was not speaking from a Maryborough point of view—because his remarks applied also to Townsville, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Ipswich, and Toowoomba—but all over the colony foundries had been started, employing a large number of men, and on the machinery of which a vast amount of money had been spent. There was one firm in particular, at Maryborough, which had as good tools as any shop of the kind in the Australian colonies. He had had something to do recently with purchasing small engines for contractors, and he had found that in spite of the protective tariff engines could be made in Melbourne cheaper than articles of the same kind could be imported from home. That was the result of protection; and he ventured to say that there was very little mining machinery required in Victoria that was imported from the old country. The hon. member for Mackay seemed to think it a great cruelty to tax sewing-machines coming from America. Let a factory be founded here, and let Australian sewing-machines be sent to America, and hon. members would see what sympathy the Americans had with the colonies. They would not allow the machines to be landed under a duty of at least 25 per cent. With regard to the mining industry, Parliament had done a great deal for it during the present session and the last, and he did not think the miners had much reason to complain of the 2d. per pound duty on candles. There was an item of £10,000 for deep sinking and another of £2,000 for schools of mines; and indeed the miners were very liberally treated whenever they came before the Assembly.

Mr. SMYTH : Put a duty on cement.

Mr. ANNEAR said there was already a heavier duty on cement than there was on candles. He should like to see a far higher stamp duty put upon mining scrip, and then there would not be so much bogus paper knocking about the country—there would not be as many bogus transactions made when they had to pay more than 2s. 6d. for doing so. He had had very little indeed to do with the selling of scrip. His occupation had been chiefly confined to paying calls upon claims that had given no return. For those reasons, representing as he did not only Maryborough but the mechanics of the colony, he thought that the Treasurer might, at the very least, put a duty of 15 per cent. upon imported machinery. He felt sure that the electors of the colony, and especially the mechanics and labouring portion—because the mechanic made work for the labourer—would approve of it. He had heard a good deal talked about the capital and the industries of the colony, but he would point out that the labour of the colony was its greatest capital, and that if they had ten times more foundries and other industries—which he hoped to see established—if the Treasurer would impose a little heavier duty than he had done—it would be all the better. What did they find the other day when it was considered likely that there would be war between Great Britain and Russia? That they had skilled mechanics in the colony who were prepared—and had actually offered to the Government that, if they were short of cannon or any other ordnance of the greatest calibre, they would be prepared to make it; and he quite believed that they were able to do so. It was only, as had been said by the hon. member for Rosewood, when they were driven into the position of having to do the

best they could for themselves, that they could do those things; and he believed they were quite as well able to do it as any other colony in Australia, or even Great Britain or America.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if it had been proposed to put an import duty on cannons?

Mr. ANNEAR said the cannons he referred to would be made in the colony, and therefore no duty would be payable upon them; they would be of local manufacture.

Mr. LISSNER said after the very loud speech which they had heard from the hon. member for Maryborough, he, as a mining member, was almost frightened to address the Committee. The amount of benefits which had been voted by the House, last session and the session before, to the miners of the colony, was quite enough to kill him! It was really wonderful to consider all that the Government had done for the miners; but all he could say was that, as far as his district was concerned, they had got nothing excepting what they saw on the Estimates. Nobody had been made any the better yet for any of those benefits. Nothing had been done to make miners any smarter than hitherto, with the exception of the proposed additional tax of 5 per cent. on their machinery—which they did not get from Maryborough. The machinery that they used was got from England principally, and he believed they were quite as good judges of what was good for them as any hon. member who had had shares in Maryborough foundries, or who came into that House as a heavy protectionist against Northern interests. He did not want to go away from the topic. He had heard any amount of argument brought forward why miners should not be taxed 5 per cent., and he was surprised that the Government should bring in such taxation upon the two most important industries of the colony. How much would it bring in per annum? He believed that £12,000 or £13,000 was the Colonial Treasurer's estimate, and by imposing it the Government would be far more unpopular—far more—well, they would have no sympathy at all. He held that the miners were taxed quite heavily enough at present, notwithstanding the opinion of the hon. member for Maryborough about machinery and other things. The duty of 2d. a pound on candles was a tax that dropped very heavily on the miners, and it did not protect the colonial industry at all. He had had a good deal of experience in that article and had found that the miners would not use colonial-manufactured candles. They preferred a certain candle that was imported from England, the "Apollo" not being good enough to burn in mines. But apart from that, whenever there was a rise in the price of candles at home the "Apollo" also went up, and the consumer had to pay just the same. However, that was nothing. He only wished to point out that the miners already paid a very handsome thing in the way of taxes. They were taxed on their fuses, their dynamite, their powder, on the acre of land they occupied for many purposes—£1 a year for that—as well as ordinary taxation. Some men were fortunate and could afford to pay, but there were others who were not so and who got nothing as a return for their money and labour. A great deal more had been done for the miners in the other colonies than had been done here. He would like to know what were the extraordinary benefits the miners had received from the present Government, who pretended to be the champions of the mining industry? They had been told by an hon. member who was apparently a heavy protectionist that the salvation of the colony—that the only reason why it had any existence at all—was because of "the

diggings" as he called them. If they had not had "the diggings" they would be up a tree altogether. Was that the way to raise up or elevate that industry—to increase the taxation upon it? The tax was not much in the aggregate, but still it would help to suppress the enterprise of looking for gold on other fields. It was an enterprise that was sometimes successful and sometimes was not, and if the Government put all sorts of obstacles in the way very likely it would not be so much looked after in the future as it had been hitherto. For ten years miners had had nothing to pay upon machinery, and all at once they had 5 per cent. imposed on it, and that tax would not protect Maryborough. It would not induce the miners of the Towers or Ravenswood to go there for their machinery, but it would have the effect of oppressing the industry. It was an unjust and erroneous tax. He had explained, on the second reading of the Bill, that he would oppose it, and he would now do so to the bitter end. His hon. colleague, who generally adorned the sunny side on the Treasury benches, was expected to be present when this question came on; in fact, he believed that he had promised to vote for the benefit of his constituents, but as he was not present he (Mr. Lissner) would oppose the tax to the bitter end.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Burke appeared to be sceptical as to whether members on the other side of the House would vote according to their consciences, seeing that on former occasions they had spoken one way and voted another. However, he had reason to believe that on this occasion the collar had been taken off, and that hon. members on the Government side would have some liberty of action in that respect, because he supposed that the Government had seen from the various meetings that had been held throughout the colony that it would tell very much against them politically to put on this tax; but, at the same time, for very shame's sake they could not exactly take it off, and therefore they wished to simply give their supporters an opportunity of exercising their freedom—and of defeating them on the proposition then before the Committee. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, had spoken about the great benefits the miners had received from the present Government, and instanced £10,000 for deep sinking and £2,000 for something else; but he would point out that miners, independent of other heavy taxes, had to pay so much every year that the sum levied on them for permission to dig—even before they could put the pick into the ground—considerably exceeded £12,000. That was independent of the taxes they had to pay upon nearly every article they used in the pursuit of their calling. The proposed tax fell upon the very industries which ought to be fostered instead of handicapped, as they undoubtedly would be if the motion were carried. He would take the mining industry, being the representative of a constituency which contained several mineral fields. In the northern parts of Queensland more machinery was required than in any other portion of the colony, and the proposed tax would fall especially upon the poor man, because the kind of machines generally obtained there were small ones; they were procured by poor miners who, after spending time and labour in discovering some payable mine, expended every penny of capital they could scrape up to procure machinery. The cost of this was now to be increased, as they would now have to pay a further tax upon that machine. The Colonial Treasurer had given them one argument in favour of the tax on machinery—that the articles used by the industrial classes were already taxed—but he would point out that that was an argument why

machinery should not be taxed—because the owners or persons who used that machinery should not be taxed more heavily than any other class. Not even the protectionists could justify the tax. They had seen a letter from the owners of the Maryborough foundry pointing out that the tax was a perfect farce, and would not benefit protectionists at all, though it might benefit the Maryborough foundries. They pointed out that machinery that might be taken from Maryborough to some of the northern towns at a cost for freight of £250 could be taken there from Victoria for £100. The people living in the locality were not to be allowed to choose their own market; they were to be taxed, not for the benefit of the colony, or of colonial industries, but for the benefit of particular localities. The Colonial Treasurer had stated that he could not do without that taxation, but that was the result of the inefficient administration and lavish expenditure of the present Government. As that expenditure had taken place in centres of population, and had increased the value of property in those localities, it was the owners of that property who ought to be taxed to make up for the deficiency. Of course it would not be to the interest of members on the other side that that should be done. It would not be to the interest of the Premier to have land taxed, because the expenditure had benefited syndicates with which he was connected. For instance, there were the lands on South Kangaroo Point, and there was land in which he was interested down the river.

The PREMIER: I do not know where it is.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had seen it every time he passed down, and a very fine bit of land it was. Perhaps the hon. member did not know he was a member of a syndicate that held land at Humpybong, near which the Brisbane and Gympie railway would pass?

The PREMIER: Rubbish!

Mr. HAMILTON: Mr. Bunton and Mr. Griffith.

The PREMIER: We hold twenty acres of land between us!

Mr. HAMILTON: That was the rubbish, was it? Then there was the land at Townsville, and he could mention a good deal more. All that land was increasing enormously in value in consequence of the expenditure of public money, and the owners of it were the people who ought to be taxed, not those who already were too heavily taxed. The meanness of taxing sewing-machines exceeded belief. The occupations open to women were very limited and very badly paid; the other side were attempting to limit the number of occupations by preventing women from engaging in one that was remunerative—that of barmaids; and now they wanted to levy a tax on the poor hard-working sewing-girl who earned a scanty wage by toiling from morning to night, to make up a deficit owing to the inefficient administration and lavish expenditure of the present Government. The taxes did not affect the Government or their supporters; they did not drink colonial beer, they did not live in wooden houses, and they had no interest in machinery except that some of them were interested in foundries. The Government were rewarding their followers at the public expense; and the people who looked to the party in power for justice would find they had been most egregiously fooled.

Mr. FOOTE said he would not have spoken but for the insulting remarks of the last speaker. He had spoken of members on that side requiring the leave of the Government to vote one way or the other. Well, hon. members who were in the House during the late Administration knew there

was not a sheep-dog in the whole country that followed his master with more faithfulness than the hon. gentleman did his own leader.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is thoroughly untrue.

Mr. FOOTE: If the "Votes and Proceedings" were looked up the hon. gentleman would never be found voting against the interests of his leader.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is untrue.

Mr. FOOTE: The hon. member might deny it, but members of the Committee knew the statement was correct. The other remarks of the hon. member were not worthy of observation. He always tried to insult someone, and he particularly liked to involve the Premier in syndicates, railway lines, and that sort of thing. He (Mr. Foote) only hoped the Premier had half the land he was charged with having, and he would be a wealthy man some day. If he had it he had probably paid for it, and he had just as much right as any other hon. member to exercise his judgment in matters of that sort. With regard to the tax on machinery, it would have his support. Whenever he could do so he would foster an industry without regarding one more than another. It was the industries of the colony that the Committee had to consider. The hon. member for Darling Downs accused him of being interested in the matter; but the hon. member must be aware that the machinery he spoke of was becoming obsolete and worn out, and other and far better machinery was taking its place. It was well known that in the southern colonies steel-roller mills were supplanting those in use hitherto, and the hon. member would have to keep pace with the times. It would also be observed that in his anxiety to benefit the poor man the hon. gentleman still adhered to the differential railway rate for the carriage of wheat. Not only did he import his wheat, but he got it carried at a differential rate on the railways. The hon. gentleman was certainly very liberal, and had very great sympathy and pity for the poor man, and he had no doubt that the hon. member would continue to hold his present opinions until some future time when the House would be wise enough to revise the tariff. He (Mr. Foote) agreed with the hon. member for Maryborough to a great extent, but would fix the duty, not at 5 or 15 per cent. but at not less than 10 per cent.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Bundamba had stated that he had insulted the Committee—or, at any rate, the Government side of the Committee—by making the statement that members on that side were in the habit of speaking one way and voting another. If the truth were an insult, then he had insulted members on the Government side. It was well known, and a common subject of remark, that members on the Government side spoke one way and voted another. The records of *Hansard* proved it. He saw several hon. gentlemen before him who spoke one way and voted another. The facts he used were rough—not his words—and that was what ruffled the hon. member. Perhaps the cap fitted the hon. member.

Mr. FOOTE: No; I defy any hon. gentleman to prove that I have stated one thing and then voted another way.

Mr. HAMILTON: They knew very well that there was no individual of that Committee who indulged more in the *tu quoque* style of argument than the individual who had just spoken; but, to use a remark of his own, he did not blame him, because he had not the capacity to use any other kind of argument.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He will swallow you.

Mr. HAMILTON: There was too much Foote and not sufficient soul. The hon. member had stated that he (Mr. Hamilton) was in the habit of voting with his party on every subject when they were in power. That was utterly untrue. The "Votes and Proceedings" proved that; but of course it was unnecessary for him to state that, because the mere fact that the hon. member for Bundamba made a statement was sufficient that it could not be a truthful one. No one attached any weight to anything that the hon. member said, and he was regarded as the laughing-stock of the House. He (Mr. Hamilton) would not have taken the trouble to rise to contradict him only he wished to compliment the hon. member, and he felt sure that the hon. member must feel flattered by his having condescended to notice his remarks.

Mr. FOOTE rose to speak—

The PREMIER: Don't notice him; such remarks are beneath contempt.

Mr. KATES said it appeared to him that the hon. member for Bundamba had not got over his trouble of the previous night. One thing he (Mr. Kates) forgot to mention last night, and that was that in advocating the abolition of the duty on wheat the hon. member refrained from advocating the abolition of the duty of 2d. per bushel on maize. Maize was grown in his own district, and was scarcely referred to. He would put the hon. gentleman right in reference to his position with regard to the farmers on the Darling Downs. He had done more for the farmers on the Darling Downs in one year than ever the hon. gentleman did in his lifetime. He (Mr. Kates) had never dispossessed any of them, he had never distressed any of them, and he had never refused them a bag of flour when they had no money. He had obtained from California wheat to the value of £100 and distributed it among the farmers, and that the hon. gentleman had never done. He thought the hon. member ought to leave the Darling Downs farmers alone and not interfere with his (Mr. Kates's) position in regard to them.

Mr. FOOTE said he did not wish to interfere with the position of the hon. member in regard to the Darling Downs farmers with whom he had to do. When hon. members came to that House they came to talk about certain subjects. The hon. member was, however, very personal in his remarks on the previous evening, and he ought not to complain, therefore, if he was the subject of a personal attack in return. The hon. member stated that he had done a great deal for farmers. Well, he (Mr. Foote) never charged him with having dispossessed farmers, or with holding a mortgage over their farms, or with carrying them on from year to year, and then offering them a price for wheat and saying, "If you do not take that you can go without." Therefore he did not think there was any necessity for the hon. gentleman to tell the Committee what he had done on the Darling Downs, or what was his character among the farmers up there. It was a matter of utter indifference to him (Mr. Foote). The subject he had been dealing with was a public question, and, as he had stated on the previous evening, he had not done with it yet, but would bring it forward on another occasion.

Mr. JORDAN said he regretted the tone the debate had taken, and thought it was quite beneath the dignity of members of that Committee. He approved of the tax of 5 per cent. on machinery, and he did not think with his hon. friend, the member for Darling Downs, that it would press on the farmer or the agricultural interests of the colony. The men they really wanted to help and encourage, and to

increase in number and see prospering in the colony, were men who had hitherto been successful as farmers or agriculturists—men who had cultivated their own lands. The hon. member for Darling Downs did not take into account the fact that the men whom they wanted to protect and see prospering in the colony were paying a tax at the present time for the agricultural implements they used, for he believed that ploughs, harrows, axes, and hoes, and all the implements in ordinary use by men who did their own work, were subject to an *ad valorem* duty. It was proposed now that a duty at the same rate should be charged on machinery. That would not fall on the farmer in the sense in which he understood the term, but would fall in the first place on the sugar-growers. The hon. member for Mackay had drawn a very touching picture indeed of the wrong that would be inflicted on the sugar-grower by the imposition of that tax on machinery. The sugar industry had been greatly dandled and fostered, and, to use an hon. member's own word, "coddled," for years. They had endeavoured to establish that industry at the expense of the character of the colony in the face of the whole world, by supplying the planters with cheap labour until the whole sense and feeling of the colony had been roused against the system to such an extent that the public said it should come to an end. The sugar industry had been assisted by a protective duty of £5 per ton, and the planters in the North had been able to obtain their land—which was some of the finest land in the colony—at a very low price. He believed that the industry had been sufficiently protected hitherto, and he was of opinion that it would be further benefited by the measures that had been taken by the present Premier. He thought that when they obtained a regular supply of European labour the sugar-planters of the colony would be more prosperous than they had ever been before. He did not think they could do much more to help the sugar-planters than they were doing at the present time. He took a very great interest in mining and the development of the vast mineral wealth of the colony, and it was their duty to do what they could to encourage the mining industry. He had felt a good deal relieved by the speech made by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth, who gave him to understand that miners in Queensland did not want English machinery, and found it to their advantage to use the locally made article. The hon. member for Kennedy, who also knew a great deal about mining, said that if the item were carried miners would have to pay a 5 per cent. duty upon machinery imported from Melbourne or Ballarat. If that description of machinery could be manufactured in Melbourne it could be manufactured in Queensland, and if it could be manufactured in Ballarat why could it not be also manufactured in Maryborough? It could be made in California, and why not in Australia? Of course where labour was as expensive as it was in the Australian colonies, it was possible that machinery could not be made here at such a profit as in the mother-country, where labour was cheap. But they had advantages also in Queensland; there was abundance of coal and iron, and it had been proved that machinery for the accommodation of the miners could be made at a profit. What would be the cost of mining machinery at that moment in the colony had it not been for the competition which had been given rise to by the establishment of factories here? The miners would have had to pay through the nose for it, and would have been at the mercy of the manufacturers in England and importers in the colony. He believed that the proposed tax would make the industry still more successful, and regretted that it was not 10 per cent. instead of 5 per cent.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Griffith, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Groom, Brookes, Aland, Mellor, Isambert, Campbell, Jordan, White, Beattie, Buckland, Sheridan, Bailey, Foote, Salkeld, Foxton, Annear, Wakelield, Iligson, Midgley, Macfarlane, and Donaldson.

NOES, 18.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Black, Morehead, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Stevens, Smyth, Palmer, Ferguson, Govett, Kates, Kellett, Lissner, Lalor, Nelson, and Hamilton.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that—

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

stand part of the Bill, said he did not think it necessary for him to enter into any renewed explanation of the necessity for the proposed increase in the duty on spirits. There would, he thought, be very little difference of opinion among members on either side concerning the advisability of the proposed increase upon spirits, if an increase of taxation was necessary at all. By increasing the duty on spirits, other than brandy, to 12s., it would make the Queensland tariff in that respect uniform with the tariff of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. But his immediate object in making the proposal was to provide further revenue, and in that view spirits was a very suitable article for the purpose.

Mr. ARCHER said that, if there was any necessity for fresh taxation, spirits would probably be about the most suitable article for the purpose. The only question was whether there was any necessity for increased taxation, and he and his party held that if the Government had only displayed the most ordinary prudence in the administration of the affairs of the colony there would have been no necessity for an increased duty on spirits or anything else. Their objection, therefore, was not to an extra duty being levied on spirits, but that the levying of such increased duty was altogether unnecessary. If there had been any necessity for increased taxation he would not have objected to the increased duty on spirits, and there were several other articles which might easily bear increased taxation and to which no objection would be made. For his own part, he should oppose the motion simply because he should like to prevent the Government levying any increased taxation at all. After the speech of the hon. member for Townsville exposing the extravagance of the present Government as compared with previous Governments, it was unnecessary for him to reopen the subject; but there was no getting over the figures quoted by that hon. member. He did not intend to encourage the abnormal expenditure of the Government by granting them any increased taxation whatever.

Mr. NORTON said that although he had a great desire to see local industries encouraged, yet it was very doubtful if it would be wise to encourage the manufacture of colonial rum, which was the chief object of the proposed new tariff. It was all very well to talk about not wasting any material that could possibly be saved; but they all knew one thing in connection with the manufacture of colonial rum, and that was that it was allowed to come into use too soon, with the natural consequence that it did an immense amount of harm. He believed that as good rum could be made in Queensland as anywhere else, and it was certain that some of the rum made in the colony a few years ago was

as good as any imported ; but the mischief was that as soon as the rum was made it went into consumption, not so much as colonial rum as imported rum. It was not necessary to point out the harm that was done to the people who consumed it. He took the same objection to the proposal as the hon. member for Blackall had done, besides the fact that it was encouraging what was, to say the least, of a questionable nature, unless the Government could compel the manufacturers of the rum to keep it for a reasonable time.

Mr. BLACK said the Committee had already come to a decision on what was to his mind the most important item in the schedule. That decision was unsatisfactory to himself, and he believed it would be also unsatisfactory to the country. However, they were ruled at present by the majority, and would have to put up with its decision. He entirely agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Blackall that the necessity for additional taxation which had found expression in the present very unsatisfactory tampering with the tariff had not been clearly proved by the Government. But the present state of affairs was plainly foretold by the Opposition last session when the Government were tampering with the land legislation of the country. He was not sure but that the industries which would be affected by the proposed alterations in the tariff might not have cause for congratulation next year. Those industries that were now being taxed to meet a small deficiency in the revenue would probably escape entirely next year when a very much heavier and more serious alteration in the tariff would inevitably have to take place. He regretted that it had been found necessary to tax the machinery upon which the manufacturing industries of the country were so greatly dependent. With regard to the tax on spirits, he knew there was a very large and influential section of the community who were opposed to it; still he was not prepared to disagree from a proposal to increase the duty upon the article. Spirits certainly came within the denomination of the luxuries of the community, and he should be very glad to see some steps devised by which, if possible, the consumption of strong spirits could be reduced. He did not hold the same opinion, and he should express very different views when they came to the taxation of beer, which he looked upon as a beverage, the consumption of which should be encouraged by every possible means. Of course the Treasurer had the whole of the finances of the colony to manipulate, and when there was a deficiency he had to turn round and look at the tariff and see by what means he could get increased revenue ; but he (Mr. Black) did not think that the prospects of the colony would be advanced by the tax they had imposed upon machinery. He had noticed with some surprise some remarks that fell from the hon. junior member for South Brisbane, Mr. Jordan, who, he was sorry to say, appeared to endorse the views expressed on a former occasion by the Chairman (Mr. Fraser), to the effect that the agricultural interest of the colony had up to the present time been coddled. He (Mr. Black) took exception to those remarks at the time, and he regretted to think that another member representing the capital of the colony should give expression to the same opinion, and that it should go forth to the colony as possibly being the opinion held by the chief centre of population in Queensland. He believed the hon. member (Mr. Jordan) applied that remark chiefly to the sugar industry.

Mr. JORDAN : Hear, hear !

Mr. BLACK : If it was intended to lead people to believe that that industry had been in

any way—from its initiation up to the present—coddled, he entirely differed from the hon. member. It had never been coddled, and those who were engaged in it had never asked for any coddling from the Government. They had never received any particular sympathy or coddling from the present or any previous Government. The hon. gentleman, in order to add force to his remarks, stated that they had been allowed to get cheap land. He (Mr. Black) maintained that whatever price they might have paid for their land it was the price that at the time being was put upon that land and upon all other land. There had never been any exceptional legislation framed by which those who took up land to devote to sugar-growing received any advantage that was not participated in by every other class in the country. If the hon. gentleman would take the trouble to look up the statistics of the Lands Department he would find that the average price of land in the North, where this industry had been chiefly carried on, had been higher than those devoted to agricultural purposes in the South. Another important matter to be taken into consideration, especially when they found that the revenue was falling very much below the expenditure of the colony, was this : He did not think that the Minister for Lands could say that there had been any attempt at repudiation of rents in those portions of the North where sugar-growing was carried on. He believed that the annual rental had been uniformly paid, and that the residents of the North had not asked for any special consideration from the Government in the way of extra time for the payment of their rentals. The hon. gentleman also stated, as one instance of the coddling that the sugar industry had received, that the planters were in the receipt of protection to the extent of £5 per ton on their sugar. That was a matter that had been mentioned several times, but he had thought that hon. members would have had an opportunity of inquiring into the matter by that time and have seen the fallacy of the statement. They all knew that gold was an article of which a large quantity was produced in the colony, and he would ask—In the event of 2s. 6d. import duty being put upon gold would it be considered as giving protection to the gold-miners ? Tell a gold-miner that he was protected in that way and he would ridicule the idea, because there was no gold imported. The same argument applied to sugar. With the exception of a few hundred tons of a special character that was imported he might safely say that sugar was not imported. Not only did the product supply the demands of the colony, amounting to about 10,000 tons per annum, but they actually exported 30,000 tons to supply the other colonies. Therefore, the protective duty of £5 per ton ceased to exist, and was no protection whatever to the sugar industry. If the hon. gentleman considered that duty as coddling the sugar industry he (Mr. Black) begged to differ from him entirely. He had no hesitation in saying that if the Government thought they could derive any benefit by knocking off that £5 per ton import duty, as far as those here connected with that industry were concerned, they were perfectly willing to do it to-morrow. He believed that parties of all political opinions were unanimous in wishing to see agriculture carried on to advantage in the colony by some means or other. Whatever means had been used by the sugar-planters of the colony in order to initiate and carry to a successful issue their industry, they had been entirely in accordance with the laws that that House had passed. He would also mention that whatever might have necessitated the passing of the various Polynesian Acts

in the colony they had never yet, as far as he could see, been in the interests of the sugar-planters. They had been passed as a protection to the kanakas employed here in that industry. The planter had always been—and perhaps properly so—regulated in his employment of that labour by the different Polynesian Labour Acts, and there had been no clause that he had been able to find in any of those Acts which gave the planter any protection whatever. He imported that labour at his own expense, and when the labourers arrived here both he and those labourers were amenable to the ordinary law which prevailed in the country. If the country thought it right to reverse their legislation to take away that labour let them substitute some other labour for it. He knew that the planters were not particularly wedded to that description of labour. In fact, let them repeal the Polynesian Act to-morrow and allow the same freetrade in labour to the sugar-planters which was enjoyed by any other class in the community—that was to say, let them go into the open market and get whatever labour they could. But then came in the necessity for having regulations for the proper protection of coloured labour when it came into the colony. During the last eighteen years—ever since 1867, when, as the hon. member knew perfectly well, the sugar industry first came into any notice at all in Queensland—they had seen that industry, which in that year only produced 400 tons of sugar, rise into the industry producing 40,000 tons per annum. The quantity of sugar produced during those eighteen years was, approximately, 218,000 tons, of a gross value of £3,500,000. When he heard an hon. gentleman—who ought to know better, because he was one of those who in the early days endeavoured to foster that industry—say that it had been unnecessarily fostered by the Government, he did not think that hon. gentleman did credit to the honourable position he ought to occupy. Of course, he himself held very strong views on the subject, but he could point to the consistency of his action in regard to it ever since he had been in the House. He was one of those connected with the initiation of the industry, and had seen it tide over bad times in the same way as he believed it would tide over the present depression. The hon. member for South Brisbane, who had done nothing as a pioneer in the colony, who had lived in Brisbane, and who had endeavoured to carry out the industry on wrong lines with the result of disaster to himself—that hon. gentleman now said that one of the chief industries of the colony had been coddled by the Government. If the hon. gentleman had taken the trouble to read, mark, and learn the affairs of the colony from year to year, he would know that he was putting an entirely false issue before the public at a time when it was necessary for the welfare of the colony that the whole of its producing industries should be properly protected.

Mr. JORDAN said he had not said that the agricultural industry had been coddled, but that the sugar industry had been coddled, which was a very different thing. He had repeatedly said that the agricultural industry had been discouraged and legislated against; and he did not want it to go forth to the world that he said it had been coddled. What he meant by agriculture was not sugar-growing with black labour, but *bona fide* farming by men who did their own work. He had never done anything in his capacity as a legislator to foster the sugar industry. He strongly opposed the Polynesian Labourers Act, which was introduced, he maintained, to foster the sugar-growing by the great planters. It was true that black labour had been

introduced by Captain Towns before the sugar industry had any existence; but the Act was passed not to protect the labourers, but for the benefit of the great sugar-planters. Ever since that they had had the black labour at a low price and at the expense of the character of the colony before the whole world. He had been a sugar-planter for five years and did not make any money by it; but it had not been disastrous to him, because he soon gave it up and put his capital into something else. He never availed himself of the Polynesian Labourers Act. He never employed a black man, but had always had white men, and given them good wages—25s. a week. Had it not been for a succession of severe frosts he would have made money; and he was of the same opinion now as he was then, that white labour was more economical than black labour, even in sugar-planting. He did not believe in sugar-planting in the South now, but he did believe that in the North it would be a great success with European labour.

Mr. ARCHER said he was not going to dispute the opinions of the hon. member, but he would dispute his facts. He himself was in the House when the Polynesian Act was passed, and he knew that it was passed to protect the labour. Mr. Towns had employed a number of kanakas, and there were some very peculiar rumours as to the way in which they were paid off; it was rumoured that they generally got an old musket for three years' labour, and were packed back to the islands. That was strongly felt to be an injustice, and a Bill was introduced into the Assembly by Sir Arthur Palmer to protect the Polynesians.

The PREMIER: It was introduced in the Upper House.

Mr. ARCHER said he remembered it passing through the Lower House in charge of Sir Arthur Palmer. Where was there any large sugar plantation at that time?

Mr. JORDAN: At Caboolture.

Mr. ARCHER said he was not aware there had been a sugar plantation there. He knew perfectly well that the Act was introduced to protect the kanakas. Sugar-planting was then in its infancy, and there was actually not a single plantation at Mackay; and he did not think that for the sugar plantations at that time there was any need for Polynesian labour.

The PREMIER said he hoped they were now prepared to go on with the question before the Committee, which had to do with the duty on spirits.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the discussion had originated in a very pertinent speech made by the hon. member for South Brisbane, and it was a discussion which might very well be continued. The hon. member seemed to have escaped from the leading strings in which he had been held for so long past. He had really offered them a subject for discussion which was of very material importance, not only to that Committee but to the whole colony. He thought the discussion should not be interrupted by the Premier, but that it should be allowed to continue.

Question put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought they ought to have some reasons given by the Treasurer for the imposition of that duty. He took it that the hon. gentleman was in charge of the measure, although the Premier, in the exercise of his dictatorship, appeared to interfere and take the bit in his teeth. He thought they should have some reason more than had been given from the Colonial Treasurer for increasing the duty that at present existed on that particular article. The hon. gentleman must be aware that if he

increased the duty on spirits he would also increase the tendency to smuggle spirits into the colony; the higher they made the duty the greater premium they offered to people who were desirous of making money by smuggling spirits into the country. While on that subject he would refer to a statement made by the hon. member for Maryborough, the previous evening, in reference to the collection of Customs at Maryborough. The hon. member, in discussing that measure, said that Maryborough was the second town in the colony. Yet he gave the Committee the very startling information that the population of Maryborough was larger than the population of Townsville or Rockhampton, and on that ground he claimed precedence for Maryborough, stating that it was the second town in the colony. When his statement was challenged by the hon. member for Mackay, who stated that the revenue derived from Rockhampton and Townsville was greater than the revenue derived from Maryborough, the hon. gentleman admitted that such was the case. Now, there must have been some laxity in the collection of revenue at Maryborough. He (Mr. Morehead) did not know where the fault lay, but it appeared to him that there must have been some laxity in order to account for the discrepancy pointed out by the hon. member for Mackay. He thought they should have some reasons—some very strong reasons—given by the Colonial Treasurer before they increased the duty on spirits. They had had none given so far.

The PREMIER: Reasons have been given over and over again.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman might call reasons what he did not call reasons. He maintained that if the idea was to increase the revenue the Government might do so, but the increased revenue should be collected in a different way from that proposed in the Bill. If, on the other hand, the intention in putting an increased duty on spirits was to reduce the consumption of spirits, the measure would defeat itself. That surely was evident. The Colonial Treasurer, he took it, assumed that the consumption of spirits would remain the same even with the increased duty. He maintained that the increased duty on spirits would not have the effect of checking the consumption of that article, if that was the desire of the Government. If it was with the view of checking the consumption that the proposed tax was to be imposed it would reduce the revenue to very much the same as it stood at present. On the other hand, the increased duty would lead to enormous adulteration. He believed that firmly; that had been the effect in other countries, and if that was the result in other countries the result would be the same in Queensland. He, therefore, most distinctly opposed the increased duty on spirits. It would strike at the working man and the working man only. Hon. gentlemen opposite might laugh—they might laugh as they chose—but the fact remained the same—the publican would put an increased price on the spirits, the wine and spirit merchant would put an increased price on spirits, and that increase would have to be paid by the consumer. The proposed duty would not be a tax upon the importer of the liquor, but upon the consumer. He really did not know why spirits should be seized upon as an article upon which an extra tax should be placed, except that it was a very easy matter to tax imported spirits; and whether the community in general would derive any benefit from that taxation he doubted very much indeed. He did not think it was a fair tax. He thought that if the Government were desirous of obtaining revenue they should have

gone to a very much higher source than that of increasing the duty on spirits in the manner proposed in that Bill. He thought the small deficit the Government had to meet might have been met in a much better way—by decreasing the cost of the Government establishments of the colony. Why, the appointments that had been made under the Land Act alone—the expenditure that was proposed to be incurred under that statute now, at the initiation of the measure—would of itself be more than enough to meet the deficit that the Colonial Treasurer told them existed. The enormous salaries to be paid to the commissioners under that Act would go a long way towards meeting the deficit that they were threatened with or which already existed, as they were told by the Treasurer. But instead of reducing the expenditure the Government made an attempt to extract money to make up the deficit from the people of the colony. They said, "No, do not let us decrease our expenditure; let us go to the Customs and put 2s. a gallon more on spirits and an extra duty on beer; it is a perfectly easy thing to do; we are not going in for retrenchment or to bring back the Civil servants to their old way of working when the late Government were in power." The Government would not do that, because the Civil servants' vote was a matter of importance to them; but they said, "Get this additional taxation out of the multitude—get it out of the mob—let them pay it—they are quiescent." The people were quiescent—but why? Because to a certain extent every man in Brisbane was prosperous. But trouble was before them, and that trouble would come in a few months—that effervescing would very soon subside and be flat like uncorked soda-water. Brisbane was not the whole of the colony, and the whole policy of the Government in the present scheme of taxation was a Brisbane and Maryborough policy. He would like the Premier to travel over the country now, starting from the same point that he started from on his last expedition—namely, Townsville—when he and the Colonial Treasurer went inland. He would like the hon. gentleman to go over the same country and compare notes of what he would see now with what he saw then, and then express the opinion that he had stated over and over again in respect to the prosperity of the colony. The colony was in a less prosperous state than ever it had been. There might be a fictitious state of prosperity in Brisbane, but it was only a fictitious state. The colony was never in a more disastrous state since it was founded, and yet they were asked to bolster up a nominal deficit—he said "nominal deficit," because he believed the deficit was greater than had been acknowledged—by imposing those paltry taxes. Asking the Committee to pass that schedule was only playing with the matter. The Colonial Treasurer dared not state the true position of the colony, which was overwhelmed with debt and suffering from the aggregation of three bad seasons, one after the other, which had affected the pastoral and agricultural industries. The mining industry was not, perhaps, so bad, but at any rate it was not in so flourishing a state as it might be; while the sugar industry was entirely destroyed. Still they might find those Neros who occupied the Treasury benches fiddling while Rome burned. Those were the men who came down, night after night, under the paltry pretence of asking them to pass a Bill to give them temporary alleviation in the shape of some £93,000 extra taxation. Why did they not face the facts of the case and say that the affairs of the colony had never been in so depressed a state? He did not stand up there to say anything which

would damage the credit of the colony, but simply to state the facts of the case. He never saw the colony in so critical a state as now, and unless heavy rains fell within the next few weeks it would be impossible to foretell the losses which would take place in stock and crops—and the hon. member for Darling Downs would bear him out—yet they were asked to put extra taxation upon the people to enable the Colonial Treasurer to bolster up a deficit which he (Mr. Morehead) believed was not fairly represented. He should vote against that and every other item contained in the schedule for the simple reason that he thought, at a time like the present, they should go a great deal beyond what was contained in those resolutions. They should start with the taxation of property; and a fitting time had now arrived when the poorer classes in the colony should be exempted from the strong incidence of taxation contained in the schedule. The time had arrived when a property tax should be levied not only on the lands of the colony, but upon all the property holders in Brisbane and the larger centres of population. Those were the people who were making money, and the people who should pay the extra taxation which was necessary to tide the colony over that most critical period of its existence. He assured the Premier that he spoke in no hostile way, and would be most happy to assist him in tiding over the difficulty; and he should be certainly sinking any feelings of patriotism if he did not. But he would not assist him to tide it over by a system of taxation like that proposed. They had a far greater difficulty to grapple with than the Government seemed to conceive. The proposed taxation would only affect one class of the community, and that was the class who were least able to bear it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman who had just spoken said he believed that the Treasurer had not divulged the true financial position of the colony. He had not divulged it to the Committee; but he must have divulged it to his own party, judging from the lamb-like submission with which they accepted the proposed increases in taxation. If he had divulged it to the Committee possibly there would not have been so much objection raised on the part of the Opposition. Judging by the last discussion, on the machinery question, the Government must have divulged the true position of the colony to their followers. He was certainly surprised to see hon. gentlemen on the other side, who knew a great deal of the state of the colony, voting as they did upon that occasion. They all knew that the true way to advance the colony was to remove any obstructions or obstacles that might exist in the development of its natural resources. There was not one industry in the colony that was not obliged to use machinery; nearly every man in the colony was connected with machinery, or else reduced to the efforts of his hands. Judging from the division which had taken place it was merely a waste of time to discuss any of the other items in the schedule, because he believed that the voting would be quite as strong as it was upon the last occasion; nevertheless, he considered it his duty to offer his protest against the imposition of any tax at the present time. The first duty of the Government was to have gone in for retrenchment, and then, had there been a necessity for taxation, it would have been agreed to; but until that was done he for one would not agree to any taxation, even upon property, although that should be the first proposed. The overgrown expenditure of the last few years should be reduced. They had been told by the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan) that a certain industry in the colony had been coddled. Did he not think the proposed

increase in the duty on spirits was coddling some other industry? Did he not imagine that by voting for an increase in those duties he would be coddling the sugar industry? Which of the people of the colony would gain by the imposition of that tax? He doubted whether the Treasury would gain anything by it. The makers of colonial rum—the growers of sugar—were the people who would benefit by the tax. The result would be that colonial rum would be put into consumption in a new and raw state and unfit to drink, and would be sold all over the colony as imported spirits. Every member of the Committee who understood the question knew that would be the result of that taxation. He did not think it necessary to carry on the discussion, but he was quite prepared to give his vote on every item in the schedule against the proposed increase, and he would not be doing his duty if he did not do so. He had no great objection on principle to putting a tax upon spirits—none whatever on principle—but at the present time he did not think it was necessary, and if it were necessary he said retrenchment should take place first.

Mr. KELLETT rose to speak—

The PREMIER: Question!

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Go on!

Mr. KELLETT said he intended to go on. He did not take up very much of the time of the Committee, and he was rather surprised at the Premier's remark. That was not the way to stop him at any rate. It generally had the contrary effect. Those who tried it on before always found it so. He had voted against the tax proposed upon machinery and was sorry to see it carried. If he had thought that by talking for twenty-four hours he could have prevented it he would have talked long and often, but he knew it would have no effect. It was gone now, however, and he was very sorry for it. He intended to vote the opposite way upon the present question, because he did not think it would have a bad effect at all. If revenue was wanted he did not think a better way could be found to raise it than by putting 2s. or 5s. a gallon on spirits. He did not agree with those who said it would fall upon the working man. Men who worked not with their hands but with their heads took quite as much, if not a great deal more, spirits than working men. He thought the tax would fall very fairly all round. He did not think it would hurt the consumers, though it might interfere with those who dealt in spirits. He should vote in favour of the proposed tax, because he believed it to be a very good way of raising revenue.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 29.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Groom, Brookes, Mellor, Isambert, Bailey, Jordan, Campbell, White, Annar, Buckland, Kates, Wakefield, Sheridan, Kellett, Foote, Smyth, Beattie, Foxton, Salkeld, Macfarlane, Higson, Govett, and Nelson.

NOES, 10.

Messrs. Archer, Morehead, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Black, Lalor, Ferguson, Lissner, and Palmer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that—

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

stand part of the schedule.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should like to have some information from the Treasurer as to the meaning of the schedule.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it included the same class of articles—namely, spirits mixed or sweetened so that the strength could not be ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer—which were at present charged at the rate of 10s. per gallon. There was nothing new about it; it simply followed on through the increased duty which under the last resolution had been put upon ordinary spirits.

Mr. BAILEY said there was one omission which the Treasurer had overlooked, and which might have given him a little more revenue. Of late Queensland had been infested by lecturers, who had induced people to leave off contributing to the revenue in the shape proposed by the Colonial Treasurer. Some of those new converts would no doubt still continue to use cordials and perhaps certain strong waters, such as sarsaparilla, and so on. If one portion of the community was to be taxed because it drank whisky and beer, why should not the other portion be also taxed which drank gingerbeer, lemonade, and cordials? He would suggest to the Treasurer that at least all sorts of bottled drinks should pay a tax in some shape or other.

Mr. BLACK said he could not give the hon. member for Wide Bay credit for originality. Although he believed his intentions to be good, the hon. gentleman did not carry out his good intentions by voting on the side of the House that he ought to do. The subject to which the hon. member had referred was referred to by himself (Mr. Black) at some length the other evening. He should be very glad of the hon. gentleman's co-operation in bringing about what he considered to be a very desirable object. It would have the effect of increasing the revenue, which was what the Treasurer was aiming at. He should like some information as to what were strong waters and cordials. The hon. gentleman mentioned a few articles the other night, such as peppermint cordial—which contained 30 per cent. of proof spirit—bitters, noyau, orange bitters, and a number of other articles—were they among the articles which would be affected by that clause of the schedule?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the articles chiefly consisted of sweetened gin, old tom, curaçoa, maraschino, perfumed spirits, pain-killer, and cherry brandy, all of which paid the 10s. duty, which was now sought to be increased in consequence of the duty on ordinary spirits having been increased.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: May I ask if "pain-killer" is a teetotal drink?

Mr. MOREHEAD said that as so few articles would be affected by the schedule they might very well have been included in it, and then there would have been no trouble. The Treasurer ought to revise the schedule in that direction.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the schedule was merely a transcript of that which appeared in the existing Customs Duties Act. It would be inconvenient to enumerate all the articles in the schedule, because they included all spirits, strong waters, or cordials which, on account of their having been sweetened, could not be tested by Sykes's hydrometer. There was no intention to include any other articles than those which were at present charged at the rate of 10s. per gallon.

Mr. MOREHEAD: What is the definition of "strong waters"?

Mr. BLACK said he thought the Committee would be extremely astonished to hear that "pain-killer" was an intoxicating drink that ought to be taxed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Not a drink; it is taxed in the same way that perfumery is taxed, because it contains a large quantity of proof spirit.

Mr. BLACK said he had always thought that "pain-killer" was a very harmless drink. The other day he read a book called "Advance Australia," where the writer described the scarcity that prevailed in some of the shanties out west in consequence of the non-arrival of the team bringing up the supply of spirits. The gentleman complained of having been given a glass of kerosine to drink, and on his attempting to remonstrate in somewhat forcible language he was told that he had no good ground for complaint, because there was someone else in the parlour who was drinking "pain-killer." He looked upon that anecdote as a sort of bush yarn, but if, as the Treasurer had said, "pain-killer" was one of those articles which contained a very large amount of spirit—in fact, so much that the strength could not be ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer, he could quite understand it being one of those mysterious drinks that temperance people were inclined to consume when they were understood to be strict teetotallers. In common with the hon. member for Balonne, he thought some explanation ought to be given as to what "strong waters" really did consist of, because if they were going to have such a variety of articles, and "pain-killer" included, they ought to be scheduled.

The PREMIER said that any hon. member could be serious in asking such a question it was difficult to believe. "Strong waters" of course meant spirituous liquors. It was one of the oldest terms in the English language. Not only was the term used by all the old writers, but it had always been used in Customs Acts from time immemorial.

Mr. LISSNER said he could give some information, as far as "pain-killer" was concerned, which might satisfy the hon. gentleman. When he was in New Zealand amongst the mountains, it was very cold, and people used to take "pain-killer" as a cure for rheumatism, lumbago, and other things, and they got so used to it that when spirits ran short they took to drinking it the same as brandy, rum, or any other spirit. He believed there was a duty on it in New Zealand.

The PREMIER: Is it nice?

Mr. LISSNER: It was a first-class medicinal drink. He thought it would suit blue-ribbon men occasionally. In fact, he had heard the other day of a blue-ribbon man having got drunk on "tipsy-cake." No doubt he could get drunk on "pain-killer," and there ought to be a duty upon it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think that they should be satisfied with the mere assertion of the Premier that "strong waters" was a term that had been included in Customs Acts from time immemorial. No doubt it was the province of the hon. gentleman to make assertions, but he did not think that those assertions should be accepted as proof. There were many things that had been in existence from time immemorial that required amendment, and ought to be swept away by Acts of Parliament, and he believed the time had arrived when the words "strong waters" ought to be defined by Act of Parliament. It had been pointed out that "pain-killer" came within the definition of "strong waters," and there were many other combinations of spirits that might come under the same category. It should be defined in some way. The Committee was not simply to collapse because the Premier told them that from time immemorial—which he (Mr. Morehead) did not believe—the words "strong waters" had been

used in the Customs Acts. It was too absurd that they should be ruled by tradition, or by the hon. the Premier's version of tradition.

The PREMIER: Hon. members are supposed to have an elementary knowledge of the English language.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had as good an elementary knowledge of the English language as the hon. the Premier had, and he had as good vituperative vocabulary as he had. His knowledge of the English language was certainly not less than that of the Premier—at least, he would not give in on that point either to him or any other hon. member. The hon. gentleman's knowledge of "strong waters," perhaps, might be somewhat extensive.

The PREMIER: No; I give way to you on that.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman's knowledge of the application of the words "strong waters" might be as great as that of any hon. member in the Committee, but he denied his right to come down and tell hon. members that because those words had been used from time immemorial therefore they should accept them. They desired definite information from the hon. gentleman, who, of course as usual, whenever any of his colleagues got into difficulties, took the matter out of their hands. Whenever they got into trouble they always flew back to the parent shark, as young sharks usually did under the same conditions, and the parent shark on the present occasion had simply told the Committee that those words had existed from time immemorial, and declined to go any further. That was the way in which the hon. gentleman generally treated the Committee—simply dictated to it and bullied or tried to bully it; but he (Mr. Morehead) contended that they should go further and insist upon having those words clearly defined in the Bill, which, if it became law, would be a very important statute.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman had concluded his remarks in such a serious tone that one would imagine that he was really serious. He (the Colonial Treasurer) would point out that the term "strong waters" was used in the Customs Duties Act of 1870 in the same way that it was mentioned in the Bill—in fact it was mentioned no less than four times in the schedule of that Act—and he did not think it required any interpretation clause. There had been no confusion in the minds of importers on the matter.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he could quite understand that a Government with a large majority at their back did not require any interpretation clause for anything they did. They could do exactly as they liked, as the hon. the Chairman knew as well as he did. He did not see why, because an error had existed since 1870, it should be perpetuated now. If the hon. member's contention was worth anything there should be no reform in anything; they should simply go on and take what had been handed down from Parliament to Parliament. He wished to goodness the Government had done so in many other of their measures. He contended that there should be some definition given to the words.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he did not think there was any difficulty as to the meaning of the words "strong waters." They were derived from the Latin *aqua fortis*. That was the origin of the expression.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was glad to see that the hon. member was keeping up his classics. He told the House the other day that

Ganymede was a female. He wanted to make her one of his barmaids. He hoped the hon. gentleman was not in earnest.

Mr. SHERIDAN: I made a mistake; I should have said "Hebe."

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Foote Foxton, Kellett, Sheridan, Miles, Beattie, Wakefield Kates, Buckland, White, Campbell, Jordan, Isambert Annear, Mellor, Smyth, Brookes, Rutledge, Macfarlane Groom, Salkeld, and Higson.

NOES, 8.

Messrs. Archer, Morehead, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Black, Lalor, and Lissner.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that—

Timber, logs, per 100 superficial feet, 1s.;

Timber, undressed, per 100 superficial feet, 1s.;

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

The duty on timber to be estimated as on a thickness of one inch, and to be in proportion for any greater thickness.

—stand part of the schedule, said that the reasons for imposing that duty had been already referred to in the Financial Statement, and also at considerable length in the debate on the resolutions in Ways and Means dealing with the matter. He thought it would be admitted that the Government had a right to derive a revenue from the natural products of the country, and that the industry that furnished the additional revenue should not be placed at a disadvantage by competition with outside productions of a similar character. The rate of duty proposed to be charged was a very moderate one and had been framed with regard to the duty at present collected on timber. It amounted to the *ad valorem* duty at present imposed, plus the amount of royalty charged on the local production. Hon. members should bear in mind that in all the other colonies of Australia the State derived a revenue from the importation of timber. In New South Wales the duty was 1s. per 100 superficial feet rough, and 2s. on dressed stuff. In Victoria it was 1s. on the rough, and 1s. 6d. on the dressed—that was the rate desired to be introduced into the schedule. In South Australia, the rate was 2s. equally on rough and dressed. In New Zealand it was 2s. on the rough and 4s. on the dressed. The *ad valorem* rate at the present time produced on hardwood something like 6½d. per 100 feet, and upon sawn pine about 5½d., and on logs and piles about 9½d. He conceived that the duty would be a fair and equitable one, and he did not think it would be likely to affect the building trade of the colony. There would probably not be a large amount of revenue derived from that source, because he did not think a very large quantity of timber would be imported; but it was a fair thing that there should be a revenue derived from timber, and the timber when it arrived in the colony would come under about the same conditions as that locally produced. The amount per 100 feet would be very little in excess of the present *ad valorem* duty, and he did not think it would be deemed at all excessive; and seeing that the other colonies all charged—with the exception of Victoria—a higher rate than was proposed here, he thought the Government were fully justified in selecting timber as a subject for taxation.

Mr. FERGUSON asked if there was to be any reduction of duty for timber of a less thickness than one inch?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. FERGUSON said that a great deal of the timber imported was half-inch stuff, and that

would really be charged a duty of 3s., in addition to the 6d. *ad valorem*, which would make it 3s. 6d. That was a very heavy duty and he considered it would to a large extent check the building trade of the colony, especially in the North. It was not the slightest use to say it would not check the trade; it had done so before and it would do so again. The Treasurer expected £3,000 a year out of the tax; but, according to the rate of import, the timber received at Rockhampton alone would pay that. That was to say, the people of one small town would pay as much as the whole duty the hon. member expected to get from the tax. Townsville, too, and all the northern part of the colony, must pay a duty to support a few sawmills in the South. The timber at the present time in the North was not suitable for building. The Government, he considered, were simply propping up a few sawmills in the South, and there could be no doubt that the Treasurer had yielded to the pressure of Maryborough. They all knew how the Maryborough sawmillers had treated the North. Every month there was a rise in timber until the people of the North imported their own timber. Why should they in the North be compelled to take their timber from Maryborough when they could get it on better terms from other parts of the world? While they were imposing that tax they were allowing their most valuable timber to be taken away at 2s. per 100 feet. Victoria and New South Wales had been, for some years, robbing the colony of its most valuable timber; and if they had adopted the plan of putting on a duty of 12s. per 100 feet on cedar in the log they would have got a great deal more revenue than that now expected, and they would have got it without interfering with the people of the colony. They had no other timber in the North now except cedar, and if the 12s. per 100 feet was imposed upon it many sawmills would soon become established, which would lead to the establishment of such manufactories as sash and door factories. He was very strongly opposed to the proposed tax, although he knew there was not the slightest chance of his objection having any effect whatever.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said there might be something in the argument of the hon. gentleman if the North was wholly without timber; but they knew that it had a very good supply of timber, and that sawmills were being established in large numbers. In a great deal of the country between here and Bourke there was an immense amount of timber. Even in Rockhampton a mill had lately been erected. There was no necessity for the Northern people to buy Maryborough pine, inasmuch as they had quantities of their own. They had got the "messmate" in enormous quantities, and for building purposes nothing was its equal. It was proof against white ants, and the supply was practically unlimited. He did not anticipate that the Northern people would have the slightest difficulty in supplying themselves with all the timber they required. The hon. gentleman said the proposed tax was simply for the purpose of fostering the timber-getters of the South, but he seemed to forget that for years and years timber had been cut and exported for consumption without making any return to the State. For his own part he could never see the equity of fostering the natural products of the country to be used and exported without the State deriving the slightest benefit. At the time the timber industry was depressed in Maryborough it was said that that was rather an unfair thing to do—that it was crippling an industry that could ill afford it; but that difficulty was owing to the fact that timber

from New Zealand and America was coming into all the ports of the North; and not only that, but the Northern towns were also utilising the timber of the North, and erecting mills to cut it up. That was another reason, and by no means the least reason. He believed that they were still utilising an immense deal of timber up north, and that that industry would continue to increase. As to cedar, he should like to have seen a higher export tax put upon it than at present existed, but they all remembered the attempt that was once made to put an export duty upon cedar, and it signally failed. There at present existed an export duty of 2s., and 2s. royalty, upon timber, and that brought in a fair return to the State. When he first came into the Lands Office, in many of the Northern districts there were millions and millions of feet of cedar lying in places where there was no probability of it ever being taken out. That timber was there and likely to remain there.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It will remain there all your life.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he believed it would, and there had been more loss to the State in that way than could be recovered for a very long time by additional duty. That state of affairs had been brought to an end, and was fairly and fully checked. The royalty that was imposed now, though it gave a fair return to the State, did not, he considered, press heavily upon anybody, and he thought the mill-owners, at all events, were fairly entitled to such a protection as the amount of import duty now imposed would give them, because in all the other Australian colonies there was an import duty upon all foreign timber, and New Zealand, which had an abundance of timber, imposed a higher import duty upon foreign timber than any other of the colonies—a colony which one would have thought would have been the least disposed to put on a duty of that kind. It was from New Zealand that timber-getters in this colony had most to fear. That colony came most freely into competition with the timber industry of this colony, and the proposed protection against the enormous quantity of timber brought from New Zealand was a just, wise, and salutary protection for the timber industry here, and would result in a fair revenue being derived by the Treasury.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not rise for the purpose of addressing the Committee on behalf of the timber-getters, because he looked upon them as simply one unit that went to make up the State. There was something to be considered beyond the timber-getter, and that was those who used timber for constructing their dwellings or for other purposes. He thought those people really had some claim to consideration at the hands of the Committee and the country, and he could not for the life of him see why, because the mill-owner was to be benefited by that item in the schedule, that therefore the Committee should be asked to say that the duty would be for the benefit of the whole community. He maintained that that was a tax that should never have been put on, and that it was one that affected the householder in this colony, whether large or small, and more especially the labouring man. He had in his hand a memorandum given to him showing what the effect of that duty had been on the importation of £387 worth of timber from New Zealand. He wondered what hon. members would guess if he asked them to guess what was the duty charged on that importation? It came to £76, or about 20 per cent. on the whole value of the timber. Who did that tax materially affect? It certainly affected all those engaged in the building trade, and everyone who had any

desire to put up a house for himself in Brisbane. He was talking now of an importation that came to Brisbane. Of course the same remarks were applicable to every other town in the colony. Were they, then, to pass an impost which would affect every individual in the colony, either directly or indirectly, simply to benefit a few mill-owners in the colony—at Maryborough and a few other places in the colony? They had heard from the Minister for Lands that a mill was going up at Rockhampton. The hon. gentleman had also mentioned a timber called "messmate," which, he said, was proof against white ants. Well, he (Mr. Morehead) did not believe that. He did not think there was any timber in the colony, except perhaps a few scrub timbers, that was free from white ants. The hon. gentleman also told them that, in effect, the proposed duty was a tax to protect mill-owners, and those employed by mill-owners. But the Committee had to look beyond those persons. They had to consider the interests of the whole colony and see that no impost was put on the taxpayers which, so far as they could make out, was not equally borne by each. The Maryborough people supported the duty on machinery, and now they wished to compel the Committee to put a tax on timber—a tax that would affect the whole community of Queensland. They could import timber from New Zealand at a very much lower rate than they could purchase it in the colony, and why should they not do so? He believed in freetrade; he did not believe in bolstering up any industry; if it could not stand by itself let it go. That was what the Premier had said in reference to the sugar industry, and he had let it go with a vengeance. The interest of the timber industry was small as compared with the interest of the general community which was interfered with by that obnoxious impost. No one knew that better than the Premier, who, he believed, was a freetrader at heart; at least, he hoped the hon. gentleman was. It was said that the Almighty fought on the side of the biggest battalions, and so it might be in the present instance. Those opposed to the tax would probably be outvoted. He would, however, divide against it. The hon. member for Rockhampton had pointed out the gross injustice that the majority of colonists would suffer if that impost was passed. He could do nothing more—no member of that Committee could do anything more than protest against the proposed tax, and record that protest in a division. Members on the other side of the Committee had become so degraded through the influence of the Premier that they did not vote on questions as they should vote if they acted upon the views expressed in their speeches. Some of them might get up and say that they did not believe black was white. They might say that from their own knowledge—they had reason to believe that black was not white. At the same time, if the Premier said black was white, they would admit his contention and vote with him. That was really the position of affairs now in that Committee, but there would be a day of retribution. There was no doubt that a day of reckoning would come—whether quickly or later on no man could tell—but that it would come he was as sure as that he was standing there. It would be a bad time for the colony, and damaging to the Government of the future. However, he could only say that he should protest against that tax being put upon an article, which was one that he was not very materially interested in, and perhaps that no member of that Committee was very materially interested in, but which was of very great importance to the great bulk of the population of the colony. It was really putting a tax on industry and on labour. He had hoped that wiser

counsels would have prevailed, and that the Government would have withdrawn that most obnoxious of all the obnoxious articles contained in the schedule to the Bill.

Mr. KELLETT said he hoped he should not be again considered out of order in saying a few words on the subject before the Committee. He thought the tax under consideration was the most objectionable one in the whole tariff. It was more objectionable even than the duty on machinery. He could see—in fact, it had been acknowledged by the Minister for Lands just now—that the proposed tax was decided upon on account of the royalty which had been put upon timber. The Government seemed to think that it was advisable to soften the feeling produced by the imposition of that royalty by charging a heavy duty on imported timber. To his mind the royalty was a great mistake, and he was satisfied that the same view was held by a large number of people. Indeed, he believed that nine-tenths of the people of the colony were of the same opinion. Well, that was done, and it might have affected a few of the mill-owners; but now when they came to impose a tax on imported timber, they did something that would affect the large industrious population of the colony. They saw what a number of buildings were going up all round Brisbane, and in many other towns of the colony, at the present time. Persons investing their money in that way would now have to pay a tax of 10 per cent. additional at the very lowest on every building erected. That would stop a great deal of building and do away with a great deal of employment for labour. They found that many men were at the present time drawing their money out of the savings bank, buying a bit of land, and building themselves houses; but that tax would put a stop to all that. They would find that in the next twelve months nothing like the number of buildings would be put up that had been erected within the last year. He believed the royalty was a mistake, and that it was made hurriedly; but, unfortunately, it was made, and now they had made a bigger mistake in the attempt to soften down the first error by the imposition of a tax on imported timber. The consequence would be—and it would be seen before long—that the price of timber would go up. The men dealing in New Zealand timber did not make very much out of the trade, because the local mill-owners had reduced the prices. When timber was first introduced from New Zealand the price of timber was reduced by 3s. per 100 feet straight away, but it would soon go up again now that a heavy import duty was to be imposed on foreign timber. He thought the *ad valorem* duty that had to be paid at the present time on timber imported from New Zealand was quite heavy enough. If mill-owners here could not compete with those who imported timber then the industry ought to be stopped altogether; but he believed that they could compete with them, for he knew men who were making a good profit out of their sawmills. It would, in his view, be found that the proposed tax would damage the interests of the country, and that, he was sure, was the opinion of a large majority of people in the colony.

Mr. ARCHER said he was pleased to hear from the Minister for Lands that some men were enterprising enough to start sawmills at Rockhampton; but he should also like to hear where the forests existed from which they were to get their supplies of pine. He knew there was good hardwood in the district, but it was a discovery to him to find that pine forests existed in the North.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that two millers at Rockhampton had applied for special licenses on some islands along the coast to cut pine which they intended to bring to Rockhampton. They were also getting some pine from one or two of the rivers between Bowen and Townsville, though not to a great extent. Further north there was also a quantity of pine, which they proposed to bring down as they exhausted the supply on the islands.

Mr. ARCHER said he knew there was pine on the islands along the coast, but the pine forests on them were very small indeed. He was glad to hear that there were men in Rockhampton who were going into the timber trade; but even if they succeeded in cutting and selling timber he did not see why an extra duty should be put on the timber imported from New Zealand, which was sufficiently handicapped by the freight. The freight on a cheap bulky article like timber added probably 10 or 12 per cent. to the price.

Mr. KELLETT: The freight is as much as the price of the timber.

Mr. ARCHER said it made a considerable addition, at any rate; and he firmly believed that the protection afforded by the freight was sufficient for all purposes. The extra duty would simply enable the sawyers to raise the price of timber, and would have the effect of stopping to a great extent the erection of buildings. They were sorry for some reasons to see such a lot of small shanties going up, but they could not help being glad at the same time, because it showed that the poor man who had collected enough money wished to live in his own house in preference to paying rent. That was an independent spirit which they should encourage by every means in their power. It had an admirable influence on the people, and he was delighted to see that men preferred to live in small bandboxes, so to speak, of their own rather than in better places for which they would have to pay rent. He should do all he could to prevent the tax from being imposed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that if he thought the imposition of the royalty would have such an effect as had been described, he would be the first to admit that it was a complete mistake, and withdraw from the position he had taken up. A poor man putting up a house would require about 10,000 feet of timber, which, with the erection and everything, would cost about £250. The royalty on that would amount to £2 10s., if it were all pine; but one-third being hardwood, it would only amount to about £2 5s.—that would be the amount paid for the timber taken from Crown lands. And why should he not pay £2 5s. for the timber taken from Crown lands just as well as for the land itself? A man building a house for £1,500 would require 60,000 feet of timber, for which the State would receive £16 or £18. Was it any hardship to require him to contribute that amount for timber which was the property of the State? He had no more right to have it free than to have his land free. The duty would not have the slightest deterrent effect in regard to poor men building houses, and the hardship would be too infinitesimal to be taken into consideration.

Mr. FERGUSON said the hon. gentleman was wrong in his calculations. It was not exactly the amount of duty that would raise the price of timber, but the duty would have the effect of stopping the import of timber, and the price would be raised 5s. or 6s. per 100 feet, straight away. Three years ago the price was 24s. and 26s. per 100 feet, but as soon as New Zealand timber was imported it came down 6s. per 100 feet at once. It was a very ordinary cottage that took only 10,000 feet; but even on

that the reduction of 6s. per 100 feet meant a saving of £30. There was a very small percentage of hardwood in a house, so that the hon. gentleman was wrong in that respect. He could state from his own knowledge that in Rockhampton alone 365 houses were built the first year after timber was imported from New Zealand. Three years previous to that building was at a standstill and people were forced to send to New Zealand for timber, and hundreds of mechanics and labourers found employment who would not have found it otherwise. Not only that, but there was a better class of houses built. The smaller ones were pulled down and replaced by larger ones; prices had been so high that the people would rather live anywhere than build houses for themselves. With regard to the sawmills erected at Rockhampton, mentioned by the Minister for Lands, he knew that there was a small sawmill there; but what effect would that have upon the demand of Rockhampton? Not the slightest. Even if it had, it would be no reason why a duty should be put on. He would not support the sawmill at Rockhampton more than he would at Maryborough. They should all swim in the same boat. A few sawmillers would benefit, but the public would suffer. The sawmillers in the North were few, and were likely to be few, because enough timber did not grow there for railway purposes, and it would have to come from other parts of the colony.

The PREMIER said the present was the fourth occasion that the subject had been debated this session, and he did not suppose that much additional light would be thrown upon it. He had no personal experience of the timber trade; but he supposed that people engaged in that business conducted it on the same principles as other persons. It was said that when timber was imported from New Zealand Queensland timber fell 6s. per 100 feet, and that the duty proposed would cause it to rise again. If the duty proposed to be put on were a prohibitive duty of something like 10s. per 100 feet, perhaps there might be a rise, as the sawmillers in the colony might be able to charge what they pleased but for competition amongst themselves. But, as it was, it would not rise at most more than 6d. or 1s. per 100 feet. If it did timber would be imported again at once, and the price would come down. One would suppose that they were getting an enormous Customs revenue from timber. Last year they got under £3,000, and he did not think they would get more during the present year—at any rate there would not be more than £5,000 spread over the whole colony, and would that stop the building of houses? Of course it would not.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then what is the reason of the duty?

The PREMIER said the reason was plain enough. It was complementary to the royalty. As he had said, the present was the fourth time the subject had been discussed, and it was time they reached the end of it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier had told them that the imposition of 6d. or 1s. per 100 feet would simply increase the cost of timber to the consumer.

The PREMIER: I said that was the maximum extent to which it would raise the price.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Premier said that against the experience of a man who knew the conditions and working of his own trade just as well as the hon. gentleman knew the conditions and working of his own profession in the Supreme Court. The Minister for Lands looked at it from an office point of view, just as the Premier looked at it from a lawyer's

point of view. Was the Premier under the impression that the duty of 1s. 6d. per 100 feet would have the effect of preventing the importation of that timber? If it did they would be left in the hands of the Maryborough sawmillers, and the northern portions of the colony would experience the same thing that they experienced before the New Zealand importations began—as described by the hon. member for Rockhampton; there could not be the slightest doubt about that. The Minister for Lands had told them about a sawmill that was being erected, and his remedy for the state of things predicted by the hon. member for Rockhampton was, “Build more sawmills.” If they put a tax on timber they would be doubly taxing the people of the North. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that there was a large amount of timber in the North, and spoke about a few islands having been applied for under special leases. He should like to know where the islands were. He knew a good deal about the coast and the islands, and he knew that most of the timber had been taken off them. There were islands within thirty or forty miles; but they had been denuded long ago. The hon. gentleman also spoke of a river between Bowen and Townsville. The only one was the Burdekin, and the hon. gentleman would not find much pine there. He must have been mistaken. No doubt there was pine in the scrubs behind Cairns, but it was inaccessible, like the cedar—waiting for the floods that did not come or for the railway that was not begun. That was the condition of things. There was a sawmill at Cairns, and that mill was using as much of the accessible timber as could be obtained. He had not the slightest doubt that the action taken by the Committee that night would have a very serious effect with regard to the separation movement. The hon. the Premier knew very well that there was a strong cry for separation existing in the North, from Cape Palmerston right up to Cape York, and the action of the Committee would forward the interests of the separatists. The people up there would be convinced, from their action in imposing duties upon machinery and timber, that they had no regard for their interests. The duties upon timber and machinery would only benefit one district, and that was the Maryborough district. They could not possibly benefit any portion of the North, as it was well known by every member in the Committee that nearly all the machinery used north of Rockhampton, and including Rockhampton, was imported, and the greatest portion of the timber was imported timber. Therefore, for the sake of benefiting the people of the Wide Bay district, who were now being very well coddled—much better coddled than the sugar industry was—they were imposing an inequitable tax upon the people in the northern part of the colony.

Mr. SHERIDAN said Maryborough had been so frequently mentioned in connection with the timber duty that one would suppose it was the only town or district in the colony in which there was a sawmill. He knew that there were at least four large sawmills in full swing, and some of them working night and day, in Brisbane; in Bundaberg there were one or two sawmills; in Rockhampton there was one; he believed there was one at Bustard Head, and the hon. member for Townsville had told them there was one at Cairns. Therefore, Maryborough had not a monopoly, but had a fair contest in the trade. He was proud to hear Maryborough so frequently mentioned, but it should be mentioned with greater fair play.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member for Blackall had spoken of the high rate of freight

that had to be paid on New Zealand timber. The sawmillers here had a great chance against the New Zealand men on that account. He could tell the Committee that a great deal of timber—scantling—could be put on board the ships at New Zealand at a cost of 6s. per 100 feet, but it cost 6s. in freight to bring it here.

Mr. JORDAN : No : 4s. 6d.

Mr. KELLETT said he thought he knew as much about it as the hon. member who said “No.” If the sawmillers here could not compete with the New Zealand timber paying an *ad valorem* duty, and a duty for freight equal to two-thirds of the cost the sooner they gave up the sawmill business the better.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said the hon. member for Rockhampton had made some misleading statements to the Committee, and with all due deference to the hon. member's superior knowledge he believed it was his duty to correct him. He stated that the additional tax would amount to 3s. 6d. per 100 feet, and he made it up in this way : The duty proposed was 1s. 6d. per 100 feet upon dressed timber—inch timber; the duty would be the same on half-inch timber, and the hon. member therefore said it would really amount to 3s. on half-inch timber, and to that he added the 6d. *ad valorem* duty, making it 3s. 6d. But the proposed new duty would be substituted for the *ad valorem* duty; half-inch timber was always charged the same as inch timber, and would only have a duty of 1s. 6d. per 100 feet, and as there would be no *ad valorem* it would be reduced to 1s., so that really the duty would be 1s. per 100 feet, and not 3s. 6d. as the hon. member put it. There was a reduction of 6s. upon the price of timber three or four years ago, and the reason for the high price at that time was because there was no one then embarked in importing it. The whole of their supplies were drawn from the local mills, and they combined to keep up the price. He had himself imported timber from New South Wales, and the freight he paid for it was 3s. 6d. per 100 feet; and dressed timber landed here cost about 14s. Some eighteen months ago he got a couple of shipments, but it was not in his line of business, and upon the mills reducing their prices he left it in other hands. If the mills combined again in the same way he was prepared to import again, so that the working man would get his timber at a moderate rate. The working man only built once in a lifetime, as a rule, and could well afford £2 or £3 additional for his house. He thought the tax would not fall upon the working man. A royalty had been put upon their local industry, and it was only fair to tax the imported article in an equal ratio.

Mr. SMYTH said the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, was very ignorant of the way in which timber was got in New Zealand and Queensland. He certainly did not understand the difficulties which the timber-getters in Queensland laboured under. The hon. member told the Committee that timber scantling could be put on board ships in New Zealand at 6s. per 100 feet. Why, they could not buy timber in the log for 6s. per 100 feet here; they had to pay from 7s. to 7s. 6d. per 100 feet for timber in the log in Queensland. He knew that some timber supplied to the mills in Maryborough had to be drawn for twenty-six miles by teams. He was at Lowood, some distance above Ipswich, some time ago, and he found that they were bringing pine to Brisbane from there after drawing it for a long distance with teams. There were very few places in Queensland where they could get timber so easily as it was got in New Zealand. One acre in New Zealand carried as much timber as ten acres did in

Queensland, and in addition to that the timber was easily got at, and there was water-carriage for the logs in many instances. As to what the hon. member for Rockhampton had said about Maryborough sawmillers, he could tell the Committee that they were the people who first imported the New Zealand timber into the North, and it arose in this way: The largest sawmillers in Maryborough were Messrs Wilson and Hart, and some time ago their mill was unfortunately destroyed by fire, and they had to supply their customers in the North the best way they could, and in order to do so they got timber from New Zealand; and a very bad job it was, because it introduced a new business into the colony which had existed ever since.

Mr. MOREHEAD: It was a bad job for themselves, but not for the colony.

Mr. SMYTH said that the price of timber would not rise because of the proposed tax at all, but the effect would be that a great many idle mills would be started again. There were a number of mills idle at Maryborough; there were Johnstone and Manchester's mills at Bundaberg working short-handed; at Baffle Creek there was Mr. Skyring's, and there was a mill at Rockhampton, for which the proprietor was getting timber from Percy Island. Looking at it from a reciprocity point of view, why should New Zealand send timber here at a cost of 5½d. per 100 feet and charge 2s. per 100 feet upon Queensland timber? They excluded the Queensland timber, and why should Queensland not meet that by charging a proportionate duty upon New Zealand timber? There had been splendid sawmilling machinery erected all over the colony when there was a bit of a spurt some time ago in the timber trade. The mills could not supply all the timber that was wanted in the North—Mackay, Rockhampton, and other Northern towns. But the demand had not been kept up, and many of the mills then started were now idle. They had got the timber and they had got the machinery to work it, and he was quite sure that the price of timber would not rise because of the proposed tax, and even if it did rise they could fall back again on New Zealand.

Mr. KELLETT said that members who ascribed ignorance to others had only lately learned their trade themselves; at all events he found that was mostly the case. He knew just as much about what timber cost in the log and for carriage, both here and in New Zealand, as the hon. member for Gympie did.

Mr. SMYTH: Well, tell us.

Mr. KELLETT said that the hon. gentleman was in the trade and he could find out for himself. He (Mr. Kellett) had to pay for his experience, and he did not give his information for nothing. His main object in rising was to reply to the remark of the hon. member for Moreton, that half-inch timber was always charged the same as inch timber. He did not know what the builders charged, but he did know that the imported timber of those dimensions was not sold at the same price. He was astonished that a gentleman who had been in the trade for some time did not know it. If the hon. member had dealt in imported timber he must have known it, or else some of his clerks who bought for him had put down the wrong figures.

Mr. SALKELD said that judging from the remarks of Ministers they looked upon the import duty on timber as a complement to the royalty that had been placed on timber taken from Crown lands. Some hon. members had argued on the assumption that the royalty was a tax, but such was not the case. It was no more a tax than the rent charged to a squatter or the use of the grass on his run.

Those who paid the royalty got a return for it—they got timber off the Crown lands. He saw no reason why the State should not have some return for its timber. Whether the plan adopted was the best one possible he did not know; at any rate, he was not prepared to suggest a better. The timber on Crown lands belonged to the entire colony, and no one had a right to take away a valuable article belonging to the colony without paying for it. When the Government first intimated their intention of increasing the duty on imported timber—although he was then interested in sawmills—he did not look upon it as fair, nor did he now. The tax on imported timber was, he thought, a mistake. Although not now interested in sawmills he did not look with any favour upon putting an import duty on timber. He scarcely followed the hon. member for Rockhampton in his figures, but he understood him to say that the import duty of 1s. 6d. per 100 feet would increase the price of timber 6s. per 100 feet. He could not see how the hon. member had arrived at his conclusion. In the case of a house taking 8,000 or 10,000 feet of timber, the additional tax would only amount to from £5 to £7 10s. The increased tax would benefit only one class, and a very small class—the sawmill proprietors—while it was adverse to the interests of the great mass of the population in the North, and in an especial manner adverse to the interests of the working classes in the South. His experience was that timber imported from New Zealand did not compete with the first-class timber of Queensland. The firm with which he was until lately connected could sell in Brisbane as much first-class Queensland timber as ever they could get, and more; but they found that the imported article interfered with the second-class timber, and all the sawmills in Brisbane had had the same experience. Anybody reading the *Telegraph* lately might have seen 150,000 feet of dressed timber advertised at 12s. 6d., while rough pine was selling at 15s. to 16s. per 100 feet. The reason for that was that the New Zealand timber was competing with the inferior timber of Queensland. By far the larger part of the New Zealand timber was used in houses costing less than £200 to build. Hon. members could see what that meant; it meant that the tax would fall almost entirely on the working classes, who could not afford to build houses costing more than £200 or £250. The tax might not be a very heavy one, but it was the working man who would have to pay it. Hon. members on the other side had talked a great deal about taxing the poor man's beer, and robbing him of it. From his (Mr. Salkeld's) standpoint, the less beer the working men consumed the better for them. That, in any case, was not a very heavy tax for the working man to bear, even if it should fall upon him. But the tax on imported timber would be a more serious one, and it would fall almost entirely upon the working classes. It would scarcely touch the rich, because they would have no New Zealand timber put into their houses; they would have only the best Queensland timber. The hon. member for Townsville had referred to a matter which, though some hon. members might deem it trivial, he considered was a matter of some importance—namely, that the imposition of the tax would give strength to the cry for separation in the North. He did not intend to discuss the subject of separation on the present occasion. As soon as a decided majority of the white inhabitants of the North demanded separation in a clear and tangible form they would get it, and not before. Certainly he should not raise his voice against it. It might turn out to be a bad thing for the North, and more than probably it would not be a good thing for the South. It was unfortunate, therefore, that at the present juncture

any action of Parliament should have the appearance of pressing harshly upon the North, and he regretted that the Government had seen fit to propose the tax on imported timber. The object of the Government ought to be, as the hon. member for Blackall said, to encourage men to get homes of their own. A man who had a home of his own, all other things being equal, was a better citizen than one who had not. Such a man had a stake in the country; he took an interest in its welfare; he was not a mere bird of passage, and it was to the interest of the entire community that as many people as possible should live in their own freehold homes. The tax might be a small one—£5 perhaps on every house put up—but its tendency was in the wrong direction. He wished that the hon. the Treasurer had seen something else that he could impose a tax on that would fall more equally upon all classes of the community.

Mr. BAILEY said that during the debate two classes of men had been spoken of as being affected by the tax—namely, those who wanted to build small houses, and sawmillers; but he would like the Committee to know that there was another class of men who were far more interested in the question than either of those. He referred to the timber-getters of the colony. The country owed a debt of gratitude to those men which no ridiculously small tax like that proposed would ever repay. Who were the pioneers even of the district around Brisbane but the timber-getters? Who were the pioneers of the Mary River in the olden times, when it was almost dangerous to go up it, but the timber-getters? Who had opened up the northern districts, pioneered them, but the timber-getters, and, alongside of them, the gold-miners? The gold-miners and the timber-getters had been the real pioneers of the colony, and now it was advocated that they should sit upon them and refuse them a small modicum of justice by which they would be given, not freetrade but fair trade as between this and the other colonies. If the timber-getters of this colony sent timber to the other colonies it was taxed the moment it arrived there, but when men there sent timber to Queensland it was to be admitted duty-free in order that mechanics and others should be able to build houses about £2 or £2 5s. less than they otherwise would. He thought it was a most monstrous proposition—that the colony should be so ungrateful to the men who had been almost the makers of it—who had been the pioneers of the whole country. They did not ask for any concession—any extra taxation. They only said that if they sent timber to New South Wales or the other colonies, and the Government imposed a duty upon it, when the New South Wales people sent timber here it should be treated in the same manner. They said, "Let us have fair trade between the colonies." He was very glad to hear certain hon. members who were connected with the building trade or with sawmills say that inferior New Zealand timber, as it had been styled, was not going to be imposed on the working classes of the colony. He hoped that when a working man built a house he would build it of good substantial Queensland timber that would not be rotten in three or four years; and if even by imposing the proposed tax they could secure that, he thought that tax ought to be placed on that rotten imported article. He hoped that the Committee would agree to the proposition of the Government. It was not a question of protection at all, but one of fair trade between the colonies, and it would do some little benefit to a class of people who were deserving of some amount of favour at their hands. Therefore he hoped it would be granted.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Wide Bay was the champion of the publicans

and also of the timber-getters, but he knew very little about the question or he would not have made the remarks he had. For one timber-getter the hon. member could find—he (Mr. Salkeld) was now speaking for the West Moreton district, and he believed that his remarks would apply to other districts—for one timber-getter the hon. member could find who had opened up new country and was now getting timber, he could find twenty who had never opened up any country whatever. Then with regard to his remarks about New Zealand timber, he (Mr. Salkeld) had not heard any hon. member speak of that timber as being rotten. What he himself had said was that it competed with second-class timber here—not that it could compete with our first-class timbers. He believed that the hon. member for Wide Bay did not know anything at all about it. If the working classes could not afford to pay 20s. or 23s. per 100 feet for timber, and if they could get timber that would answer quite as well, but might not be so nice, for 15s., why should they pay the higher price? Every man could not live in a house that cost £500 or £600. £100 or £200 was the most that some men could afford for a house, and they might be quite as good citizens as the others although they lived in such houses.

Mr. ANNEAR said, from his experience, he quite agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay, that the timber-getters of that district had been the pioneers of it. He wished to say a few words in reply to the hon. member for Townsville, who seemed to think that the whole work that had been done in the Committee that day was done absolutely for Maryborough and nowhere else. The hon. member also seemed to infer that if new sawmills were erected they would have to go out of the colony for the machinery necessary to work those mills. Well, he had been at the erection of many sawmills, and he wanted to show that the tax was not for Maryborough only. Most of the machinery for the last sawmill that he was at the erection of was made by J. W. Sutton and Co., Brisbane. Smith, Forrester, and Co., Evans, Anderson, and Co., and other firms could make sawmill machinery; and therefore they had not to go out of the colony for any machinery for sawmills, with the exception of the saws; the whole of the rest of the machinery could be manufactured here. He had been in the building trade for some time, and what had been stated by the hon. member for Stanley was certainly information to him—that half-inch timber was not charged as inch timber. He had never yet seen half-inch boards that were not charged for as inch timber, and he had paid thousands of pounds for timber while engaged in the building trade. He had no fear about the machinery duty. He would like to know what a "machine" was? A pen, he believed, was a machine; there was a duty upon that. If a man went into a shop and bought a shovel for which he paid 5s., there was a duty on that. If he bought a pick, there was a duty on it; and he (Mr. Annear) did not see why those who could spend thousands of pounds in erecting very large plants of machinery in the colony, could not afford to pay a duty of 5 per cent. just as well as the engineer, carpenter, bricklayer, mason, or labourer, who had to pay duty upon every tool that he purchased for the carrying out of his trade. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Townsville, and should not vote for the imposition of 1s. 6d. on timber. He spoke strongly against that the other night, and he thought that the hon. member for Rockhampton had given the true history of what took place some years ago in Maryborough, when some

sawmills were shut up. Those mills would never have been shut up had a judicious price been placed upon timber, or had the people who conducted them been of that business character that they ought to have been at the time. It was in consequence of their action that people were forced to go out of the colony and obtain timber elsewhere for carrying out their buildings.

Mr. KELLETT said he wished to say one word in reply to the hon. member for Maryborough, who had stated that he had never heard of timber being charged for at less than an inch. No doubt the timber was sold as inch timber, but it was sold at a reduced price per foot, which amounted to the same thing. The hon. member for Ipswich, who knew a little about sawmill selling of timber, was quite aware that what he had stated was correct.

Mr. FERGUSON said he rose to correct the hon. member for Moreton, who had expressed surprise at his remarks with regard to the thickness of timber. Of course they all knew what superficial measurement was, but the standard measurement was an inch, and half-an-inch simply amounted to one-half the quantity of timber. He knew very well that in shipping timber, if it was half-an-inch the freight was only one-half of what it would be on inch timber, because only half the space was occupied. It stood to reason that if there was only half the timber only one-half would be charged for. Half-inch timber could not be charged at the same price as whole inch. If that were the case, they could reduce timber to a quarter of an inch, and charge the same price as for inch. If veneering came to the colony was that to be charged at the same rate as wood an inch thick? because they could get a dozen slices in an inch, sometimes more. If that principle were carried out the duty would be sometimes 5s. or 6s., and more in certain cases. The wharfage on half-inch timber was only half, the cartage and freight were only half, and the price was less according to a certain scale; they could not treat half-inch timber the same as timber an inch thick. As for quality, the New Zealand timber was far superior to the Queensland timber, especially for outside work. He would rather have colonial pine for inside work, but when it was exposed outside it was the worst timber they could get in any house. He found that the specifications for Government work prescribed the use of kauri pine to a large extent, and the same Government were now going to put a duty on that very timber.

Mr. PALMER said he thought that if the Minister for Lands were to extend his travels to the North during the recess he would not make the statement again that the timber in the North was enough to supply the whole district. That was news to him (Mr. Palmer), although he travelled up and down nearly every year. If it were so, why should the Government stipulate that the sleepers for the Cooktown railway should come from Maryborough? The report on the Cloncurry railway advocated that iron sleepers should be used on account of the scarcity of timber. He believed there was timber about Cairns, but it was very difficult to get at, and he did not think even the opening of the railway would make it accessible for the wants of the North. The remarks of the hon. member for Gympie with regard to the timber duty in New Zealand were fully answered by what the hon. member for Mackay had said with regard to the sugar duty, that it did not make the slightest difference to the sugar-growers; and the duty in New Zealand would not have any effect on the timber-getters there. There was not the slightest likelihood of timber being shipped to New Zealand from Queensland. He hoped

the Colonial Treasurer would soften his heart with regard to the timber duty; his heart was as hard as Pharaoh's, which took him into the Red Sea before he saw that he was wrong. He trusted the hon. member would consent to remit the duty, or it would be a very heavy tax on persons desirous of building houses for themselves. He supposed it was very little use talking against it as the vote was sure to be carried; but he believed a day of reckoning would come when they would be very sorry that they had carried it.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought that what had been said with reference to the proposed duty falling upon the poor man was a mistake; it would fall more on the builders. The junior member for Rockhampton had told them that timber was bought up and houses built and then sold to the poor man. Most of the timber coming into the colony was so used, and there would be no harm in taxing the parties who applied it in that way. With reference to the timber up north he believed that there was as much timber there as would supply the northern part of the colony for many years. He knew for a fact that there was a great deal along the Johnstone, and along the proposed line of railway to Herberton. He did not think the duty would be a hardship to the poor man, but it would be a protection to a certain extent to the timber-getters, who felt the opposition long before the royalty was put upon the timber. He thought that royalty was another reason why the tax should be put on importations.

Mr. BLACK said he did not expect to receive any sympathy in the matter from any of those hon. gentlemen who represented what was known as the "Wide Bay bunch." Not only the proposed tax on imported timber, but also the tax upon machinery, was to a very great extent imposed for the purpose of benefiting that portion of the colony. He agreed with his hon. friend the member for Townsville, that when the northern portion of the colony ascertained that at one fell swoop taxes had that evening been put on the industries of the North to a very much greater extent than they were going to tax those of the South, it would do an immense amount of good to that movement, which he wished every success—the separation movement. The hon. member for Ipswich—Mr. Salkeld—referring to that matter, no doubt expressed his candid opinion when he said that the movement should be granted if the majority of the North wished it. That was beside the question just now, perhaps; but, as the hon. member had stated his opinion that he thought it would be a bad thing for the North and also for the South, he wished to put on record his opinion that it would be a very good thing for both of them—neither would the South suffer nor the North. On the contrary, he believed the South would progress very much more rapidly if they had only their own affairs to understand and attend to. He assumed they would understand their own affairs, and they would leave the North to manage their own affairs, which they understood a great deal better than the people of the South. To show what the effect of that evening's taxation would be on the North he would just quote one or two facts to that Committee. The value of the sugar machinery alone, according to the last Government statistics that were available, amounted to £171,729, and he need hardly say that the whole of that went into the North. The value of the quartz machinery—and they had been told by the member for Gympie that the whole of the Gympie machinery was manufactured in Maryborough, and therefore the mining machinery that was imported also went into the North—

was £32,961; making a total of a little over £200,000 for machinery imported solely for the North; and assuming that the progress of the North was likely to be the same in the future as in the past, it meant that additional taxation had been imposed to the extent of £10,000 on the North, without any corresponding duty being imposed on the South; and he was perfectly certain that when that became known in the North—as it would undoubtedly after the speech of the member for Townsville—they would see what it meant being at the mercy of a Queen-street Ministry, such as they had, the only member of which who represented the North was the Attorney-General, who had been absent from the Committee that night when a matter seriously affecting the interests of his constituents was being debated. He, knowing that that matter was before the Committee, had carefully avoided being present to record his vote. Holding the views he (Mr. Black) did with regard to the separation movement, he felt it his duty to let it be known how very little the North would get so long as they were at the mercy of a purely Queen-street Ministry.

Mr. NORTON said he had listened that night to the debate that had taken place, in connection with the timber duty, with a great deal of care, because he hoped that from amongst the various speakers they should hear some real reason for the duty being imposed. Now, the real reason the duty had had to be imposed had been almost lost sight of. When the Land Bill was passed last year, they were led to suppose that a very large revenue would be derived from it, but when that Bill became law the Ministry began to discover that they had made a mistake, and in order to raise the revenue from the land they immediately imposed a royalty upon timber. The royalty which was imposed under the first regulations met with the strongest objection by all people connected with the timber trade in the colony. The excitement, he believed, was greatest in the town of Maryborough and district, and it was so great that, at the time the Premier was there and was being entertained at a banquet, those connected with the timber trade were amusing themselves by burning the Minister for Lands in effigy outside. The result was that the Government took into consideration the position somewhat seriously, and it ended in the royalties being reduced by one-half. Now, the only sound reason which had been given for imposing that duty was because a royalty had been imposed. They knew from Ministers that the revenue to be derived was not to be taken into account, and, further than that, there was not the slightest belief in the necessity of imposing a duty on imported timber. Before those royalties were imposed there was a meeting in Maryborough of timber-dealers, and it was proposed to ask the Government to impose a royalty on imported timber—and what was the result? The proposal was ridiculed all over the colony. He did not know whether it was ever seriously made to the Government, but at any rate the matter was discussed, and the result was that a resolution was passed to the effect that it would be desirable to impose a duty on imported timber. Since the royalty was imposed, then there became something like a substantial reason for imposing a duty, and that was how it originated. Now, he would point out that the whole trouble commenced with a bungle on the part of the Government. They made a mistake in estimating the return they expected to get from the Land Act, and to obviate that difficulty they imposed a timber royalty which they had to revise and reduce, and now, in order to rectify that, they had come down as far as they could without doing the correct thing, which

would be to abolish the royalty. They were obliged to ask the Committee to consent to the imposition of a duty. That was the whole secret of the matter, and it had been shown by hon. members who had spoken on both sides that the timber duty was an exceedingly objectionable one. It was one which would act unfairly, and would not benefit the timber-getters, but would benefit the sawmillers and those who were connected with the timber trade, but not the business of getting timber. Those were the men who would benefit by it. The public would be at a loss, and the timber-getters would be at a loss. He would point out that what led to the introduction in the first place of imported timber was this: The country was in a very prosperous condition and throughout the colony there was a great demand for building material. The demand was so great that the mills could not comply with the orders as they came in; and, taking advantage of the demand, the principal sawmillers in Maryborough and Brisbane combined, and put up their prices until they became so high that there was an inducement to import timber from outside, which would never have been imported if they had maintained something like a fair price all through. They took advantage of the position of the colony and the great demand which existed, and now the consequence was that a greater evil had befallen them, and that was the introduction of foreign timber. It was through their own desire to make the most they could at the time that the demand was so great that the importation commenced. The duty had been imposed because of the royalty, and now, in order to try and remedy the two troubles which had arisen, the Government had come down to the House and asked them to consent to imposing a duty. Well, he objected to the duty altogether. Of course there was no use objecting when there was a majority against the objectors, except for the sake of protesting and entering a most decided and emphatic protest which would be recorded in the pages of *Hansard*. They had heard a great deal about the timber industry that night, but he thought hon. members on both sides had wandered rather a little from the subject, but considering the discussions which had taken place during the last two or three nights that could hardly be wondered at. Of course the question would go to a division, and he was only sorry that there was reason to believe that the Government would be able to carry their motion.

Mr. KATES said that on the second reading of the Bill he distinctly stated that he was opposed to the imposition of a tax on machinery and timber, and he meant to adhere to what he then said. He intended to oppose the tax on timber for three reasons, the first of which was that it would fall on the labouring man, who was not able to build a brick or stone house, and would discourage building and injure carpenters and joiners. His second reason was that the Colonial Treasurer had told them that he expected to obtain £3,000 from the duty on timber, and he did not think it was worth while to raise the tax on timber for the sake of £3,000. The last reason of all was that he knew the imposition of that tax would make the Government unpopular, and his vote might relieve them of some of that unpopularity.

Mr. JORDAN said it struck him as a very extraordinary thing that any hon. gentleman should say that a heavy burden would be imposed upon the working man by a tax which was only to raise £3,000. Spread that amount over 300,000 people and how much would the working man be injured? It had been said that the tax would benefit one class only—the mill-owners. When the deputation which he had the honour to

introduce waited on the Minister for Lands, it was stated by a gentleman who had had perhaps more experience in the timber trade than any person in the colony—or, at any rate, was about second as far as experience was concerned—that £750,000 a year was paid away in wages in the timber trade, and that £1,000,000 was employed in that industry. The meaning of the opposition to that tax was this: that whereas New Zealand imposed a duty of 4s. per 100 feet on all timber introduced into that colony—which had an immense amount of timber and could export it at a very low price with a profit—we were to court the introduction of New Zealand timber into Queensland by allowing it to come in duty-free or for next to nothing; and that would have the effect of destroying the timber trade in this colony. Now that a reasonable tax was to be imposed on imported timber the sawmillers of the colony would be enabled to compete with New Zealand. Having put on a royalty, were we to be forbidden to put an equivalent duty on timber imported from New Zealand? It had been said that as much timber grew on an acre of land in New Zealand as probably grew on a square mile in Queensland. In New Zealand the sawmillers could put the sawn timber on board ship for 7s. 6d. per 100 feet, and even less; he had heard recently that it had been done as low as 5s. 6d. per 100 feet. The freight to this colony was 4s. 6d.; so that the timber stood the importer, after payment of freight and duty, at 10s. 4½d. per 100 feet. In this colony pine in the log costs 7s. 6d. per 100 feet. The waste was about 40 per cent., which increased the cost to 10s. 6d., and it cost 3s. more to cut it up into boards. When they considered the amount paid away in wages in the timber trade and the large sum of money invested in the industry, he thought that it would be most suicidal to put a royalty upon colonial timber and not to put a corresponding duty on imported timber. He could not conceive of anything more fair, that as a royalty had been imposed an equivalent import duty should be imposed so as to discourage the importation of foreign timber.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I would ask the hon. gentleman whether he did not support that royalty?

Mr. JORDAN: No; certainly not. I opposed the royalty and said it would be injurious to the timber trade.

Mr. NORTON: You voted for it in this House.

Mr. JORDAN said the royalty had been imposed then, and he now contended that the royalty having been imposed it was proper and right to put on a duty on imported timber. Even if the royalty had not been imposed he thought it would have been right to put a duty on foreign timber so as to discourage its importation. It had been said that the tax would fall on the working man and raise the price of timber. That was not so. The duty would fall on the importers of timber, and they got such a wide margin of profit that he had heard it said some of them had boasted that they could bear a duty of 3s. or 4s. and yet compete with the sawmill-owners in the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that a definite question had been asked the hon. member, and he had to admit that he had voted in the way he (Mr. Morehead) intimated—namely, for the royalty—and that he had spoken against it. That could be seen in the records of the House. "These be thy gods, O Israel!"—the gods the hon. member for South Brisbane worshipped.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no wish to prolong the discussion, but he could not allow a statement made by the hon. mem-

ber for South Brisbane to pass uncontradicted. The hon. member said that one acre of land in New Zealand contained as much timber as a square mile of country in Queensland. Had the hon. gentleman been in New Zealand? He did not suppose he had. There were thousands of square miles in New Zealand that did not carry one single tree, and the heavily timbered country there contained no more than the heavily timbered portions of Queensland. He had seen both. If there was anything in the hon. gentleman's arguments it would be completely nullified by the fact that he himself was interested in the vote he was about to give.

The PREMIER: Question!

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman called "Question," but he thought that if the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville was correct, as he assumed it was, the vote of the hon. member for South Brisbane might be challenged as he had a direct personal interest in the matter.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 20.

Messrs. Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Smyth, Isambert, Jordan, Buckland, Mellor, Wakefield, Foxton, Bailey, Higgins, Stevens, Macfarlane, Groom, Rutledge, and Brookes.

NOES, 12.

Sir T. Mellwraith, Messrs. Archer, Morehead, Kates, Norton, Macrossan, Black, Nelson, Kellett, Lissner, Palmer, and Ferguson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Preamble put and passed.

The House resumed: the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments, and the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1878 AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that they insisted on their amendment in the 4th clause—

"Because it is undesirable and inexpedient to leave in the hands of the Executive Government power to postpone for an indefinite period the commencement of the repayment by annual instalments of the capital sum beyond a term of ten years, which ought to be sufficient for the completion and bringing into remunerative working of any municipal waterworks."

And insisted on their amendment in the 5th clause—

"Because in most instances the waterworks will extend beyond the limits of the municipality, and water rates will be levied on persons beyond the municipal boundary, and it would be inequitable to divert any surplus to other purposes than those for which the loan was originally obtained or to works which would not be for the benefit of the whole of such ratepayers."

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

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS MAN- AGEMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they concurred in the further amendment in clause 6, made by the Legislative Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the adjournment of the House, I may say that after the third reading of the Customs Bill to-morrow, the Government propose to consider the messages of the Legislative Council, and then proceed with the Beer Duty Bill.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not rise to oppose the adjournment; but I think the Premier should cause some steps to be taken

to prevent a repetition of the trouble we have had with the electric light this evening. I do not know whether it was any occult influence exercised by any hon. member opposite that has led to the aberration of the electric light, but it would be better to have no light at all. It is hurtful to the eyes, and I have heard complaints from members on both sides of the House. It goes down very low and then burns brightly, which is very trying to the eyes. I think some steps ought to be taken by those in charge of the engine so that we should not be subjected to these sudden alterations. I am sure every member in the House has suffered from it.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker, — I think the hon. member is quite right. The sooner the electric light is abolished the better. It costs £12 a week to keep those two lights in this Chamber, and so far as I am concerned, gas is preferable. If it cannot be improved upon, the sooner it is done away with the better.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I would not like to agree with the sweeping change proposed by the hon. member for Rockhampton; but I think that some steps ought to be taken to prevent the light from being so intermittent as it has been. It certainly is very injurious to the eyes, and I think that after a few weeks' experience of it as it has been working to-night we should certainly all be blind.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker, — I think it would be a very great improvement if some lamps were put at the front entrance to the building, where the Queen's statue used to stand. As it is at present it is very dangerous to vehicles driving up.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Hon. members are of course aware that the present arrangements are merely temporary. The permanent engines are now in the colony, and are being erected near the Government Printing Office. They are not yet complete, but we have made the best arrangements possible to have the electric light at once. Of course it is very irritating as it has been working this evening, but such things are bound to occur unless the engine is working very regularly. I do not know what was the cause to-night in particular. There is a competent man in charge, and he has been put to a great deal of trouble in keeping the machinery at work, as it is not powerful enough to keep up a sufficient continuous power. When the other engine is ready I think the difference will be appreciated. It would be a pity to condemn the light simply because it has not worked well through the first few weeks of its trial.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 11 o'clock.