Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 15 *October*, 1885.

Questions.—Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Bill —third reading.—Friendly Societies Act of 1876 Amendment Bill — third reading. — Motion for Adjournment.—Pacific Island Labourers Act Amendment Bill—second reading.—Justices Bill.—Supply —resumption of committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. Whether the Government have accepted a tender for the supply of fencing wire to fence back the rabbits?
2. What other steps have the Government taken in the matter?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. W. Griffith) replied—

The Government have received a report from Mr. Humphry Davy, who was specially appointed to visit the country adjacent to the Queensland border, from which it appears that there are at present no rabbits within 130 miles of any part of the border. Under these circumstances, the Government have deferred the acceptance of tenders for fencing wire until the proposed vote for that purpose has been submitted to Parliament.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Secretary—

Have the Government received any communication from Mr. Pietzcker, or any other agent, which would lead them to suppose that direct German immigration to this colony is likely to commence soon, or the contrary?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied—

The Government have not received any official report from Mr. Pietzcker, or any other agent, on the subject; but they have ascertained that by the law of Germany it is unlawful for intending emigrants to enter into agreements in Germany for service in foreign countries. They have also been informed that strong efforts have been made in Germany to disparage Queensland as a field for emigration. Under these circumstances I do not think that direct German emigration to the colony is likely to commence soon.

Mr. KATES asked the Minister for Works—

When does the Government intend to start with the survey of the Warwick and St. George Railway line?

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

Mr. Austin's party is now *en route* from Charleville to Warwick, and may be expected to reach Warwick on the 21st instant, when the survey will be at once commenced.

UNDUE SUBDIVISION OF LAND PREVENTION BILL—THIRD READING.

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

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT OF 1876 AMENDMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

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

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House, with the view of bringing before hon. members the way in which the new Land Act has been administered in the case of the division of the Emu Creek Run. It appears that the commissioner submitted to the board a plan of the division which was objected to by the lessee, and by the advice of the board the commissioner then submitted a second plan, which was accepted by the board, and ultimately the lessee brought in his own witnesses and actually got the land divided according to his own wish, the board setting aside altogether the advice of the commissioner in the matter. What I want to ask the Minister for Lands is whether there is no provision made by which the commissioner can uphold his division of runs by producing certain witnesses who are reliable, so that the Act should not be carried out in the way it has been in this instance? If such a thing happens at our doors what will happen in outside districts, where we have no cognisance of what may be going on? If Mr. Golden, one of the land commissioners of the colony, and who, I believe, has the confidence of the people, is to be set up as a puppet to be knocked down without any support whatever, then the administration of the Land Act will be a farce. I consider that the board ought to prepare themselves with credible witnesses, from the district in which a division is made, to support the action of the commissioner, and then there would be some chance of carrying out the thing fairly. But when the witnesses are all one-sided, when the lessee only brings witnesses, and none are called by the Government to defend themselves and support the commissioner, the Land Act will result in a farce.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member is not quite correct in his statement of the case, inasmuch as the commissioner sent in two recommendations. He recommended, in the first instance, such a division as would resume the whole of the agricultural land upon Emu Creek Run. He also sent in at the same time an alternative plan, which would effect a division in such a way as to apportion the agricultural and grazing land on the run equally between the lessee and the State. The board, in the first instance, recommended the division which Mr. Golden at first proposed, resuming the whole of the land that was fit for agricultural purposes and leaving the lessee a larger area of purely grazing country. That the lessee objected to as an unfair division within the meaning of the Act—which, as hon. members know, provides that the lessee shall be entitled to a fair division of the country according to its average quality—and maintained that he was entitled to have the run divided in such a way as to secure to him a portion of the richer part of the land. The division that he contended for was the same as the alternative division submitted by the commissioner. The board considered it a fair division, and divided the run accordingly, giving the lessee a portion of the richer land and taking a proportion of the grazing land for the resumed part of the run. I do not think they were wrong in their decision. I maintain that they made a fair division of the run. There is no doubt that in the interest of the public it would have been desirable if the whole of the agricultural land could have been secured for the use of the people; but the Act states that a fair division shall be made, and the alternative division submitted by the commissioner was a fair division. It gave to the lessee some portion of the richer land, which was good fattening country, rather than the larger area of purely grazing country which was suggested by the

commissioner, who thought that division would suit the lessee equally well and be better for the public. In reference to what the hon. member said as to bringing witnesses down, I may state that there was no doubt about the correctness of the evidence given. One of the Crown lands rangers who was intimately acquainted with the land was brought down, and his opinion exactly coincided with that of the commissioner and the other witnesses. There was no difference of opinion as to the grazing capacity of the country, or as to what was agricultural and what was purely grazing land. The question for the board to determine was simply whether the lessee was entitled to a fair proportion of the richer land on the run, and they decided that according to the provisions of the Act they should give him an equal and a fair share. The evidence taken throughout coincided in almost every particular; there was no discrepancy in it. I went through the evidence this morning and found that that was the case.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—Touching the division of runs, I do not suppose we shall ever get entire unanimity between the board and its commissioners, but I think that when so strong a case is made out as was made out by Mr. Golden in this instance—by which it was shown that the first division suggested was necessary for the purposes of settlement—the board ought to give a little more consideration to the commissioner's opinion before redividing the run and altering their original decision. The Land Act has for its principal object the settlement of the land. I am given to understand that many people, both in my district and the district further on, have been disappointed by this redivision of Emu Creek Run; that the first division just suited selectors, and now their expectations are disappointed, because they will not be allowed to select land as it was originally surveyed. Seeing that the only evidence produced was on the side of the lessee, I think the commissioner should have been allowed to summon witnesses from the district in which the run is situated to support his opinion. Of course, as I have said, we cannot expect the board always to agree with the commissioner; but when a strong case is made out in favour of the division proposed by the commissioner I think something should be done to uphold his opinion.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is exceedingly improper to talk about upholding the commissioner when the division he proposes is contrary to what the Act says it shall be. The Act provides that when a run is divided the division shall be a fair and equal division, and after reading the evidence in this case, as it appeared in the papers, I think the board have made a fair division. If a squatter objects to take a larger area of land which is not fattening country, and prefers a fair division of the agricultural and grazing land on the run, he is entitled to that under the Act, and it is mere nonsense to blame the board for carrying out the Act. As the Minister for Lands has said—though probably the hon. member for Ipswich thought it was a misstatement—the commissioner submitted an alternative plan in case the squatter declined to accept what was a larger area of country but not fit to fatten his cattle on. In doing that he was carrying out the Act. It is no use talking about upholding the commissioner's opinion, because you might take all the valuable country from the squatters and ruin them. I do not think that the Act contemplated that, or that the Government intended anything of the kind. The board have to their honour shown that they are alive to what the Act intended.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: Mr Speaker,—I should like to be allowed to explain away a misunderstanding which the hon. member for Ipswich seems to entertain about the alternative recommendation of the commissioner. It did not come in after the first; the two were sent in together.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—The way I read this is that there were two lines submitted by the commissioner, and that a third line was adopted by the board. Mr. Deshon declared that "the lessee's last suggestion as to how the division should be made had thus been practically adopted." That is the way I read the whole thing—that the two lines recommended by the commissioner were laid aside altogether, and a third line adopted. That is very evident from the newspaper reports.

Question put and negatived.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL — SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill, sir, deals with two or three different subjects, all relating to the Pacific Island Labourers Acts. The first subject dealt with is the question of the cost of administration of the Acts. It has always been understood that the cost of administration of the Acts should be borne out of a fund made up of contributions by the employers, money falling in from the wages of deceased islanders, and other sources of that kind, but that the general revenue of the country should not be charged with any of the expenses of administering the Acts. Up till recently that fund has been sufficient for the purpose, but lately it has become apparent that it is insufficient, and that if the administration of the Acts is to be continued, either the contributions made by the employers of labour must be increased, or else the country must be prepared to contribute a considerable sum of money annually to support this branch of labour. The other alternative of reducing the expenditure I do not think is practicable because there is not too much supervision at the present time, and I am not prepared to ask the House to go on allowing the men to be introduced unless with at least as effective supervision as there is at the present time. The direct contributions made by the employers to the Pacific Islanders' Fund at the present time are—first, the capitation fee, paid upon making the application to introduce islanders, at the rate of 30s. a head; and secondly, the hospital capitation fee, which is payable in districts where hospitals are established for Polynesian labour, at the rate of 10s. a head. There is a third source of income—the money which falls in from the deceased islanders, which is unfortunately sometimes a very considerable sum. It is a sum we cannot look to as a proper source of income, although we know a great many of the islanders will die. To show the inadequacy of the present sources of revenue, I would call attention to the returns laid on the table of the House this session. By a return laid on the table on the 23rd of July, it was shown that on the 30th June, 1884, there was £10,669 to the credit of the fund, and on the 30th June, 1885, that amount had been reduced to £4,701, notwithstanding the receipt of £10,887 in the meantime. That £10,887 was the revenue; and the expenditure during the year was £16,855. Of course that state of things cannot go on; for in another twelve months the fund would be exhausted—more than exhausted; and the money would either have to be paid out of the general revenue or not paid at all. The number of islanders introduced during that financial year was about 1,800, so that the amount actually received as

capitation money was about £2,700. There is an item for return passages which also swelled the fund; but the amounts paid for return passages are purely trust money to pay for the passages of the islanders home. It must be applied for that purpose, and cannot be properly applied in payment of the current expenses of working the department. There are other trifling amounts, and then come the hospital capitation fees—For Maryborough Hospital, £370; for Mackay Hospital, £1,331; and for Johnstone Hospital, £60. The hospitals are now in working order, and there are no amounts chargeable at present for buildings. These buildings have all been paid for, and of course they account for a considerable part of the £10,000—the excess of expenditure last year over the receipts. I will state how the hospitals stand at the present time. In the Maryborough Hospital district there are 1,300 islanders, the hospital capitation fees on which amount to £650. The cost of the hospital during the last twelve months was £1,835, and the cost of it during the last quarter—June to September—was £600. So that if the cost continues during the current year at that rate the expense of the hospital will be £2,400, whilst the income from capitation fees will be only £650. It was always understood that these hospitals would be self-supporting, or almost so. In the Mackay Hospital district there are 3,400 islanders, producing in hospital capitation fees £1,700. The expenditure during the last financial year for maintenance, without including any expenditure of capital, was £3,133; and for the last three months of the current year the expenditure was £1,343. It is therefore very certain that that institution is not supporting, or anything like supporting, itself. The Johnstone Hospital has only been open for a short time. During July, August, and September of this year, the expenditure for its maintenance was £147, which would represent an annual expenditure of £588. The total number of islanders in the Johnstone district is not more than 600, so that the hospital capitation fees there would not do more than cover half the cost of the hospital. During the year the number of the arrivals in the colony has been very much the same as in previous years—about 1,800. The exact number was 1,781, which, at the present rate of the capitation fee, would give an income of £2,672. The general expenses of the introduction of these islanders, including the salaries of Government agents and inspectors, amount to £8,300 a year. That is what is voted. The actual expenditure last year was a little less—something under £8,000. The contributions towards that amount were less than £3,000. Of course, under those circumstances the institution would very soon break down unless funds were provided from some other sources. The expenses of the Government agents alone last year were £3,557, as against a total income from capitation fees of £2,670. Now, the only other fund available for covering those expenses, besides fines, which amount to less than £100 a year, are bonds that may be forfeited — a thing, however, which fortunately does not very often occur—and deceased islanders' wages. Supposing these were to contribute £4,000 a year, there would still be far from sufficient to cover the deficiencies. Under those circumstances it became necessary to ask the House to take the matter into consideration. The total hospital disbursements are at the rate of £10,000 a year and the total receipts for hospital capitation fees are not much more than £2,500. I will now explain what the Government propose to do. Of course they do not desire to press unduly on the employers of Polynesian labour, but they do think the contributions from the employers of the islanders and the islanders themselves should, as was intended, be enough to cover the expenses of the department. We propose, therefore, that the amount to be paid on the introduction of islanders should be £3 a head, instead of £1 10s., and that the hospital capitation fee should be £1 instead of 10s. That will be sufficient, at any rate, for the current year, although I am afraid the credit balance will be less at the end of the year than it is now. But we must make an effort to make both ends meet. We also propose that all money received in respect of any bond given under the Act shall be paid to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. That is done at the present time, but not apparently in strict accordance with the Act. There are some provisions in reference to the payment of the hospital capitation fees, contained in the 7th section, the object of which is to make the arrangements for the payment of these fees more convenient. At present they are payable every year, but there is no time fixed at which they are payable, and from this great inconvenience arises. The fee will be payable on the 1st of January in every year, in respect to every islander then in employment and a similar amount for every islander engaged during the first half of the year. If an islander's term expires within the first half-year, then only half the amount of the fee will be payable. One-half the fee, or 10s., will also be payable for every islander engaged between July and December. Then there is a provision as to when the hospital fees shall commence to be paid, and it is, that upon the first establishment of an hospital in a district the fee shall be immediately payable in respect to all the islanders employed in the district. These provisions are as fair as they can be made. Then, in respect to the wages of deceased islanders, the present provision is that all moneys due by a master to a deceased islander go into the Pacific Islanders' Fund. Clause 9 of this Bill provides that money paid to an islander before his death and placed in the Savings Bank, or received by the Curator of Intestate Estates, shall be placed to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. As, however, there might be cases in which persons might be recognised as brothers, sisters, or other relatives of deceased islanders according to their tribal law, the clause also provides that the Minister shall be authorised to apply the money in payment of any debts due by the deceased islander, and to pay the surplus or any part of it to any person proved to his satisfaction to be one of the next of kin of the deceased islander. It is then proposed that the money standing at the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund shall be applied to any purposes in connection with the execution of the provisions of the Acts. So much of the Bill is purely financial, and deals merely with the replenishing of the fund and its administration. The next point is the removal of a difficulty which has arisen in consequence of many of the places from which the islanders were brought having ceased to come within the definition of the principal Act. Since the principal Act was passed, some of these islands have been annexed by Germany and others protected by Great Britain. Of course it is desirable that the islanders from these places should continue under the protection of the Act so long as they remain in the colony, and this is provided for in the 5th section. Another subject is dealt with in section 4, which provides for the repeal of the 5th section of the Act of last year. By the principal Act every employer is bound to pay the return passage of his islanders; and it was provided in the Act of last year that in the event of an islander not wishing to go home, and going into the service of

another employer, the second employer should pay the £5 back to the first employer. That has been found very inconvenient, for in many cases the islander has re-engaged for perhaps only three months. The £5 is really a part of the first cost of the islander, and it is thought more convenient to revert to the former system. By the 13th section it is provided that complaints of breaches of the Act shall be determined by police magistrates only, and that no other justices shall take part in the hearing and determining of such complaints. That has unfortunately become necessary. On many occasions complaints have been brought, and the bench has been so constituted that the decision of the police magistrate, who may be considered an impartial judge, has been overridden, and the cases have been dismissed. In fact, in one or two districts it was found quite useless to make complaints: the bench was sure to be full and the complaint dismissed. It is far better that men employing islanders should not take part in deciding cases in which their interests might conflict with their duty. The 12th section makes it lawful for any person to enter on enclosed lands to discover contraventions of the provisions of section 10 of the Act of last year. If those provisions are to be observed, it will not do to prevent anybody from seeing whether they are being observed or not. Proceedings were taken in one case lately, which were of a most arbitrary and unjust character. It was notorious that on a certain plantation those provisions were being evaded. Some men took the matter up and wanted to see if it were the case, and they were given in custody for being illegally on the premises. The bench was composed of a very large number of persons, and one of the men was convicted. However, the result of his inquiries showed that the employers were evading the law, and they tried to screen themselves from the consequences of evading the law by securing that the prosecutor should be locked up when the case against them was called on. They got him convicted for being illegally on the premises, and before he could be released from gaol by paying the fine they brought on the case in which he was the complainant. It was a scandalous perversion of justice; that I have no hesitation in saying. While this matter was being dealt with last year the planters expressed their desire not to employ islanders in undue competition with white labour. In some places the planters have loyally endeavoured to obey the law, while in others their efforts to evade it have been notorious and persistent. The only remaining matter dealt with is one of very considerable importance; that is, to fix a limit to the introduction of islanders into the colony. The date proposed is the 31st December, 1890. During those five years, I expect, great changes will take place in the agricultural conditions of this colony; and that is a sufficiently long time. Although the passing of a provision of this kind does not preclude any future Parliament from altering it, yet it will have this effect: that no one afterwards can complain if the law is not altered in the meantime, for they will be aware of the fact that after that date no further licenses will be granted. It would not do to say that the Act shall cease to be in operation after five years' time, for that would simply mean that there would be no check whatever to the introduction of islanders. They cannot now be introduced except under license, so that the proper way to deal with the question is to put a period to the granting of licenses. While the islanders are in the colony they must of course be subject to the care and protection provided by the principal Act. The date fixed is of course an arbitrary one. The Government, after consideration, thought that five years was a reasonable time. Some hon. members may think it too long, others may think it too short; I think myself that it is a reasonable time. Most hon. members, I believe, have come to the conclusion, as have the majority of the people of the country, that the time is approaching when we can no longer depend upon the introduction of this kind of labour for agricultural work. Before five years are over other arrangements of a more satisfactory kind will, we may safely predict, be made. We shall see some other system of agriculture substituted; agriculture will be conducted by farmers working for themselves rather than by men working in large numbers for absentee employers. I think I have now sufficiently explained the objects of the Bill. The question has, I think, been dealt with in a reasonable manner, so as not to inflict any hardship or injury on the employers of coloured labour, while at the same time protecting the interests of the country; and I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt that the Premier has drawn this Bill in a very careful way, according to his views, and at first glance many persons will feel inclined to suppose that there is nothing of a very extreme nature in it. Those who understand the question, however, will see that there are concealed in it some of the most dangerous principles that could possibly be introduced into a free country. I shall refer to that matter later on. The hon. gentleman says that before these five years have expired the conditions of agriculture will undoubtedly change. I quite agree with him there. The altered conditions of tropical agriculture will be its extinction in Queensland. Whether the hon. gentleman is in a position to show that the small farmers cultivating their own land—who are undoubtedly a most desirable class to encourage—can do without labour, is another question. When the Government attempt to interfere with a very important industry, and with a labour which has certainly resulted in a certain amount of success up to the present time, they ought to be in a position to point out what the alternative labour is going to be. We have heard it stated this afternoon by the hon. gentleman that he has received information that the chief source of indented labour that was to take the place of the islanders—namely, immigrants from Germany—is likely to be of no effect. That is exactly what the planters anticipated. The German Government, having satisfied themselves that the labour to which their subjects were to be indented was labour of an unsuitable kind for them, have taken steps to prevent it. The planters, I may say, entertain that view, and even had the German Government not taken the step they appear to have taken, it was anticipated that the Government themselves would place such obstacles in the way of the introduction of this labour, if the planters endeavoured to secure it, as would undoubtedly lead to the failure of that scheme of labour supply. I know—and the view I hold is held by a great many persons—that the project of introducing a cheap European population to work alongside a higher paid European population must result in disaster. There is no doubt that people of the same colour cannot work for any length of time side by side in that way without such antagonism springing up between them that the result must be that the older established hands in the colony must be displaced by the lower paid class, or the lower paid employés will not keep their agreements; and in many cases I think they would be entirely justified in attempting to break away from agreements made outside the colony for a description of labour which they found to be unsuitable when they came out here. However, we know quite well that this has been made such a political subject with the Govern-

ment—we have been told that it was one of the chief tickets in their political platform, and I know quite well that it is no use to take a vote of this House with the view of having the Bill thrown out; and all I can do, as the representative of a class that are entitled, I think, to a little consideration—perhaps not the consideration that I should like them to get—but they are entitled to a little consideration as being the chief producers of agricultural produce in the colony—I say all I can do is to point out to this House some of the most damaging clauses in the Bill in the hope that, at all events, the good sense of the majority will so amend those clauses as to do as little harm as possible by the passage of this Bill. The first matter the hon. gentleman referred to was the necessity of increasing the revenue to be derived for carrying out the purposes of the Polynesian Act. There is no doubt that the extremely lavish expenditure that has been going on during the last twelve months has resulted in an undoubted deficiency in the revenue of the colony; but I will point out to this House that for sixteen years the revenue from the Polynesian Fund has been found not only ample for all requirements, but has actually every year had an increasing surplus.

The PREMIER: There were no hospitals then.

Mr. BLACK: It is very strange that the department which twelve months ago had a surplus of £13,000 should now have it reduced to something like £4,000. I think those are about the figures. Government statistics are not always very reliable, because from the return laid on the table by the same department, on the 30th September, last year, it appears that there was £13,037 1s. 11d. to the credit of the Polynesian Fund, whereas the return the hon. gentleman has quoted from shows that, on the 30th June, 1884, there was a credit of only £10,669. However, I suppose that can be explained by the different ways in which the different branches of the same department keep their accounts. But, Mr. Speaker, it is monstrous to think that, in order to maintain the hospital system which at present exists—the chief centres being Maryborough and Mackay, there being only a small outlay at the Johnstone—it should require an expenditure of £10,000. It is in the extravagant administration of the department that reform should be made. Let hon. gentlemen look down the receipts to the fund, and the expenditure from it, and I think they will admit that very considerable reduction in expenditure might very safely take place. But this is a department over which this House seems to have no control whatever. We have control over the expenditure of all other departments through the Estimates, but this fund is a sort of sealed book, and there is no control over the administration of the officers, who do not seem in any way responsible to this House.

The PREMIER: The money is voted every year.

Mr. BLACK: The money is spent out of the Polynesian Fund.

The PREMIER: It is all voted in Committee of Supply.

Mr. BLACK: Here are some items: Salaries, allowances, and expenses, head office, and inspectors, £3,398; Government agents, £3,557 19s. 7d. I do not object to the payment of Government agents, if they are competent men. In fact, I would be inclined to pay them much higher salaries than they receive at the present time; but, sir, it has been the incompetency of the Government agents that has, in many cases, brought so much discredit on the colony in connection with this labour. Then I find misappropriation of savings bank deposits of Polynesians. £165 14s. 7d. is charged against this fund. I do not know the details of this, but I imagine it is this: The Government appoint savings bank officers.

The PREMIER: They were not savings bank officers. They were clerks in the Polynesian department.

Mr. BLACK: Well, the clerks appointed by the Government misappropriated these moneys, and the planters are told that they have to pay this misappropriation. That is what it amounts to.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. BLACK: If that is not so, how are the planters charged with the misappropriation? Then there is an item—"Expenses attendant upon return of rejected and kidnapped islanders, £275 7s. 2d." Why should the planters pay that? If the ships, accompanied by competent Polynesian inspectors, bring labour which is not suitable, it is the duty of the shipowners to return those men. The planters have no right to be saddled with an expense of that sort. Then there are items amounting to £740 13s. 2d. for law expenses. The Government institute prosecutions—I do not know what becomes of the penalties—but law costs to that amount are charged against the planters. I assume that, if a planter was able to get a verdict against the Government, the damages would also be taken out of the Polynesian Fund according to this. In connection with the hospitals, I maintain that the management is unnecessarily extravagant. I know that the hospital committee at Mackay have no control whatever over the expenditure. Tenders are certainly submitted to them for consideration, but they have no power to accept or reject them, and I know several cases where provisions could have been got at a very much lower price than they were. Even in the item of sweet potatoes, of which a very large quantity is consumed, the Government accepted a tender at £6 while the planters were paying only £2. The fact is, a fund like this is such a nice fund to operate upon, and there is no sympathy for the planter who all the time has to pay for this extravagance. One clause that has been referred to is the 4th, which it is now proposed to repeal. I think it will be a mistake to repeal that clause, the object of which is this: It was found that islanders who wished to return home at the end of their term of agreement of three years were frequently decoyed and induced to stop in the colony and get adrift in towns by people who thought that they would benefit by having a Polynesian who had been what might be called "broken-in" by his three years' residence in the colony; and offers were frequently made to islanders who should have been, if re-engaged at all, occupied on plantations. They were induced to remain in the country, and bring discredit generally upon the employment of Polynesian labour, because, when they got scattered about, and away from the employ for which they were originally introduced, especially in towns, the friction occurred between European labour and Polynesian labour. The European naturally looked with suspicion upon those men as interfering with the legitimate employ of Europeans. The planter always wishes that the labourers should either be re-engaged or compelled to go home; he does not want to see them scattered about the district in twos and threes; and it was found that if the new employer had to refund the £5 passage money to the previous employer it had the effect of preventing them employing islanders in ones and twos and threes all over the district. That clause has had a most beneficial effect; and it is not

that I am pleading that the previous employer should get the £5, but that the second employer who has not incurred any expense whatever in the introduction of this labour should certainly have to pay something towards carrying out the provisions of the Act. The new employer has, in future, according to this Act, to pay £3 per head capitation fee, and why should the employer who has incurred the expense—who has paid hospital fees for three years, and who has made this Polynesian labourer a more useful man than he was when first introduced—have to pay the whole of the expense, and the second employer be allowed to induce that labourer to go into his service without being called upon to contribute anything towards the administration of the Act? That is a very good clause in the Act, and I know, Mr. Speaker, it has had a good effect, although I daresay that a good many people who have been deprived of, and found a difficulty in obtaining, this labour, in ones and twos, have objected to it. They, no doubt, said, "Why should we, if we only wish to engage these men for three months, have to pay this £5?" That was the very object of the clause: to endeavour to restrict the employment of Polynesians to tropical agriculture and plantations. I think it would be a mistake to repeal that clause, which I know has had a beneficial effect. With regard to clause 6, which refers to the increased capitation fee, the Premier says, of course, that the revenue of the fund is entirely inadequate for carrying out the provisions of the Act. The planters always maintained their willingness to pay all the expenses connected with the labour which they considered necessary for their plantations. That has always been the basis upon which Polynesian labour has been employed, and the planters have always preferred, so long as they could get suitable labour, not to take advantage of cheap European labour, although the Government were prepared to defray nearly the whole cost of its introduction. I maintain that the necessity for the increase of this capitation fee, and the increase of the hospital fees, proposed in the next clause, have not been sufficiently proved. It is the unnecessarily extravagant administration of the department which has given cause for the unnecessary decrease in the amount to the credit of the Polynesian Fund, which in the short space of twelve months has been decreased from £13,000 to £4,000. Of course at the present rate it will be bankrupt in another three or four months. The Premier has pointed out that the expenditure on the hospitals, at the present rate, is £10,000 a year, and the income only £2,500. If so, what is the use of simply doubling the hospital fee? That will not give the hon. gentleman sufficient funds to work upon. If the hospitals were left to local management, under the supervision of the police magistrate, or any other officer the Government might appoint, we should see a reduction of at least 50 per cent.

The PREMIER: They are left to the management of a committee of planters.

Mr. BLACK: The planters have nothing to do with them. Two medical men are employed, and are well paid, whereas there is no necessity for more than one. The planters have no means of reducing the expenditure; they are told they have control, but they have not.

The PREMIER: Why do they not remonstrate?

Mr. BLACK: Because their remonstrances are not received in a friendly manner.

The PREMIER: It is because they have not sent any in.

Mr. BLACK: Not on any subject connected with Polynesian labour?

The PREMIER: Not on any subject of that kind.

Mr. BLACK: I think clause 9 is a very good clause; that is, that the money of deceased islanders, which up to the present time has been paid to the Curator of Intestate Estates, should be placed to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. I think, when we consider the liberality with which the Government have paid all the officers in connection with this department, there are some cases in which they have not been liberal, which I shall refer to more particularly in committee. Where it is known that the children of Polynesians lose their parents, and when it is known that the wages of that deceased parent have been paid into the Polynesian Fund, I think the Government should repay them to any children which have been left in the colony. There is one case I specially refer to, in which a child of five months old lost its mother by death, and the money owing was paid to the credit of the Polynesian Fund, and the Government refused to refund any of that money for the support of the child which was left destitute.

The PREMIER: They refused to remit it to the employer.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman says he refused to remit it to the employer. It was well known that the employer's family were bringing up that child as if it were one of their own, and taking every care of it in the most humane manner. If the hon. gentleman refused to remit it to the employer, why not to the Polynesian inspector? Every suspicion that it is possible to throw upon the employers of Polynesian labour has been thrown by the Government, and they are perpetuating the same system. Clause 11 states that—

"The money standing to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund shall be available, and may be applied by order of the Governor in Council, for the payment of any expenses lawfully incurred in and about the execution of any of the provisions of the Pacific Island Labourers Acts, 1880-1885, or in and about any act or thing done by the Minister for the protection or benefit of any islanders."

That seems plain enough; and I will point out that had this clause been in force when that picnic took place in the "Victoria," the other day, all the expense of that expedition, amounting to some £6,000, would have had to be paid out of this Polynesian Fund. I am not quite certain whether, in the event of compensation being granted to those planters who have been deprived of labourers from New Guinea by the illegal action of the Government, as provided by the Act passed last session, that compensation will not have to be paid out of the same fund if this clause pass in its present shape. But the two clauses to which I take most exception are the 12th and 13th. The 12th says that—

"Any person may lawfully enter upon any enclosed lands for the purpose of inquiring and discovering whether any islander is employed thereon in contravention of the provisions of the 10th section of the Pacific Islanders Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884. Provided that such person does not do anything on such enclosed lands tending to disturb or interrupt any work or manufacture there carried on."

That is offering employment to spies and informers—a class than whom I do not think there is a more despicable one to be found in the colony. It is legalising spies and informers; and when it is borne in mind that of any penalties inflicted under this Bill one-half is to go to the spy and informer, I am sorry to say that I am perfectly certain that we shall have a number of men becoming spies; for in all communities there are to be found men so mean that they will undertake any dirty work that the Government may wish them to do. We shall find a class of

men going about interfering with the legitimate business of the planters, interrupting their work, and rendering the occupation of the planters so hazardous and disagreeable that there is no doubt we shall not see any extension of this industry. I cannot imagine how, in a country like this, any Government could attempt to bring in such a despicable clause as this. Consider, sir, how the thing will work in practice. A planter may pay off a man, but he has no power to order him off his estate. All that man has to do is to say, "I won't go; here is my tent, and I shall stop here; I am going to see how you work your plantation." There is nothing to prevent a man entering my house and going through the rooms to discover whether I am employing any kanaka in contravention of the Pacific Islanders Act. Why, assuming that the provisions of the Act are sometimes evaded, or attempted to be evaded, that is not so harmful a proceeding as legalising these spies and informers. Under the present system a Polynesian inspector, or his assistant, has full power to go on any plantation to see how it is worked, and whether the provisions of the Act are evaded, and the planter is bound to give the inspector or any officer under him all necessary information. Surely that is sufficient without allowing any man to trespass on private property and assert his right to remain there in defiance of the owner! Such a proceeding cannot possibly be justified by anyone who believes in fair play to all classes of the community. But what do we find in the next clause? That after legalising spies and informers, the cases brought on by these ruffians—for I can call them nothing else—shall be tried, not by public opinion, not in the way cases are usually tried, but by the police magistrate alone, who is at the beck and call of the Government; and if he does not give a decision in accordance with the views of the Premier for the time being, what will be at stake? This 13th clause is a deliberate insult, not merely to the planters, but to the whole magistracy of the colony. I would point out that it is not the planters who, as a rule, adjudicate upon these cases.

The PREMIER: Yes, they do.

Mr. BLACK: I have been present at cases which have been heard at Mackay, and I have seen that the planters have kept away from the bench, and the magistrates who have adjudicated in cases in which planters have been concerned were merchants, storekeepers, and others. The planters have carefully abstained from acting in cases in which their interest may be involved. I do not say that this is always the case, but it is the feeling among planters generally, and they deserve credit for it. We have not got to go far to find how a magistrate may be dealt with when his decision on a Polynesian question has not been entirely in accord with the views of the Government. We know what was done in the case of one police magistrate at Mackay and another at Townsville. The removal of these magistrates, two of the oldest police magistrates in the colony, was in consequence of their decisions in Polynesian cases not having been endorsed by the Premier. The Government may deny that, but we firmly believe it. If the bench of magistrates are false to the oath which they have taken to administer justice in a fair and equitable manner, the proper remedy is to strike them off the Commission of the Peace. But having decided to legalise spies and informers, it is a most monstrous thing, and contrary the principle of equity and justice, to say that the cases brought by those informers shall be decided by a police magistrate alone. I say that, however strong may be the feeling against coloured labour, the most rabid anti-coloured labour man would not endorse a principle so opposed to our Constitution as this is. The last clause that I shall refer to is clause 14, which states that—

"After the thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, no license to introduce islanders shall be granted."

That virtually means that we shall have no Polynesian labour after the next eight years. As far as the planters are concerned, I do not think they would regret very much if the whole of the Polynesian Acts were swept off the Statute-book.

The PREMIER: I should think not!

Mr. BLACK: The hon. gentleman is trying to strangle the sugar industry by indirect means. Let him openly state what he intends to do, and not attempt to strangle the industry while, at the same time, he poses as a reformer and a friend of the working man. He is nothing of the sort. We have had nearly two years under the present Government's *régime*, during which they have, as I have said on previous occasions, done all they could to harass that industry. It has been greatly harassed, and is on the verge of extinction at the present time. The planters are now in this position: that, with a good season, such as I am happy to say we are having at the present time, they will be able to pay working expenses; but in the event of a bad season—and we know that bad seasons must come — there is the certainty of a loss. I really do not see how, in view of the fact that the planters have to pay interest on the £6,000,000 invested in the colony, it is possible, with the present low price of sugar and the high cost of production, to carry on this industry in Queensland. I will point out that although we are doing all we possibly can by legislation to drive that industry out of the colony, the other colonies are doing all they can to induce those who formed the industry here to start it there—in the Northern Territory of South Australia and Western Australia. I have seen an offer in writing from the Government of Western Australia of 100,000 acres of their very best land to be selected by the planter, allowing him to use coolie labour or any labour he considers necessary, on condition that within five years the company accepting these terms spend £100,000 and introduce 5,000 immigrants. Now, that is a venture that will have to be made. No doubt those who for the last sixteen or eighteen years have made their homes in this colony here do not wish rashly to sever their connection with the industry and the colony, if they can see the shadow of a hope of being allowed to carry it on on profitable terms; but the experiment will have to be made. We know that none of the financial institutions of the colony will advance a single sixpence on the industry, though it is an industry necessitating the expenditure of a large sum of money. Of course the removal of the machinery will be an expensive item, but we shall have to do the best we can. Provided that the climate of Western Australia is suitable, the terms offered are so favourable that I know some of our leading planters are seriously entertaining the idea, and I hope they will entertain it. If the hon. gentleman could only convince me that by the system he wishes to introduce the industry can be made a financial success, no one in the House would be more ready to assist him than myself; but none of his projects can be proved as at all likely to be financially successful. I hope the House will not look upon this question from a party point of view, as has been the case hitherto with all references to the Polynesian question. I would point out that there was no real necessity—

except perhaps to increase the capitation fee, or the hospital fee—for tampering further with this industry. The mere announcement in the Governor's Speech, that it was proposed further to amend the Polynesian Act, destroyed confidence even more than it had been destroyed before. Those engaged in the industry said, "Good God! are we never to be let alone?" The working men of the colony—and I think hon. members will admit this—are convinced now of the benefits of this industry, and see that under the present regulations the Polynesian labour does not unnecessarily interfere with them. On the contrary, it gives them a sphere of labour which otherwise would not be open to them. I think it is a great pity the Government should have found it necessary to introduce a Bill containing such harassing clauses, and treating the planters of the colony just like a lot of criminals.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend when this Bill goes into committee to look carefully into it. It really appears to me that there is a great deal like what the hon. member for Mackay alluded to—it seems like pouring water on a drowned rat. The industry is thoroughly crushed now. I have had an opportunity of gauging public opinion in a Northern constituency twice during the last two years, and I can fully endorse what the hon. member says—that the working man does not object to South Sea Island labour. He admits the necessity of it to the planter, and he sees that it does not come into collision with him in any other avocation. He knows that the employment of a number of Polynesians means the employment of a proportional number of white men at a higher wage. The bulk of the population of the North object emphatically to the introduction of coolies; they are an unknown evil—if they recognise black labour of any kind as an evil—and the working man prefers to encounter an evil he knows. I agree with the Premier that the supervision should be in no way relaxed. I should have been glad to see in the Bill a proposal to carry the supervision further along—back to the first introduction of the islanders. It is there that the abuses and atrocities have crept in that have raised everyone's indignation—not only here, but throughout the world—and have brought the whole system—and I may say the very occupation itself—into evil odour and bad fame. Supervision is exercised at one end of the line, and the other is entirely uncontrolled. The planters have sinned more by omission than by commission. They should have urged on the Government the necessity of seeing the business right through. I believe a depôt should be established somewhere in a central point amongst the islands, where a Government officer could be put, and a steamer could be sent round among the islands to carry on the trade entirely under Government control. The islanders would not cost the planters a bit more than they do now, got in dribs and drabs in these schooners, which seem to me to be manned by and in the hands of all the pirates, and rascals, and blackguards that exist on the sea. The stories which were abundantly proved showed that the trade could not be permitted to exist as it was; and why should not the Government carry their supervision a little further and see that the trade is properly regulated from the first? I look upon clauses 12 and 13 with the utmost suspicion. I do not believe in the creation of a class of spies and informers. There is a Government Polynesian Inspector, and the white men necessarily employed on the plantations are quite able to take care of themselves, and see that their interests are not interfered with. The inspectors are not cringing crawlers; they are capable men, they enjoy high salaries, and are not afraid of losing their situations, either, if they see the Act violated under their eyes. Men are not of that disposition in Queensland. If a man is a good man he can get a job anywhere. If he is discharged by one master he has only to go to another for a job. A man in Queensland need not be in any fear or trembling of his master. The 12th clause does not only affect the planter. It also provides for spies and informers, who could go into anybody's house, and say "Oh, we are travelling under the Polynesian Act, and are looking for straying kanakas," whilst all the time they might be burglars or robbers. I certainly will not support any such clause as that. With regard to the 13th clause, the Colonial Secretary has his remedy already. If magistrates pack a bench why does he not knock them off the Commission? I say it is a slur on every magistrate in the colony to propose such a clause. Have not I as much right to sit on a case as any police magistrate? I have been a magistrate for twenty years, and whether it was a kanaka or a white man who was being tried, I considered I had a perfect right to sit on a case whenever I chose. I consider that this clause is an aspersion on my character. I have sat on many cases under the Masters and Servants Act as an employer, and never had the slightest exception taken to my position. The law in the "back tracks," too, is just as good as the law in the "front tracks," and not so expensive. I daresay cases have arisen in which injustice has been done, and the Colonial Secretary, in dealing promptly and sharply with these, will find a strong supporter in me. Every member in this House will support him in purging the bench when that is necessary, but a clause like the 13th is unnecessary and inadvisable. With regard to the last clause, I look upon it as a sop to the rabid anti-coolie party. There is no doubt that at the present rate of things the sugar industry will come to an end in eight years, if in the meantime some other means is not adopted of providing coloured or reliable labour at a moderate rate. It is no use attempting to imagine what labour is like in the tropical jungles or in the sugar-cane districts of the North. I have had a considerable opportunity lately of looking into it myself. It is work that you would never get white men to do. It is no use trying to fight against nature. White men would not and could not do the work, and it would be very bad for them if they did. In the canefields, and also in connection with the mills, there is a lot of fiddling, tiddlewinking sort of work, that able-bodied men would not like to do—work similar to what is taken by women and children at harvest time—work that wants fingers, not men. An industry of that kind cannot afford to pay wages at the rate of 30s. or £2 a week, and I trust it will be a long time before a large number of women and children will be found in this colony ready to work for a few shillings a week. It is, therefore, perfectly manifest to me that unless some cheap labour is furnished the sugar-growing industry will soon become extinct. I myself have not personally any direct interest in it, but indirectly it affects the prosperity of the whole colony, and that to an extent which people hardly realise. Every trade, profession, and industry will feel its loss when it is gone.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I have only a few words to say on this Bill. I am sure we all deeply regret the necessity for its introduction. The sugar-planters have always made it their boast that they are willing to pay all the expenses attendant on the Act, and seeing that their contributions to the fund are not equal to the demand made on it, I think it is ample

time the Government should bring a Bill like this down to the House, calling upon the planters to make up the deficiency. I do not think the planters themselves can at all cavil at the Bill. It says that the money which is incurred in the introduction of kanakas and the maintenance of hospitals for them, should be contributed by those who reap the direct benefit of the labour traffic. It appears that the necessity for this Bill has been caused by the establishment of these hospitals. I do not think there is much in the contention of the hon. member for Mackay as to the extravagant manner in which those hospitals are conducted. Looking at the return which has been laid on the table, it does not appear to me that they are conducted in a very extravagant manner. The hon. member mentioned something about £6 a ton having been paid by them for sweet potatoes when other people could buy them for £2 a ton. That is a very small matter indeed. I should like to know how long the hospital committees were paying £6 a ton while the planters were paying £2. I daresay if the matter was fully gone into it would be found that it was for only a very short period during which a contract had to run. All hospitals enter into contracts extending over a certain length of time, and it often happens that while a contract is running there is an alteration in the market prices, sometimes higher and sometimes lower; and in the case of these sweet potatoes I imagine it must have been something of that kind. But these hospitals are managed by a committee appointed partly by the Government and partly by the planters themselves. In fact, they are all planters with the exception, perhaps, of the police magistrate; and they must be as anxious as the general body of planters themselves that the hospitals should be conducted in an economical manner. It is certainly their own fault if they are not conducted on those lines. The hon. member for Mackay made reference, as I knew he would, to the answer given by the Premier this afternoon to the hon. member for Logan. It appears, from that answer, that the supply of labour to be derived from the continent of Europe is not likely to be so great as was at one time anticipated. But the hon. member is not right, I think, when he charges that to the Government. He ought rather to charge it to himself and to those persons who have acted with him. We know very well that from the outset they have placed themselves in antagonism to the Government on this question; and we know also that since then they have been spreading throughout Germany reports which were certainly calculated to cause the Germans to hesitate before they ventured into that employment for which we sought to have them brought here.

Mr. BLACK: That is not true.

Mr. ALAND: With the hon. member for Cook, I do not like the 12th and 13th clauses of the Bill, although no doubt the action of the planters themselves is the cause of those clauses being introduced.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ALAND: We know what action the sugar-planters took in the neighbourhood of Bundaberg; and that, I take it, is the case to which the Premier referred; and nineteen persons out of twenty who read the details in the newspapers must have exclaimed, "Surely this ought not to be tolerated; surely the law will be vindicated!" I presume it was the occurrence of that case which caused the Premier to insert those clauses in the Bill; still, I hope that in committee they will be modified in some way. I have always been led to believe that "an Englishman's house is his castle," and I certainly should not like anybody to come spying about my premises unless he was armed with some legal authority. I certainly should not like, as the hon. member for Cook put it, to have some prowling, loafing person coming into my place to see whether I had a kanaka in my kitchen or back-yard, and was giving him work to do which the law prohibited; but I should have no objection to a legally constituted authority asking in a proper way to be allowed to see whether such was the case. That clause gives a wholesale power which is certain to be largely abused. When the hon. member for Mackay was talking about Western Australia, I was almost led to say that it would not be a bad idea if the sugar planters of Queensland were really to accept that offer of the Western Australian Government, and try their hands in "fresh woods and pastures new." At present, it appears, they can have any amount of coloured labour there that they require. They may enjoy that for a brief season, but the time is coming, even in Western Australia, when the people will cry out against their colony being inundated with an unknown quantity of coloured labour. I shall support this Bill, reserving to myself the right of not voting for the 12th and 13th clauses unless they are modified in committee.

Mr. STEVENS said: Mr. Speaker,—Had it not been for the 12th and 13th clauses, I should not have had very much to say against this Bill. With regard to the clauses dealing with the hospitals I think the Premier has made out a tolerably good case. Those hospitals are provided for the accommodation of a certain class of labour, and the employers of that class might very fairly be asked to find the money for the maintenance of them. With regard to clause 14, some few years ago I spoke very strongly in favour of this very thing. I am still more in favour of it now as I am fully convinced that black labour in this colony is doomed. It is only a matter of a few years, when that labour will entirely cease. As to the 12th and 13th clauses, I shall oppose them to the very utmost. I did not think it possible that anyone, more especially the Premier, could have sat down and deliberately drafted such clauses as those; and I doubt whether anything of the kind has ever before been proposed in any English-speaking country. It is actually repulsive, and the more the clauses are read the more repulsive they must seem. It has been pointed out by hon. members, that under these clauses anyone can enter upon a person's premises at any hour of the day or night, and insist on going over the whole place; and even if it is only confined to the plantations it will make no difference. Who are the men most likely to take advantage of that portion of the measure? Why, those loafing scoundrels who have been knocked off the plantations because they were not worth the wages they were getting. Men of that kind are to be allowed to go on a plantation at any hour they please, and ransack it from end to end! He may go and stay there for a day or a week; you cannot even order him off at any time; and he might be a perpetual curse and annoyance to the proprietor. If it is meant to hunt the planters away at once, I do not think a better means could be devised. I have no doubt from what I have heard that the feeling of the House is that the last clause of the Bill should be carried; but I do think there is no necessity for making things rougher for the planters than they are at the present time. If it were not for those two clauses I do not think I should have said anything against the Bill; but those clauses I shall oppose to the utmost.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the hon. member for Mackay, in speaking to the second reading of this Bill, did so in a very

temperate, fair, and impartial manner. As regards the question of the hospitals, in my opinion the expenditure is very excessive indeed. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, said the saving of £4 on a ton of sweet potatoes was a very small item; but if the hon. gentleman knew as much as I do of the way islanders will consume sweet potatoes he would see that it was a very large item indeed, because when islanders can get sweet potatoes they make them the chief part of their food.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Have you had any islanders?

Mr. ANNEAR: The hon. member asks me if I have had any islanders, and I say no, not being a planter; but I have worked on a score of plantations, and I know the work they can do and how they are treated by a great many of the planters in this colony. And I must say this, as the employer of a large number of mechanics—as many as thirty at a time—that I am confident that the mining interest even has not done more for the mechanical population of Queensland than the sugar industry has done. I shall oppose the 12th clause of this Bill, sir, because I know that there are quite enough spies in the colony already without legalising any more. There are men in this colony—white men—who are so degraded that they will do anything for money; and to say that this House—the Parliament of Queensland—is going to legalise a clause whereby men are to be authorised to go about and spy, and receive half the fine—I hope, Mr. Speaker, that such a thing will never exist, at any rate while I am a resident of Queensland. I must say, sir, that I was very much surprised when I saw this Bill for the first time. I always understood that legislation took place when demanded by the people of the colony—when public opinion had arrived at that head on some important question that the people say to their legislators, "We demand," or "We wish so-and-so." Now, sir, I do not believe that a majority of the public of Queensland—90 per cent. of them—do ask for the suppression of the trade from the South Seas. I think the Government are to be congratulated upon introducing the new regulations under which the labour now comes to the colony, because during the last twelve or eighteen months we have seen none of those cases in the law courts such as we have seen heretofore. The labour is now under proper restrictions; the islanders come here in a proper manner; there can be no doubt that this labour has been of general benefit to the colony. Then, I say, why interfere with it, Mr. Speaker? I think it should be part of our legislation to foster and help our industries as much as possible, especially at the present time, when they are not in a very flourishing state; and taking the Bill as a whole, and especially the clauses that legalise spies and informers, I look upon it as a piece of very irritating legislation indeed. There are some hon. members, sir, who do not know much about the sugar industry—who, if anything in the shape of a black man is mentioned to them, will say without rhyme or reason, "I will have no black labour; I will give no countenance to it whatever." About the time of my election a gentleman connected with a Brisbane newspaper came up to Maryborough, and said to me, "Annear, if you are going to stand for Maryborough you must have nothing to do with the kanakas; you must not countenance the sugar industry," and so on. I said, "Before I give you an answer to that you will have to take a turn round with me and see the factories and workshops here." He did so. I took him to the Union Foundry, where there were 220 men employed inside its gates; I took him to where a couple of boilers were being made, to where several engines were being made, into the moulding shop—in fact, all over the place; and, pointing to a piece of machinery, he said, "What is this for?" I said, "That is for a sugar plantation." I showed him about a hundred machines and articles that were for sugar plantations. I educated that man, sir, to such an extent before he left that foundry that he said, "You are perfectly right; I never knew what was being done until you showed me these things."

Mr. SMYTH: What about your contracts?

Mr. ANNEAR: All the contracts I have done—I can tell the hon. member for Gympie—whether Government or private, I am not ashamed of. They were carried out in a strictly honest and straightforward manner. I can say, sir, from personal experience, that the sugar industry is as great, and has done as much good to the colony, as the mining industry, because we have now a large mechanical population here that we had not before—a population that could never have been kept here had it not been for the sugar industry, and the way in which it has advanced in Queensland. I may say that there was a time when I was a strong anti-kanaka man, but I am one of those simple individuals who live to learn. No man is too old to learn, and he should never be ashamed of changing his opinion when he sees the error of his ways. I do hope, sir, that the hon. the Premier will see his way to strike out the 12th clause of the Bill altogether. The trial by police magistrates of the cases referred to, I entirely agree with; but to make it lawful for a lot of ruffians to go on a man's property to spy about is going too far altogether. We have seen what some men will do; that they will even seize a man's timber to get a few shillings. There are some who would swear a man's life away to put a few shillings into their pockets.

Mr. KATES said: Mr. Speaker,—I really think that the Government have made a mistake in introducing this Bill at this time. Why try to harass the sugar-planters? After the return of the islanders by the "Victoria" we thought everything was settled; and why take this step, especially when we find that under the new regulations everything works fairly well, as far as the planters are concerned? The sugar industry, to my mind, is a very valuable one, and I do not agree with the hon. member for Toowoomba, who said he would like to see the sugar-planters go to Western Australia. I believe that the sugar industry has been very valuable to the colony generally, and of great value to the people in the southern portion of it. I remember some few years ago the sugar-planters of the North used to go regularly every year to the Darling Downs to purchase draft colts for their plantations; and in other ways they have done great good to the residents in the southern portion of the colony. I quite agree with the hon. member who has just sat down, that the 12th and 13th clauses are outrageous. As has been pointed out, the 12th will allow any man to enter upon enclosed land for the purpose of discovering whether there there are islanders on the premises. I think the Government should appoint some official to do that kind of work, and not allow any man to annoy people, perhaps because there is animosity between the two persons. The 13th clause I consider a downright insult to the magistrates of the North. If I were a magistrate there I would not remain so a single day—I should resign at once after such an insult. These men are sworn to do justice between all parties, and it is casting a great slur upon them to preclude them from sitting on the bench in those cases. I have not the slightest doubt that those two clauses will be

rejected—unanimously rejected—in committee; and I think the 4th clause also should be amended. I think that the repeal of the 5th section of the Pacific Islanders Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884 should not take place. I think that the second employers should also pay a certain portion of the expense of importing these labourers. If they do not pay the whole £5 they should at least be called upon to pay half of it. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, and reserve to myself the right to move any amendments I may think proper in committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to detain the House long. I rise principally to point out the extraordinary—I think I may fairly term it—change of opinion that has taken place in the minds of many members sitting upon the Government side of the House, with regard to the labour question. We have heard from the hon. member for Maryborough that he has seen reason to change his views with regard to the expediency or otherwise of employing coloured labour, and many other speeches made by hon. members on that side have tended in the same direction. I am afraid that it is rather late in the day for them to change their views. I regret extremely that wiser counsels did not prevail in their constituencies when the last elections took place, which possibly might not have resulted in the return of those gentlemen, but in that of gentlemen who held then the opinions that those who were returned hold now. The damage has been done, and I may almost say the fatal blow has been struck, and now it only remains apparently for the Ministry who have dealt that blow to add an additional amount of torture. That is what the Ministry are now determined to do, under the 12th and 13th clauses—to inflict torture combined with insult. The 12th clause is certainly the most—what the hon. President of the Legislative Council would call—algerine clause that has appeared in any Bill which was ever introduced into this Assembly or any other. I am informed on very good authority—by the hon. member for Townsville—that it is very much stronger than even the brutal coercive measures which apply at the present time to Ireland. As has been already pointed out, any ruffian may, for some purpose best known to himself, felonious or otherwise, enter the enclosed land of another individual, no matter under what title the enclosed land is held—not necessarily a plantation—and act according to his own sweet will. One clause institutes a system of terrorism, and the other is an insult. Clause 13 insults every magistrate who is entitled to sit upon a bench where any case other than under these clauses may be adjudicated upon. I think, myself, that if a magistrate—an unpaid magistrate—is not competent to sit on cases of this sort he should not be a magistrate at all. I think that is quite evident—it goes without saying; and why it should be proposed by the Government of the day that such a slur should be cast upon gentlemen holding the position of justices of the peace in those localities, I do not know. But I think that if the Government really believe that an unjust decision could be given by those gentlemen in those cases they should be removed from the Commission of the Peace. I do not see why, if they give unjust decisions in one case, they should give just ones in another. Of course, I see there is no use in resisting the second reading of the Bill. With regard to the 14th clause, I agree with the hon. member for Mackay. It limits the time of this employment of labour to eight years. I think, myself, it would have been more kind on the part of the Government, having determined to destroy this industry, to have given it a short shrift, and destroy it right away. It would have been more logical; and, I dare say, more in the interests of the industry itself. I am perfectly certain of this, looking at the change of opinion which has taken place in regard to this question: that if the destruction of the black labour came more speedily, the more speedily would the sun rise on the prospects of the sugar-planter, because it would be distinctly and clearly seen that the industry would never have any prospect of success in this colony without black labour.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope the Premier will not be deterred by any adverse criticism on the Bill. The country has been looking for it for a long time, and I believe it will give great satisfaction now it is before the House. A great deal of objection has been taken to the 12th and 13th clauses, but most speakers appear to have overlooked altogether the proviso in the 12th clause, which says:—

> "Provided that such person does not do anything on such enclosed lands tending to disturb or interrupt any work or manufacture there carried on."

That provides that kanakas must not be interfered with while at their work, and if too much inquisitiveness is shown, which will tend to disturb the peace, the person may be prevented from doing anything. It has been said by several hon. members that they would not submit to such an arbitrary law as the 13th clause, which would prevent them from sitting upon benches in certain cases. The magistrates in various places have brought this upon themselves. The law must be honoured; and if magistrates, who ought to know the law, deliberately set it at defiance, there is no other way of dealing with them than by bringing such a sharp Act of Parliament against them. It has been suggested that they ought to be struck off the Commission; but hon. gentlemen must remember that the evil would be done before they could be struck off. I think there will be no harm done in saying that no unpaid magistrate shall adjudicate in these cases where planters are so much interested. We do not allow publicans to sit upon cases concerning their interests, and the present case is very similar. We should not allow magistrates who are interested in sugar-planting to adjudicate in cases affecting planters, where the district is so mixed up with the industry that if they are not actually directly interested in it they are indirectly interested.

Mr. DONALDSON: That is an insult to every man who sits in Parliament.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I quite approve of the clause. With regard to the 14th clause, like the hon. member for Balonne, I should be much more pleased if the time had been made shorter when coloured labour should terminate altogether. It would be much better for the districts concerned; but I am quite willing to assent to it as it is, and shall offer no opposition to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—It seems to me that most hon. gentlemen are pretty well satisfied with the Bill, with the exception of clauses 12 and 13. I think both those clauses go too far; the former might be well amended by saying "any person legally qualified," etc. There should be legally qualified officers to inspect these plantations, and I take it that they should be the only parties who should do so. They should have some legal authority, and be able to show it when they entered upon a plantation.

Mr. ALAND: They have it now.

Mr. KELLETT: No man should go on to a plantation and inquire what is going on, without some legal document to show his authority. Otherwise there may be great hardships, and a

great deal of trouble, which might lead, possibly, to loss of life. I am sure that a man going to a plantation that I had anything to do with would get into trouble before he went away. As to the 13th clause, I do not take as much exception to it as some hon. gentlemen do. We must remember that at one time all magistrates went on the bench to license publicans, and it was found that that was very objectionable, because the bench was packed, and large numbers of men in this town then took their seats upon the bench who never appeared all the year round until the licensing day. And it was found necessary, even in the great city of Brisbane, to stop that performance and appoint a licensing bench. It was a necessary evil which for some years was allowed to go on in all the principal towns of the colony, but a good change has now been effected. I think, also, that in cases which may arise under this Bill, magistrates interested in the matter would be unsuitable men to sit on the bench and adjudicate. It is very well known that a great number of magistrates, while they may be able to sign their names to legal papers, and were possibly appointed for that purpose, are not fit to sit on the bench. Therefore, I think there is not so very much objection to this 13th clause. Perhaps, however, we might go a little further, and provide that a bench of magistrates shall be appinted in each district to try the cases that may arise under this Bill. If there is any strong objection to one magistrate deciding those cases that might meet the difficulty. As to the 14th clause, I think it is kind to planters, as well as a good thing for the country that some date should be fixed for the finish of black labour. With the amendment suggested, the planters will have eight years from the present time to make other arrangements for a supply of labour. If we allowed the matter to go on a little longer, and public feeling became as strong as it was a short time ago, they might not get half that time. I shall have great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. When we go into committee the necessary alteration can be made in clause 12.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—There is a good deal in this Bill that may be useful, and the proposal to increase the hospital and capitation fees may be necessary. I daresay it is, if the expenditure is to go on as it has been doing. But there are several of the clauses to which I object. I object to clause 9, which provides that when an islander dies and leaves money in the savings bank, that money is to go to the Pacific Islanders' Fund. According to that provision the relatives of a deceased islander—his wife or children, if he had any—have no chance of getting his money, except by the goodwill of the Minister. I do not think such a power should be left in the hands of any Minister. If a man—be he black or white—dies, his relatives should receive what he has left behind as a right, and not be dependent upon the goodwill of the Minister for it. The 12th clause is a very objectionable provision. It would allow any ruffian to go into any premises for any purpose under the pretext that he was looking for islanders. He might be in a place for the purpose of committing burglary, in an orchard for the purpose of stealing, or in the back area for some villainous purpose, and when he is caught all he has to do is to say, "I am looking for kanakas." In fact, under this clause any scoundrel may enter upon a man's premises at any time with perfect impunity. As to the 13th clause, I do not know much about that. Of course, people interested in a case should not adjudicate upon it. Under the old Publicans Act people connected with public-houses were not allowed to sit on the licensing bench, and if this provision was intended only to prevent planters sitting on the bench there would be some justice in it; but as it now stands it is a slur on all the magistrates in the Northern districts of the colony.

Mr. SHERIDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—As representing a constituency in which there are several sugar-planters, I think it my duty to say a few words on this Bill. It is very well known that many years ago, and during a very long period, I took an active interest in the question of the introduction, management, and employment of kanakas, and I have the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that if the advice I gave at that time had been taken there would have been no occasion for such a Bill as we have now before the House; nor would the atrocities that have taken place in the South Sea Islands ever have occurred. I anticipated—I foresaw—all that has occurred, and in the best manner I could I advised the Government to make laws and regulations to prevent such outrages as, I am sorry to say, have taken place. When I was before my constituents one question put to me was, whether I was in favour of kanaka labour or not? I said then, as I say now—that I was in favour of kanaka labour so long as the kanakas were obtained honestly, treated kindly, and paid their wages justly. That was all I asked for them. I have always looked upon kanaka labour as a useful and valuable assistance to the sugar-planter—in fact, such assistance as he could not have got on without; and I must say that my constituents, to a man, approved of my views in the matter. They have always said that, so long as kanakas were not allowed to be employed promiscuously and to enter into the various occupations in which they would come into juxtaposition with white men—that so long as kanakas were employed on plantations, as they were intended to be employed—they were in favour of their being so employed. At present it is a notorious fact that there are no complaints of any interference on the part of the white people of the districts of Maryborough and Wide Bay with kanakas. It seems to me that everything goes on smoothly in those districts. Vessels from Maryborough have no difficulty whatever in getting the number of labourers they are entitled to carry, and with the exception of one unfortunate case, in which there was a gross miscarriage of justice, there has been no complaint of any abuses made to the Government. It has been said by one speaker that hon. members on this side have changed their views on this question. Now, I deny that. I think the same ideas that are entertained now were always entertained by the majority of hon. gentlemen on this side. I am not aware that there is one of them who was really an anti-kanaka man; they only wished that these men should be treated properly. I must say I regret the 12th clause; but I think it can easily be amended by a very few words introduced in committee. With regard to the 13th clause, on the whole I am in favour of it. My experience tells me that it is not well that magistrates should sit on the bench who are in the slightest degree interested, either on their own account or on account of their friends in a case brought before them. No more insult is offered to these magistrates by prohibiting them from taking a seat on the bench, than is offered to wine and spirit merchants by prohibiting them from taking a seat on the licensing bench. The clause is no insult to the magistrates; it only relieves them from all imputation, and leaves the matter to the proper authority—the police magistrate—who is paid for the duty, and who is responsible to the Government. I sincerely hope that the 12th clause will be altered so as to do away with the mean contemptible spirit which pervades the whole of it. I regret,

I say again, that it becomes necessary to introduce such a Bill as this; but it is a melancholy satisfaction to me, because I fought for it.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not understand much about this Bill, but there are one or two questions the discussion has raised in my mind. When hearing hon. members on the other side talk about the sugar industry being ruined, I cannot get out of my mind the fact that we can buy sugar for £15 or £16 a ton less than we paid three or four years ago. If this cheap labour they employed three or four years ago was the cause of the high prices, I say stop it as soon as possible. Sugar can be bought to-day for £20 a ton, that three years ago would have cost from £35 to £36 a ton. I think we are taking a very selfish view of this cheap labour. It would be a very interesting document which would tell us how many kanakas were imported into the colony during the past ten years and how many returned. From the statements in the Press as to the number who die, it appears that we are importing these kanakas simply to enrich a few of the white population, at the risk of these people being really slaughtered in a year or two. I believe that the sugar industry will in a few years redeem itself, and that when it is on a proper footing the planter will be able to carry on his plantation with white labour. It is possible that the plantations will not be so large, and that instead of amassing a fortune in five or ten years they will have to extend the period to ten or twenty years. A man with a large family will be able to cultivate ten, fifteen, or twenty acres of cane, and the industry will be carried on more successfully and with more benefit to the country. I certainly do not care very much about the 12th clause. It might be managed so that it would not be offensive; but I should not like to see a man come crawling about my premises. There ought to be some guarantee that the men are properly employed. I fail to see where the insult to the magistrates comes in in clause 13. If they are insulted by this clause, then magistrates are insulted by the Licensing Bill. In years gone by the licensing benches were packed; I have seen thirty-five magistrates on the Brisbane bench on licensing day, who would not turn up again till next licensing day. The consequence was that the Government saw the necessity of appointing a licensing board and restricting the number of magistrates that could sit on the licensing bench. I take it the same is the case with this Bill—it is seen to be desirable that cases in which sugar-planters are interested should be tried before the police magistrate. I shall vote for the second reading, hoping that the 12th clause will be amended in committee.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no intention of discussing the whole kanaka question, which has been discussed so frequently before, and I shall confine my remarks to the Bill before the House. I must congratulate the hon. member for Mackay on his manly and excellent speech. I am certainly of opinion that most members of this House must be convinced, after hearing the hon. member's speech, that the Premier did not make it clear why the kanaka hospitals should be costing so much more now than they have cost hitherto, and why the administration has become so expensive since the time he has been in office. Last year there was a credit balance of £13,000 and now it is reduced to £4,000.

The PREMIER: The hospitals have only just come into existence.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The kanaka hospitals have been in existence for years.

The PREMIER: No; I appointed the doctors to all of them.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They must certainly be extremely badly managed under the hon. member's jurisdiction. Sixty-four was the average number during September in Mackay, and thirty the average number during the same month in Maryborough, and there was a small hospital recently opened at the Johnstone; and the cost is £10,000 a year for maintenance alone. That is over £100 per head. I do not think the Premier has made out his case at all for increasing the capitation fee, or that he has justified the imposition of the tax on the planters for hospital purposes. Then again, instead of giving the total figures with regard to the cost of administration, and so on, I think, considering the largeness of that cost, he should have given us a more detailed statement of the cost, so as to convince us that it was indispensable. I am inclined to think that the cost in both these cases — the capitation fee and the fee for hospitals—is excessive. If we look at the return placed on the table, under the head of "Pacific Islanders' Fund," we find that the salaries, allowances, and expenses of the head office and inspectors amount to £3,398. Well, I really cannot see what there is to cause such an expense. Why, sir, the expenses are much greater in managing the Polynesian immigration in proportion than in managing the European; and I am quite certain that if the planters who have to find this money had any say in the expenditure, as they ought to have, it would be conducted in a more economical way. I really do not see why any body of men should be sat upon as the planters appear to be sat upon in these matters. They are asked to contribute the whole of the money and they have no control over the expenditure. This is quite contrary to all our opinions of expenditure. Of course our first idea of taxation or expenditure is that there should be some representation connected with it. In this case the only representation is that a number of planters are called a committee, and yet they have no power to control the expenditure. I think they should not sit as committeemen until they have control of the expenditure of the hospitals.

The PREMIER: They have got that.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I really think the Premier has not made out a case for the increase in capitation fees which he has asked for here, and for the increased cost of the islanders. Then, as to the 4th section of this Bill, repealing the 5th section of the Pacific Islanders Act of 1880, I think that is a mistake, and that every obstacle should be thrown in the way of islanders being engaged in any other kind of work than on plantations. I believe that is the policy advocated by the majority in this House, and I think it is the policy that should be pursued by the Government. I think the retention of the 5th section of the Pacific Islanders Act of 1880 would tend in that direction, as—the second employer being compelled to pay £5 before he could engage a man—it would be deterrent, and he would not be likely to engage him. I believe the majority of the members of this House and of the people of the colony believe also that the time-expired kanakas should either be engaged on plantations only, or go home to their own country That provision not having been in force in years gone by has been the great cause of the outcry on the part of the European labourers against the kanakas. The islanders have been employed in towns at every kind of occupation, down even to the nursing of children. The Europeans have, therefore, been perfectly justified in protesting, because they have been directly interfered with in their work by the kanakas. On the other hand, the

kanakas on the plantations are in the most direct manner increasing employment for Europeans. I think, therefore, that the Premier is making a mistake in proposing the repeal of the 5th section of the Pacific Islanders Act. The hon. member for Mackay has put in my hand the Estimates for this year, from which I see that the whole of the expenses attending the European immigration, which is so much larger and so much much more important than the kanaka importations, and which is conducted in a different way entirely, is only £7,665, as against £3,300 for the head office alone of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. Now, I think that before the Premier asks us to increase the contributions made on the part of the planters, he should first say that he will have that office conducted in a more economical way than it is at present. Clause 9 provides that the wages of deceased islanders shall be paid to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund. The Premier, no doubt, has the very best intentions in taking this money out of the hands of the Curator of Intestate Estates and placing it to the credit of the Pacific Islanders' Fund but I think he is making a mistake. I think that in every case in which an islander dies with money to his credit the value in trade of the money he has earned should be sent to the island from which he came, and be distributed amongst his relatives by the Government agent. Such a course would give the people on the islands a high opinion of the justice and honesty of Europeans. Under the present and proposed systems, when an islander dies his people hear no more of him until returning islanders tell them of his death, and they reap no benefit whatever from the work he has performed in this country. It would be much better to do as I propose, and the Minister should not wait until he receives an application from the next of kin. How could a deceased islander's next of kin apply?

The PREMIER: They do it often.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes, if they have kin in Queensland; but if all their kin are in the islands how can they do it? In every case the value of the wages should be sent in trade to the islands, and distributed there by the Government agent to the nearest of kin. That would be the best way to convince the islanders that we are a just race who wish to do them good. On the 12th clause I need say very little. It has been generally and very justly condemned. Some hon. members have spoken of amending it, but I really do not see how it could be amended. Moreover, I see no necessity for passing it. The inspectors have already the power to enter on any plantation or any place where they may think islanders are illegally employed, and I think that ought to be quite sufficient. In addition to that, every white man employed on the plantations is more or less an inspector. These facts ought to have prevented the Premier from introducing a clause of this kind. Some hon. members have condemned the 13th clause; others, again, have spoken slightly in its favour. I believe that what the Premier stated in reference to benches having been packed for certain purposes may be correct, but then it was his place, if he knew that such was the case, to strike those gentlemen off the Commission.

The PREMIER: That is an extreme remedy.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think if he had done that it would have been sufficient to prevent any other attempts to pack a bench. What would be said if a clause of this kind was made to apply generally? This, of course, will only affect the justices in the districts where the plantations are situated. Let us suppose it applied to the Western districts, and that no squatter should be allowed to sit on the bench in any case in which the general interests of squatters were concerned. Or let us come nearer home, and suppose it applied to the merchants of Brisbane who were to be prevented from sitting on any case of offences against the Customs Act. Going further still, let us suppose it applied to every employer of labour who was to be prevented from sitting on the bench to decide on any case brought under the Masters and Servants Act. The remedy for the evil mentioned by the Premier is to strike the offenders off the Commission, instead of insulting the whole roll of magistrates by saying that they are not capable of trying such cases fairly and honestly. With regard to the 14th clause, I think the time is too long. The Premier has decided in his own mind that five years is the proper period at which to limit the existence of this traffic. Practically, that makes it eight years, because a sufficient number of islanders will no doubt have been obtained, if they can be obtained, or if the industry is still in existence, to carry planters on for three years beyond that time. It is just about eight years ago since the Premier was asked to put a limit to the traffic in kanakas, and he has now taken it into his head that it is the right thing to do to give it eight years more. If the hon. gentleman had taken the work in hand eight years ago, before the millions that have been invested in the sugar industry had been invested, it would have been far better for the country and far better for the planters, who are now about to suffer. Even if the limit had been made two years, or even one year, it would have been better. What is the use of keeping these men in suspense, after it has been decided by the Government that they shall be abolished out of existence? What is the use of torturing them after they have been condemned to death? It would be far better to give them the merciful stroke at once, and have done with them. I believe with the hon. member for Mackay that by the end of five years there will be very few planters in the colony, and very little sugar produced in it, so that this clause will practically be a dead-letter. Planters cannot continue to exist under the present conditions. The state in which the sugar-producing districts have got into is well known to people conversant with the work, It is known that the planters have made up their minds to shut up their establishments as soon as they can work off their present number of kanakas and sell their machinery. They will work off their present number of kanakas in the easiest and best way, so as to suffer the least possible loss: but there can be no doubt that they intend to shut up. Why not end the industry at once, instead of condemning those men to a lingering death? The sugar industry has been of great value to Queensland, and but for the mal-administration of every Government, from the initiation of the Polynesian traffic to the present time, it would never have got into the position it is now. If the way in which the islanders were recruited had been properly watched, and if the outrages had been stopped when the first one occurred, and if the islanders had been kept out of the towns, as they ought to have been, the industry would have now been in a state of great prosperity. It is important to know the benefit this industry has conferred upon the colony. We reckon the value of an industry by the money value of the produce of that industry. The statistics published by the Registrar-General show the great importance of the sugar industry as compared with the other branches of agricultural industry carried on in the colony. During sixteen years the money value of the wheat produced

in the colony has been £322,500; the money value of maize, £1,259,700; or a total of £1,582,200. During the same period the money value of sugar produced in the colony has been £5,291,700, or more than three times as much as the other principal agricultural productions of the colony. During the last year of the general statistics—that is, 1883—the value of sugar produced in the colony was £780,700. We all look with pride upon our mining as being a very prosperous industry, and one which is of great benefit to the country; and it employs perhaps the largest number of Europeans in a most creditable manner. Well, the money value of the gold produced during the same year was £740,744, or nearly £40,000 less than the value of the sugar. I can easily understand the argument of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, when he spoke about that Liberal editor who wished him to declare against planters and kanakas during the last election, and said that he took him round the foundries of Maryborough, and showed him all the work that was being done for the sugar-planters. That amount of sugar cannot have been produced without benefiting all the different interests of the colony. The farmers on the Darling Downs have benefited from it, and very largely. Two or three years ago thousands of bags of maize were regularly imported from the Downs into the sugar districts of the North. But the farmers themselves did not know of it; they did not know then that their customers were the much maligned sugar-planters. The timber industry at Maryborough and elsewhere was also benefited to a large extent by these planters. But because the different Governments have not done their duty this most valuable industry is doomed. I fear I must even blame the present Government, although they have been so short a time in office; but half of them were in office before and did quite enough then. I therefore include at least one-half of the present Government as well as all the Governments that have preceded them. I am extremely sorry that it is likely that those planters mentioned by the hon. member for Mackay will migrate from Queensland into the northern territory of South Australia and into Western Australia, but I really do not see what else they can do. Every man must look after his own interest—every man does so—and if the planters find it to their interest—now that they are in such straits in Queensland for obtaining proper labour—to go to the northern territory of South Australia, I believe they will do so. I am afraid that they will find it to their interest to do so, because we have all seen, by the action of the South Australian Government, that they will be provided with the labour that will be suitable for the plantations, and the same thing will take place—or has been promised at least—in Western Australia; and besides that, there will be a protection duty put on sugar, and land will be given for nothing. It is not the first time in the history of the world that people have been driven from their country, to which they were of great benefit, and have gone to other countries upon which they conferred the same benefits. We have seen it in the case of the silk-weavers of France, who were driven into England, and France lost to a corresponding extent what England gained. We have seen it in connection with certain industries in Ireland, which have gone to England, and every hon. member must know instances that have come under his notice in reading where the same thing has happened; and it is about to happen now in Queensland. There is no doubt in my mind that this Bill will be the last straw on the camel's back. I believe that it will be the death-knell of this lingering industry.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not at all.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Some hon. member says "Not at all." I should like it to come about that his "not at all" will be true, but I am afraid it will not be. I have as much dislike to kanakas coming into competition with Europeans as any man inside this House or outside of it, but I believe, as I said before, that the industry could have been carried on legitimately with kanakas employed on the plantations in such a way that it would have been a credit to Queensland and a benefit to the European population of the colony also. Of course it is not one bit of use to try and oppose the second reading of the Bill. No doubt it will be altered considerably in committee, and I hope it will be altered much more than has been indicated by many hon. members who have spoken. I hope that clauses 6 and 7 will not be carried in their entirety, because, whatever may be argued in favour of increasing the capitation and hospital expenses on the planters, I do not think we are justified in going to the length of doubling them. No doubt it has always been understood in this House that the planters should bear the cost of the administration of the Act, but it was never intended that the administration of the Act should be so extravagant as it seems to have been lately. I think when it comes to that this House should consider whether the whole cost should be thrown upon the planters or not. First let them be satisfied that the administration of the Act is as economical as possible, then, if it is necessary that the planters should bear the cost, let them bear it; but until that is proved I do not think it right to place a double burden on the planters.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I believe that the sugar industry in Queensland will live and grow and expand into a great industry, and that it will be a great source of wealth in this colony. We know what we have realised during the last sixteen years, but that is nothing compared to what we shall realise in the next sixteen years from the growth and manufacture of sugar. I believe nature intended this to be a great sugar-growing country. Nor am I opposed at all to the planters. I deny altogether that I am a rabid abolitionist—in the sense of being opposed to the interests of the planters in Queensland. I know that they have established the industry under the sanction of the laws of the colony, and that they have done so with the assistance of black labour; and I would not needlessly or suddenly interfere with the employment of black labour, or in a way which would be a manifest injustice to the planters. At the same time, sir, I believe there is no necessity for black labour in Queensland. I am a rabid abolitionist in that respect. I believe that we never wanted a black man in this colony. I am satisfied that throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen can live and do as much work—more work—than any black man, and that their work will be more profitable. I believe that on any properly conducted sugar plantation one white man will do more work than two black men could possibly do. I entirely differ from the opinion expressed by the hon. junior member for Cook, although he has been in the North, and I have not been—at least, not far—north. He says he is satisfied from his own observation that white men cannot labour in what he calls the jungles of the North. And yet, sir, who is it that does the labour in those jungles? Who is it that fells the cedar? Who is it that carries on gold-mining successfully in the North? We know that it is our Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen; and I am satisfied that the labour on a sugar plantation is not at all more difficult than felling cedar or mining for gold in the Northern districts of the colony. The hon.

member for Cook spoke of a particular kind of labour required on the sugar plantations, which he said was not fit for white men, and required a feeble race like the kanakas to do it. He implied that it was a kind of degradation for an able-bodied Englishman or European to be employed in a good deal of the labour going on on a sugar plantation. I would like to know what the nature of that labour is. I suppose we shall be told that it is trashing the cane; and yet, I believe, the trashing has been done away with to a large extent. I know it has been on some of the sugar plantations in the South, and I have been told on good authority that the planters find that cane does not require trashing. Now, what is the other labour that white men cannot do on a sugar plantation, I should like to know? Ploughing the land, fencing in the estate, building the mill, cutting the cane, hoeing—which, I suppose, is done with a horse-hoe, as that is the most economical way of doing that kind of labour—all those kinds of labour can be done more profitably by white labour than by black labour. I am opposed to black labour on another ground. I believe one great hindrance to the progress of the colony has been the fact that for twenty years we have made it known to the world that we required black labour for the cultivation of sugar. I know that there was nothing that proved so injurious to the successful operation of our first land and immigration scheme in England as the idea that got abroad that we were going to encourage coolie labour by passing the Coolie Labour Regulations of 1861. I was met with that on every hand. In the papers and at public meetings I was asked—"You have passed regulations for the introduction of coolies into Queensland—what is the reason of this? How can you consistently recommend us to go to Queensland to settle on the land when you are passing regulations through your House of Assembly for the introduction of coolie labour." What reply could be made to such a question as that? It was most injurious to the interests of the colony; and the fact that we have a great sugar industry established in Queensland, and have provided for the introduction of Polynesian labour at the expense of the credit of the colony all the world over, disgracing our colony in the estimation of English-speaking people in all parts of the world, has proved most injurious; and a great hindrance to the colonisation of the colony has been the fact that we have had a Polynesian Labourers Act in existence for the last twenty years. I rejoice in the fact that the people of the colony have said at last that they will not have black labour. This Parliament was sent here generally on the understanding that black labour was to come to an end. The question whether we should exchange Polynesian labour for coolie labour was certainly not immediately discussed; but the feeling manifested through the constituencies, especially the populous constituencies, was that black labour must come to an end. I am only sorry that, when the Premier grappled with this question two years ago, he did not bring in a Bill to put an end to it in a certain period. I do not think we have gone far enough in this Bill. It perpetuates this labour for eight years, practically, and I believe it can be put an end to at once without injuring the sugar-planting interest. I am satisfied that what we did last session was quite sufficient to provide a supply of European labour for the plantations of the North. It is said that the anticipated labour from Germany is likely to prove a failure. I never wished very much that we should have German labour; I maintained, and stated over and over again in this House, that we can get labour enough for the sugar-planters from Great Britain. If the planters are only prepared to give fair wages, such as are generally given to new arrivals —about £40 a year, with the ordinary rations—I believe they can get any quantity of labour, well selected in England — persons who will be willing to come for a period of two years at that amount of wages, with their rations. I feel assured that if the planters would only keep themselves in communication with the Agent-General he would be able to send a regular supply just as they might need it in the various sugar-growing localities. In Mackay, for instance, if the sugar-planters were to consider how much labour they were likely to require for the coming season, and send the Agent-General orders for that quantity, he would engage it for them and send it to Mackay. The persons who came out would come with a written agreement to serve for two years, at £40 a year in addition to rations; and the particulars of the rations should be given. They should be allowed to land nowhere but at Mackay, and under the Masters and Servants Act they could be kept to their agreements. In addition to that we might have a system of this kind: that if they served their full time they should have a gift of land, say ten or twenty acres, made to them by the Government. I believe that would be a very great inducement, and a large number of persons would settle down as small proprietors, and perhaps sugar-planters, and that would eventually be found to be the most profitable way of carrying on sugar-planting in Queensland. I would like to see an end to Polynesian labour in the course of three years, and some arrangement of this kind might be made. The islanders should not be allowed to come beyond a period of twelve months from the present time, and at the end of three years, or within that period, the whole of them should be sent home to their islands. I am satisfied that if the planters would assist the Government we should have a system of immigration from Great Britain that would be sufficient to meet all the demands for labour in the North, and I believe that under such a system sugar-planting in Northern Queensland would be more profitable than it has ever been before. There is a part of this Bill that I do not like; I participate in the feeling which has been generally expressed in reference to clause 12: I think it would be most objectionable in every way that persons should be allowed to enter upon the premises or estate of a sugar-planter in order to spy out a kanaka and find out any evil that might exist, or prove that the Act was being violated; and I trust that in committee this clause will be, if not expunged, at all events greatly modified. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, because I wish to see kanaka labour come to an end; but it might be greatly improved.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not generally rise to speak upon subjects that I do not understand, and with regard to this question I am very much in the position of the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. I am certainly speaking on a subject of which I know very little. Now, all I know about it is derived from information I have received from persons who are interested in planting, or, better still, from persons who have laboured on plantations. The fact of having spoken to those people personally, and having obtained all the information in my power, has assisted me to arrive at certain conclusions, and my conclusions are certainly not those of the hon. member who has just spoken. I hardly agree with him in his remarks that he believes that in sixteen years hence there will be

a greater increase in the sugar industry than there has been in the past sixteen years. I think that everything at the present time points in a different direction altogether ; and unless there is some very great change indeed, either with regard to labour or a higher price for sugar, I venture to predict that that industry will have failed altogether. I think that hon. members in this House are always able to approach any question in a calm and deliberate spirit. The necessity for having coloured labour has certainly always been a burning question in this colony. I am one of those who, from information I have received, believe that the sugar industry cannot be successfully carried on unless we have a certain amount of cheap labour. Having been a large employer of labour at various times myself, I have never advocated the necessity of having a low-class labour; but I believe, so far as the sugar industry is concerned, that there is a large quantity of work that has to be done which cannot be successfuly performed by white men. The hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Jordan) stated that a white man could almost do more labour than two black men, but the hon. gentleman must know that in a climate entirely suited to them those two black men would be far better labourers than a white man. I believe that in a cold country, or any country where the climate is suitable, no coloured labourer can compete with a European. If we look at any country where coloured labour is employed we shall find that the work done by a coloured man is very small compared with what is done by a European in an ordinary climate. Neither Chinese nor coolies can do anything like the quantity of work that a white man can do, but in their own country they can do far more than a white man could do there. Reference has been made to cedar-getters and diggers, and it has been argued that they have succeeded in working in a Northern climate. I have met many men who were induced to go to the North by the discoveries of goldfields there, and also many timber-getters; and they, one and all, have told me that they suffered from fever and ague, and that their health has been so lowered by long residence in that climate that they have found it necessary, notwithstanding that they were earning large wages, to seek a more genial climate. No doubt the excitement of gold will attract men to such places, but they cannot possibly be induced to remain there. Last year I expressed my opposition to the Bill which was then passed for the introduction of cheap European labour for sugar plantations. I stated at that time that that labour would not succeed in this country, for many reasons. One was, that men brought out here to work at a lower rate of wages than that received by the general community would at once break their agreements, and their employers would then have the option either of putting them in gaol for breach of agreement, or of letting them go at large. If the former course was adopted I have no doubt that our gaols would soon be full, and if the latter course was followed those men would enter into competition with the labourers already in the country, and that would have a tendency to reduce wages. I think it is a very desirable thing to have a healthy stream of immigration to the colony, but it should not in any way interfere with the wage-earning portion of the community. Another thing that can be said in favour of sugar plantations is that the industry, which has been fostered to a considerable extent by Acts of Parliament, has been the means of introducing a large amount of capital into the country. I believe that something like £6,000,000 has already been invested by capitalists in this industry in Queensland. It would, therefore, be very unwise for us to do anything that would in any way injure that industry. I must express my disapproval of clause 12. The objections to it, however, have already been plainly stated by several hon. members, and there is, therefore, hardly any necessity for me to enter into the subject. No doubt, if this clause is passed it will give any discharged servant the opportunity to harass his late employer, and go on to the plantation for the purpose of annoying him. With regard to the 13th clause, which states that every complaint of a breach of the provisions of the Pacific Island Labourers Acts, 1880-1885, shall be heard and determined by a police magistrate, I really think it is an insult to all the magistrates in the Northern districts.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : There is a similar law in Scotland with regard to poaching.

Mr. DONALDSON : I was just about to refer to that, and I am glad the hon. gentleman has mentioned it. The hon. gentleman reminds me that in Scotland it is the practice to allow no territorial magistrate to adjudicate in a poaching case. I daresay that is a very wise provision, because in Scotland nearly every magistrate is a landholder, and would be placed in an awkward position if he adjudicated in cases of poaching. But here the case is different, for all classes of persons are appointed on the Commission of the Peace. A police magistrate under this clause will be placed in as awkward a position in trying cases under this Bill as the territorial magistrate at home would be in deciding poaching cases ; he will be placed in a position dangerous to himself, because if he gives a decision opposed to the Government he will run the chance of being dismissed. And if his sympathies are with a Government opposed to black labour, his sympathies may influence his judgment. I think it would be just as dangerous to place a police magistrate in such an awkward position as to exclude others from sitting. It might be wise to prevent planters sitting in those cases. I should have no objection to their exclusion ; but why other justices residing in the district should be prevented from adjudicating on them I cannot understand. I trust the clause will be amended in that direction. As I find that there is a general desire to bring this debate to an end, I shall not prolong it by making any further remarks.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

JUSTICES BILL.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council, forwarding, for the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly, a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to Justices of the Peace and their powers and authorities.

On motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the House went into Committee further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £8,328 be granted for the Treasury—stamp office, and printing and engraving maps and securities. There was an increase of £40 on last year's estimate. A junior clerk in the stamp office received an increase of £10, and two lithographic printers, who had served their apprenticeship in the office and were entitled to a periodical increase, received £10 and £20 respectively. Those were the only alterations in the estimate for the present year.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that before they went on with the Estimates he would like a little information about the retiring allowances on page 3. There was £8,191 to be paid away. He would like to know what proportion of that was paid by the Civil Service Fund, and what proportion came out of the Treasury?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the whole of that £8,191 was charged to the consolidated revenue. The several sums were continuously paid to the various recipients during their lifetime, by virtue of the Civil Service Act of 1863. While they were in the service their contributions to the fund were paid into the consolidated revenue, against which the amount of retiring allowances was drawn.

Mr. ALAND asked how much was paid annually into the consolidated revenue from the Civil Service Fund?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the amount was periodically published in the *Gazette*. The amount received for the Civil Service Superannuation Fund during the year ending 30th June, 1885, was £1,209 16s. 2d. The amount was annually being reduced, on account of the rights conferred by the Civil Service Act of 1863 gradually expiring. Hon. members must be aware that those rights did not appertain to the officers who had entered the Civil Service of late; consequently the contributions were only received from officers who entered the service several years ago.

Mr. ALAND said it appeared that while the rights were expiring the amounts were increasing. Could the hon. gentleman tell the Committee how much had been paid into the fund from the commencement—from 1863? The expenditure was £8,191, and probably would continue at that amount, or increase, unless some of those people should unfortunately die.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not tell now, but if hon. members were interested in the subject he would have a statement prepared and laid on the table of the House the next day or the beginning of next week.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether the Colonial Treasurer could tell them whether the amounts paid by the different recipients would have entitled them to similar sums in an annuity office?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was not in a position to answer the question. It was largely a matter of actuarial calculation. He did not think similar contributions to any insurance or annuity office would provide such allowances to the various recipients.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said of course he excepted pensions pure and simple, such as the first and second on the list—the late Chief Justice and the late Under Colonial Secretary. He meant officers who were receiving those sums on account of having paid certain money from their salaries into the Treasury under the Civil Service Act.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £16,000 be voted for Miscellaneous Services. The amount, he said, was for refundments; commission, exchange, etc.; unforeseen expenses; advertising; premium on general guarantee policy; and Admiralty survey. The refundments amounted to £2,000, and chiefly comprised sums which had been in suspense—such as fines, license fees, etc. Commission, exchange, etc., £6,000, referred to exchange and commission charged by the bank on the sale of Government stock and in the negotiating of drafts for the colony. The amounts of commission and exchange paid for the financial year ended on the 30th June last represented in the aggregate £7,600. The chief items were ¼ per cent. for paying off £1,018,000 debentures, 1st January, 1885, £2,545; ¼ per cent. for paying off coupons, 30th June, 1885, £1,694 14s. 9d.; ⅛ per cent. paying off discountary accounts £429,185 8s., 30th June, £536 9s. 7d.; commission on £1,694,000 at £600 per million, £1,016 18s. 10d.; interest due to sundry trust accounts and savings banks, £1,440 3s. 6d.; and several smaller commissions. He estimated that £6,000 would be sufficient for the present financial year. The premium on general guarantee policy was a premium paid on the fidelity of officers in the Public Service. The amount was set down at £1,000, and the insurance was effected with the London Guarantee Exchange Company, at the rate of 7s. per cent. The next item was a provision for the completion of the Admiralty survey of the Queensland coast, in which the "Paluma" was engaged. From correspondence on the table it would be seen that the Admiralty had bound themselves to contribute £4,000 per annum for the survey, and allowed the Queensland Government £2,500 for the use of the "Paluma." Queensland had thus the advantage of having the vessel in her own waters, and was at the same time receiving a rental for her services. The Government had not up to the present paid any large amount towards the survey. The accounts were kept by the Admiralty, and were to be adjusted periodically. The statement of expenditure had not yet come to hand, but doubtless the accounts would be adjusted during the present year. He asked for £5,000, which would represent the amount the colony was prepared to contribute towards the survey.

Mr. ARCHER said he could not understand why such a large sum should be required for the Admiralty survey. The Colonial Treasurer had stated that the English Government were paying £4,000 a year, and that they allowed the Queensland Government £2,500 for the use of the "Paluma." And now they were asked to vote another sum of £5,000. He had grave doubts as to the suitability of the "Paluma" for the work in which she was engaged; and now, since he had seen the other gunboat, he could not conceive of a worse type of vessel for surveying the coast. He was quite aware that there were hundreds of passages still unsurveyed inside the Great Barrier, and that the work was very important; but they were employing the worst kind of craft for the work and for the convenience of the men and officers on board. He was quite satisfied the officers and men would have been able to do a great deal more work than they had accomplished if they had been in an ordinary vessel, and that, too, at a much smaller expense. Why the English Government had chartered the "Paluma" he could not understand, but he thought that in doing so they made a mistake. However, time would show. The work could be done quicker by a vessel like the "Otter" or any other Government boat. The gunboats were exceedingly strong fighting vessels, and when he visited H.M.S. "Nelson" when she was recently in Moreton Bay, several of the officers told him that the little "Gayundah" could knock the "Miranda" and "Swinger" into cocked hats in five minutes, and could be a very dangerous opponent indeed to the "Nelson" herself. The "Gayundah" and "Paluma" were splendid defence boats, but they were utterly unfitted for carrying on a survey. Did the Government expect to receive periodical reports of the survey, or would they have to wait until the full report came out from England? Was it known where the vessel was now, and what work was being done?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the vessel was considered suitable by the Admiralty authorities ; in fact, not the slightest objection was raised to her suitability, otherwise the Government would have accepted the position and not insisted on her being employed for the purpose. The Admiralty authorities took charge of the vessel and fitted her out for the service. No complaint whatever had reached the Government as to her unsuitability. The vessel was now stationed off Bowen. He was not in a position to say what work had been done, but he believed everything was progressing satisfactorily. During the summer season, when the north-east trades set in, and it was inconvenient to proceed with surveying, the work accomplished up to that period would, he understood, be tabulated ; and the Government would be supplied with a report as to the progress that had been made. The charts would be prepared by the Admiralty authorities, and until the hydrographer received the survey for the purpose of publication it would not be of any use to the marine public. The colony was to be congratulated on having induced the Admiralty to resume the survey of the coast and make it continuous. The Admiralty estimated the expenditure at £8,000 per annum, against which would be set off the charter of the vessel. The Government had therefore put down £5,000 as the probable share which the colony would have to provide. It was always understood that the colony would have to pay the larger amount per annum, and that was one of the reasons why the negotiations with the Admiralty were so prolonged. However, the Admiralty fitted the vessel out in an efficient manner, and the work had been commenced at a much earlier period than would otherwise have been the case.

Mr. ARCHER : I did not understand the hon. gentleman correctly. Does the £12,000 cover the entire cost of the survey ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : No ; the cost is estimated at £12,000 per annum.

Mr. PALMER asked for some information about the item " Premiums on general guarantee policy, £1,000 ?"

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was a rule of the service that all who came under the Audit Act as public accountants had to give a guarantee. In former years there was great irregularity in getting the bonds renewed, and consequently it was deemed better, a few years ago, that the Government should at once insure those officers themselves and keep them insured in a guarantee company, and make provision for it on the Estimates. The amount covered the total guarantee of all the officers who occupied the position of public accountant in the Public Service.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £39,143 be granted for the Customs Department. The amount voted last year was £36,450, and the increase was caused by additions to the staff necessitated by the great increase in the business done. Those additions were as follow :—Brisbane : two landing-waiters, at £250 and £240 ; two lockers at £150 each ; and two tidewaiters at £150 each. The tidewaiters were formerly paid out of Contingencies, and some of them had been in the service since 1866. Therefore, when it was deemed advisable to increase the department permanently, he thought it only right that men who had been so long in the service should be gazetted to a position in it. The increase for Brisbane represented twelve officers and £1,990. At Maryborough there was one additional locker, at a salary of £175. At Rockhampton, a tide-surveyor had been appointed at Sea Hill. That was a new office, occasioned by the increase of the trade of the port. It was found convenient that Customs supervision should be extended to vessels in Keppel Bay. That item, with three boatmen at £96 each, also for Sea Hill, made the total increase for Rockhampton £488. At Townsville an additional tidewaiter had been appointed at a salary of £150. Those were the total additions to the staff, representing eighteen persons and £2,795. The only increase to salary was in the case of a junior clerk at Maryborough, whose salary had been increased from £100 to £115. There was an apparent increase of £25 to the sub-collector's salary at Rockhampton, which demanded explanation. On last year's Estimates it was proposed to increase the sub-collector's salary at Rockhampton to £500 a year, and a similar sum was placed on the Estimates for the sub-collector's salary at Cooktown. Owing to certain representations that were made about irregularities in the department at Rockhampton, the £25 then proposed was withdrawn. Certain arrangements were then made by which Mr. Fahey was transferred from Cooktown to Rockhampton, carrying with him, of course, his salary of £500. Therefore it would be apparent that although there was an apparent increase of salary the same salary was virtually continued to Mr. Fahey that he had received at Cooktown. He thought it would be admitted that the increase upon the Customs estimates was exceedingly small when they bore in mind the immense amount of revenue that was now being collected by the department. It must be a matter of considerable gratification that the collection of a million sterling of revenue annually was conducted at such a very low percentage. The cost of the Customs collections at the port of Brisbane did not exceed £3 8s. per cent., and the cost for the whole colony was a fraction over 4 per cent.

Mr. ARCHER said, with regard to the Collector of Customs, considering the responsible position that officer occupied, the important duties he had to perform, and the highly creditable manner in which he discharged them, he (Mr. Archer) certainly thought he was entitled to an increase of salary. He ought to be placed in the same position as an Under Secretary. He would like to know from the Treasurer whether sub-collectors of Customs were provided with residences, or any allowance in place of residence ?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked how it was that Customs officers got forage allowance ? There was one officer in Brisbane and another at St. Lawrence who received that allowance.

Mr. FERGUSON said it had been rumoured in Rockhampton that the Government were going to remove the pilot station to Sea Hill. He would like to know if the Government contemplated doing so ?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that with reference to the question raised by the hon. member for Rockhampton, it was not the intention of the Government, at the present time, to remove the pilot station to Sea Hill, inasmuch as it would necessitate the services of a second steamer. With regard to the forage allowance to which attention had been called by the hon. member for Townsville, in one case it was allowed to an officer in Brisbane who was obliged to keep a horse for the purpose of visiting and inspecting the wharves in order to see how the Customs work was being proceeded with. With respect to St. Lawrence, a small amount of £25 was allowed to the collector of Customs there for forage, because he was living three miles from the port. He must say, in reference to the question of providing residences, that in course of time he should like to see it entirely abolished. He did not believe in residences being provided

for officers in the Public Service. He believed it led to a great deal of discontent and heart-burning. However, any alteration in that respect must depend on the progress of the towns of the colony. When houses could be obtained by public officers then he would be glad to see the system of making allowances for rent, or providing quarters for them, terminated; but at present the Government were placed in the position that, if a sub-collector of Customs was stationed at a port at which there was a house provided for him, and he was removed to another port where there was no such accommodation provided, of course he was placed at a great disadvantage, although apparently he might enjoy a larger salary; and under those circumstances some allowance had to be made. He trusted, however, that with the progress of the towns that practice would be discontinued. The officers in Brisbane did not enjoy that privilege, and consequently, although they might appear to draw comparatively larger salaries than officers in the outposts, really they did not enjoy emoluments and fees to the same extent as those officers. He was very glad to hear the hon. member for Blackall pass the encomium he had on the Collector of Customs, who was certainly well entitled to all the credit and merit which had been recognised by the hon. member. This year, in accordance with the promise that he (the Colonial Treasurer) gave the House, he had not felt himself justified in giving any increase of salaries to officers at present drawing anything like large salaries. The Collector of Customs received the same salary as the Under Secretary for the Treasury, except that the Under Secretary for the Treasury received £100 as commissioner for stamps.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he wished to say a word with respect to his old department. He was very glad to hear the hon. member for Blackall stand up and say that the Collector of Customs was underpaid. He (Mr. Sheridan) was clearly of opinion that there was no officer in the Public Service so much underpaid as the Collector of Customs, taking into consideration the large amount of responsibility that fell upon his shoulders. He had the collection of a million of money a year; he had a large number of employés under his charge; he had several departments under his control; and he received no other consideration whatever except his actual salary. He had always thought that the Collector of Customs, occupying the exceedingly important position he did, was very much underpaid, and he was more than pleased to hear the hon. member for Blackall recommend an increase to his salary; and he sincerely hoped that next session a substantial increase would be placed on the Estimates for that officer. He must say that he disagreed with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer in saying that sub-collectors of Customs should not have residences. He thought they should, because they would be able to do their work very much more efficiently by living on the spot. The object of giving residences originally was in order that those officers should be on the spot whenever they were wanted at any time, day or night. He was speaking from his own experience. He often had to perform his official duties in the middle of the night. Many a time the captain of a vessel had come to him and asked him to clear his vessel, and if he had been at some distance out of town, and provided his own residence, it would have been detrimental to business. Sub-collectors of Customs should always have residences.

Mr. FERGUSON said that the sub-collectors of Customs at both Rockhampton and Townsville received £50 less than the sub-collector at Maryborough, who did not have half as much work to perform; he supposed that was because the hon. member for Maryborough was there previously. If the sub-collector at Maryborough was entitled to £550, the other two he had mentioned were entitled to £600 each in proportion to their work, and perhaps more. He hoped that that matter would be rectified in the next Estimates.

Mr. ALAND said he sincerely hoped that the Colonial Treasurer would do nothing of the sort. If the sub-collector at Maryborough was overpaid it was no reason why the sub-collectors at Rockhampton and Townsville should be overpaid too. Those officers were very well paid, and he trusted that the Colonial Treasurer would pay no attention to the recommendation of the hon. member for Rockhampton. He could not help thinking that it was a good job they had in the Committee an ex-collector of customs and an ex-registrar-general. It was delightful to hear those gentlemen magnifying the offices that they once held, and to listen to them one would think there were never such hard-worked public servants as they were.

Mr. PALMER said the Colonial Treasurer had informed them that the eight extra tide-waiters had been paid from Contingencies some £1,200; but he noticed that the Contingencies remained the same. Did the hon. gentleman intend to put in another bunch of tidewaiters? The vote for Contingencies remained the same, £6,575. He would also draw the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that the second officer at Normanton was the most underpaid of all the second officers in Queensland. The second officer at Cooktown received £300, while the second officer at Normanton received only £175. At Port Douglas the second officer received £185, at Cairns £200, at Townsville £300, and so on. He believed the gentleman he referred to was a really hard-worked officer, as could be proved by the amount of customs collected there.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, with regard to what had been said by previous speakers, it was only due to the sub-collector at Maryborough to say that he was one of the oldest officers in the service. He was in Brisbane for a long time at £500, so that he only received a slight increase on going to Maryborough. He should be sorry to think that the Committee were in earnest in wishing to reduce his salary. With regard to what the hon. member for Burke said concerning the eight tidewaiters removed from Contingencies, and the item still remaining the same, he must say that it seemed rather a remarkable fact. The reason was that, as the vote for Contingencies was exceeded last year by over £2,000, provision now being made for the removal of those officers, the amount put down would be sufficient. There was a very large increase in the trade of Brisbane particularly, which demanded a much larger staff of officers.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to ask the hon. Colonial Treasurer why the officer at Sea Hill was called a "tide-surveyor," while all the others were called "tidewaiters"?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he was informed that the reason was that the duties of a tide-surveyor were not analogous to those of a tidewaiter. The latter stayed on a wharf; but the former had to perform duties similar to those performed by Mr. Wassall, at Lytton—to board vessels on their way up the river. With regard to the junior officer at Normanton, he had not been very long in the service, and that was one reason why he was receiving a small salary. In addition to the

£175 per annum, he received £36 sustentation allowance, on account of the extra expense of living.

Mr. SHERIDAN said that, with reference to the hon. member for Rockhampton's allusion to Maryborough, he might say that he considered that he (Mr. Sheridan) ought to know all about it. The Customs department there was the hardest worked and most underpaid branch in the colony. Many of the officers there had been in the service a long time—one, actually as long as thirty-five years. Mr. Taylor, the head of the department there, had been a long time in the service in Brisbane, and had always acquitted himself as an efficient officer, and he only received an increase of £50 on going to Maryborough. If the salaries of the officers at Maryborough were compared with those paid to officers in other parts of the colony, the former would suffer.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer how the difficulty concerning the matter of overtime had been settled in connection with the Customs officers? There was a change proposed some time ago, and a great deal of discussion took place.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the question of overtime had occupied the attention of the head of the Treasury Department for a considerable period. Not only had he been desirous of bringing those charges to a proper scale, but his predecessors in office had also attempted to do so. Officers had taken every possible opportunity of working overtime and charging the public for every hour of their time, and, eventually, it became very oppressive. The Collector of Customs, who had always been of the same opinion, laid before him a certain scale of charges which he thought was fair. The working hours of outdoor officers were fixed at from 8 o'clock in the morning till 5 o'clock in the evening on the wharves, without charge to the public. He authorised the Collector of Customs to adopt that scale, but before it was proclaimed he (the Colonial Treasurer) deemed it advisable to consult the collectors at Sydney and Melbourne, so that a uniform practice might be adopted in the working of overtime. He did so; and the practice in this port was now assimilated to that which obtained in Sydney and Melbourne. A proclamation was then issued, and if hon. members were interested in the precise terms he would read it to the Committee. It was published on the 6th June, and was as follows:—

"His Excellency the Governor in Council has been pleased to amend the regulations relating to overtime fees in the Customs Department.

"Officers who may be required to give their attendance before and after the hours stated in the Customs Act of 1873 and subsequent Treasury minutes, shall be paid according to the following rates:—

	s.	d.
Landing-waiter, per hour	3	0
Locker, per hour	1	6
Tidewaiter, per hour...	1	6

Provided that where attendance is necessary between the hours of 12 midnight and 6 a.m., the above rates shall be doubled.

"Upon Sundays and holidays single rates only shall be allowed for every hour worked, subject, however, to the provision relative to attendance between midnight and 6 a.m., but the minimum fee on such days shall be—

	£	s.	d.
Landing-waiter	1	1	0
Locker	0	10	6
Tidewaiter	0	10	6

"Landing-waiters superintending the overtime working of more than one vessel shall be paid at single rates for each vessel: Provided always that such single rates shall cover two or more vessels belonging to any one company or employ and upon one station, and in no case shall a landing-waiter receive more than two fees at one time."

It was formerly the practice for landing-waiters to receive full time for every vessel at the same wharf, so that frequently they were receiving three or four fees for attendance at one wharf.

"Fees to clearing-clerks shall be paid in accordance with the following scale:—

	s.	d.
For attendance to clear at Custom House or wharves before and and after office-hours	7	6
For attendance at bar or roadstead ...	10	6

"When the attendance of clearing-clerks is required between the hours of 12 midnight and 6 a.m. at the wharves, the fee shall be double the first-named rate of 7s. 6d., and for each day's detention in the bay beyond the appointed time for clearing an additional fee of 10s. 6d. may be charged.

"Also, provided that, upon notice being given before 4 p.m. at the Custom House, of an intention to clear a vessel, the clearing-clerk shall remain in his office on any day other than Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, until 5 p.m., without fee.

"All overtime fees shall be paid in advance, or an amount sufficient in the opinion of the Collector of Customs, or principal officer, to cover the requirements of any applicant for overtime attendance for a period of one month, shall be deposited, on the first working day of such period, at the Custom House.

"These regulations shall come into force and take effect from the first day of June, 1885."

The effect of those regulations was that they reduced the charges to the mercantile community fully one-half, and adequately paid the officers when they were required to remain at work and perform additional duties for the public. He had no doubt that hon. members would agree with him that when an officer was called upon to work outside office-hours he was entitled to additional pay. The charge was formerly two guineas for one transaction, but that was very oppressive, and had now been reduced to one guinea. That was the general scope of the amendment; and the reason for the reconsideration of the matter was that he deemed it desirable to make the overtime arrangements accord with the practice of the southern colonies.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that the ordinary hours of those officers were from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Outdoor officers, from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m.

Mr. NORTON said that was one hour longer than other officers in the Civil Service. Surely that was not fair to the officers. Had there been any alteration in their hours?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that tide-waiters were paid 3s. per hour overtime. Did they only get ordinary pay on holidays and Sundays?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said those officers worked no longer hours than they used to do. Apparently they worked one hour longer, but that was not the case, as they were allowed an hour for lunch in the middle of the day. It was the custom for the wharves to be closed between 12 and 1 o'clock for lunch, and they did not work during that hour. They worked from 8 till 5 under their official salary, and then when they were required by owners of vessels to superintend deliveries, after that time, they were paid 3s. per hour, which was an inducement to them to work.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think any inducement was required, because the men were compelled to do the work and could not get out of it. He would like to know whether there was any difference in their pay on Sundays and holidays?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Single rates only were allowed on Sundays and holidays.

Mr. NORTON said that was rather hard for the men who had to work on Sundays. He thought they should have more pay on that day than any other day. Why should they not be allowed to go to church, or, if they were compelled to work, why should they not receive more than ordinary rates? There was a general feeling that Sunday was a day on which a man was entitled to more consideration than on any other. A private firm or individual paid their employés more for work done on Sundays than they did for work done on week-days, and that used to be the practice of the Railway Department.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could assure the hon. member there was not the slightest difficulty in getting the officers to do the extra work for the increased remuneration. In New South Wales it was the practice to have two shifts of men, so that the day hands were not employed overtime. If the officers here objected to the additional work, the same plan would be adopted; but he had no doubt they were very well pleased to receive the additional remuneration.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had a word to say with regard to the sub-collectors at Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Townsville. No doubt the sub-collector at Maryborough was a very good officer, and had been a long time in the service, as the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan, had pointed out; but he did not know that a man was more efficient for having been thirty-five years in the service than one who had only been ten years in the service. At the same time, he believed the sub-collector earned his salary; but hon. members knew perfectly well that the revenue derived from the Customs in Rockhampton and Townsville was very much larger than that at Maryborough. He thought a man ought to be paid in accordance with his work, and the sub-collectors at Townsville and Rockhampton should receive at least as much as the sub-collector at Maryborough. The duties collected at Maryborough were about one-third of those collected at Townsville. As far as revenue returns went, Rockhampton and Townsville were only second to Brisbane, and he did not see why the sub-collector at Maryborough should get more than was paid to the sub-collectors at those ports.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. member lost sight of one important thing altogether. Mr. Taylor was one of the oldest officers in the Customs Department, and he was now in a position to retire on a pension of about £400 per annum. If he were to retire, and another sub-collector were appointed on the same salary that was paid at Rockhampton, they would have a charge of another £500 on the revenue. He did not know how the hon. member compared the towns; taking them according to population, at the last census Maryborough had 4,500 more than Townsville and 6,000 more than Rockhampton.

Mr. STEVENSON said they were dealing with Customs estimates, and they must gauge the towns by the Customs revenue. If the officer was worth a higher salary, why not remove him to the town which was most important as far as Customs revenue was concerned?

Mr. SHERIDAN said the hon. member lost sight of the important fact that a great deal of the goods consumed in the Wide Bay district were duty-paid in Brisbane, and the officers in Maryborough had to take account of those goods. They had to see that the goods were duty-paid somewhere, and it gave them as much labour as if they had to collect the duty. It did not relieve the collector of any labour; on the contrary, it made him rather dissatisfied to think he had all that work to do and nothing to show for it. He (Mr. Sheridan) would be just as pleased as any hon. member in the Committee to see the sub-collector of Customs at Rockhampton receive the same salary as the officer at Maryborough, because that officer was an old *protégé* of his own. He had been promoted from his (Mr. Sheridan's) department to his present office, and he was a credit to the department.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not see what it had to do with the matter that the officer was a *protégé* of the hon. member. He would like to know why the sub-collector at Maryborough should be paid more because the goods went by another route than through Maryborough? That showed the sub-collector at Maryborough had not the work to do; it simply strengthened his (Mr. Stevenson's) argument.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said they must not forget the position of affairs. The salary at Maryborough was increased some years ago, and the present holder was appointed at the increased salary. He did not think he was justified in the present state of the colony in asking for an increase for the sub-collectors in the other towns, more especially as Mr. Fahey, an excellent officer, did receive an increase of salary by his transfer to Rockhampton.

Mr. HAMILTON said he noticed that there was one officer less at Port Douglas.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was found that the trade of the port did not require so large a staff.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £3,923 be voted for the Border Customs Patrol. The estimate, he said, was presented in exactly the same shape as in last year's Estimates. He might remark, however, that the trade across the border was increasing very largely, and that if it continued to increase at the ratio it had been during the last six months, next year's Estimates would show an enlargement of the vote.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the increase of trade alluded to was from South Australia?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there were increases at Wompah, Innaminka, and Birdsville, but not so large as at Hungerford from Bourke. The more western stations were affected by the extension of the South Australian railway line.

Mr. NORTON asked if there was an increase of trade at Stanthorpe?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Customs revenue collected at Stanthorpe was about stationary. In 1884 it was £265; this year it was £254. At Hungerford, last year, Customs duties to the amount of £2,935 were collected, and for the year ending 30th June last the amount was £6,992. The increase at Birdsville was not very great.

Mr. ARCHER asked how in the face of those facts only one officer was stationed at Hungerford?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that provision would be made for another officer at Hungerford if the trade continued to increase.

Mr. HAMILTON asked if Innaminka was on the border of New South Wales or of South Australia? It was a place he had not heard of before.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that Innaminka was on the South Australian border.

Mr. GROOM said he noticed with surprise that the Customs officer at Hungerford was receiving a miserable salary. According to the Colonial Treasurer's own statement that officer was collecting £6,000 per annum, and the estimate showed that he had to live on £132 a year. Junior clerks in Brisbane got a great deal more

than that. Why, it was hardly enough to keep body and soul together, to say nothing of buying clothes! He questioned if rations could be got in the interior on such a wretched salary. Moreover, the work of the officer was evidently increasing, and it was possible that by the end of the present year the revenue he would collect would amount to £12,000. He (Mr. Groom) did not wish to say anything against the officers at Stanthorpe, but he would point out that whilst the duties collected there only amounted to £250, there was a first officer receiving £300 a year, and a second officer getting £150, whilst at Hungerford, where duties were being collected at the rate of £12,000 a year, there was but one officer, and he was only paid £132 per annum. He hoped the Treasurer would inform the Committee that he intended to increase the Hungerford officer's salary.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that hon. members must bear in mind how the Border Customs Patrol originated. It was originally a police patrol along the border, and the salaries were on the same scale as those of mounted troopers. Hence all the salaries were remarkably low. But they were supplemented by allowances. The officer at Hungerford had an allowance for a horse of £50, and £30 for quarters, making a total of £212. Within the last week, on representations having been made to him of the dreadful state of the country for forage, and the loss entailed by horses dying, he had authorised the allowance temporarily to be increased to £100, making altogether £262.

Mr. PALMER said he failed to see why an establishment should be maintained at Stanthorpe which cost more than the revenue it collected.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the establishment at Stanthorpe was a Customs establishment pure and simple. There was a bond there, and a second officer was required to take charge of it. It was the regular depôt for dutiable goods coming across the border. At Hungerford the duty was collected from the drays and teams as they passed.

Mr. STEVENSON said he noticed that the officer at Texas only got £75. How was the salary supplemented, and to what extent?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the officer at Texas received £125 as inspector of sheep, £125 as inspector of brands, and £75 as acting sub-inspector of the Border Customs; altogether £325.

Mr. NORTON said one of the officers at Stanthorpe might very well be dispensed with, or transferred to some place where there was more work to be done.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the establishment must be maintained at Stanthorpe for the protection of the revenue even if they did not collect a shilling of duty. It was the great highway over the border. Possibly when the railway was extended further it might be worked more economically, but in the meantime a staff must be maintained there whatever the trade was.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see why they should pay more for the collection than the receipts actually amounted to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not an unusual circumstance.

Mr. NORTON: It ought to be.

The PREMIER: How much revenue does a coast-guard collect? Nothing; but they prevent a great deal of smuggling.

Mr. NORTON: But where the revenue is so small the work might be done at a less cost than £570.

Mr. BEATTIE said the Border Customs Patrol was first of all a preventive service, and they did not collect as much as would pay their salaries. When trade over the border increased a bond at Stanthorpe became necessary. Of the two officers, one must always remain in charge of the bond, while the other did the actual work of patrolling the border and preventing smuggling. He looked upon the Border Patrol as simply a preventive service, and if they did not collect much revenue their presence had a deterrent effect upon men who would otherwise smuggle dutiable goods across the border.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that one of the duties of the second officer at Stanthorpe was to meet the mail coach when it crossed the border, as it frequently happened that passengers' luggage was subject to duty.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £4,845 be granted for Distillation. The item presented an enlarged appearance to the extent of £575, the reason being that the Chief Inspector's salary was wholly provided on the Estimates, whereas formerly it was provided partly from the distillation branch and partly from the office of Curator of Intestate Estates, which he had ceased to occupy. There was no actual increase in that officer's salary. Then there was an additional inspector on account of the resumption of work at the Morayfield Distillery, thus increasing the number from ten to eleven. Those two items accounted for the increase in the estimate.

Mr. BLACK asked if there had been any very material increase in the quantity of rum distilled in the colony during the last twelve months?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the quantity of rum distilled during the year ending the 31st March, 1884, amounted to 144,000 gallons; during the year ending 31st March, 1885, 133,700 gallons—a decrease of nearly 10,000 gallons. But since the 31st March, 1885, several distilleries had resumed working — notably, Morayfield.

Mr. BLACK said the statistics given were excessively puzzling. It was said that figures could prove anything, and he would point out to the Treasurer that at page 247 of the Statistics of the Colony, which he supposed were a record of the progress or otherwise of our industries, he found under the head "Quantity of rum distilled" for the year 1884-5, 1,337,683 gallons.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not account for the discrepancy, unless it arose from the molasses manufactured during the year—about 804,000 gallons—being included. It might also be accounted for by the fact that the year for statistics of the colony terminated on the 31st December, while the year for distilleries terminated on the 31st March.

Mr. BLACK said the figures he had quoted did not include molasses, which were given in another column. It distinctly said the quantity distilled was 1,337,683 gallons.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was clearly an error. Perhaps it had arisen from the figures 133,768·3 having been published without the decimal point.

Mr. NORTON said it would appear from the returns that a very large quantity of new rum had gone into consumption during the year. The amount of spirit in bond on the 1st of January, 1884, added to the amount distilled in the year amounted to a very considerable quantity, and the greater portion of that, including a large quantity of new rum, which the medical profession generally condemned as being very unwholesome, had gone into consumption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he hardly thought the hon. gentleman was correct. No doubt a considerable quantity of rum had gone into consumption which had not arrived at that stage of maturity which would make it much more wholesome; but the average quantity of rum still remained in bond. The hon. gentleman's argument amounted to this: That the stock which was in bond on a certain day, plus the quantity manufactured during the year, had gone into consumption; but that could not be so, because the quantity of new rum remaining in bond would more than cover the quantity in stock at the preceding date.

Mr. NORTON said what he wished to point out was that a very much larger quantity of rum than was in bond at the end of the year had gone into consumption, and therefore it must have been new rum, manufactured during the year, which was most unwholesome.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving £600 for Government Analyst, said from the report of that officer recently laid on the table it would be observed that he was continually making analyses of various descriptions—of spirit, teas, oils, etc., and other subjects for purposes of police investigation, the results of which were given in his report.

Mr. GROOM said he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer a question as to how the Government Analyst applied the test to kerosine. He had been given to understand that, not very long ago, a shipment of 5,000 cases was received in the city from Boston, and subjected to the usual test by that officer. In fact, he applied several tests, and finally the kerosine was condemned, and the importers were compelled to remove it; so they shipped it to Melbourne, where it was subjected to the test usually applied by the Government Analyst there, and was found to flash at something like seven or eight degrees in advance of what had been obtained by the Government Analyst here. It was admitted into the city of Melbourne and consumed. Complaints had been made against the Government Analyst here, to the effect that his defective method of treating the oil was likely to do a considerable amount of harm. He was rather obstinate, and would not take advice even when tendered to him by those who knew probably as much about it as he did himself. He would like to hear the Colonial Treasurer state whether the facts were such as were related to him, so that he might ascertain the truth. He spoke under correction, but from the correspondence which he had seen, which passed between the Colonial Treasurer and the importers, he thought a very strong case had been made out in favour of some alteration being made in connection with that officer's test for the kerosine imported into the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the question was a very important one, and had occupied the attention of the Collector of Customs and himself for a very long period, and he was sorry to say they had arrived at no satisfactory solution of the difficulty, which might be briefly described in this way: Under the Mineral Oils Act, as passed by the Legislature, the flashing test of kerosine was fixed at 110 degrees. The Victorian Act fixed it at 100 degrees. But both Acts were defective in this respect: that they did not define the time for heating the oils. In New South Wales the heating was limited to fifteen minutes, but the practice of the Customs here had been to heat the oil during a period of twenty minutes. The oils to which the hon. gentleman referred were submitted to the ordinary test, and flashed at considerably under 110 degrees. They were re-submitted to Mr. Marr, as an impartial authority, and he tested them with similar results. The matter was represented to him, and, in company with the inspector, he visited the testing apparatus, and the oil was tested under two experiments. If the oil was heated rapidly the gas did not escape or diffuse itself in the surrounding atmosphere as gradually as if the heating process was extended over a longer period, and consequently if the same oil was heated, within fifteen or twenty minutes, to a certain temperature, it would flash considerably below 110 degrees. If the heating were extended over forty-five minutes it would not flash till it reached nearly 120 degrees. It appeared that the Melbourne process allowed a longer period than the New South Wales process. He condemned the oil in the interests of the community. He asked Mr. Marr whether he considered, in the interests of the public, that the oil was safe to be admitted for consumption, and his opinion was that it was decidedly dangerous. Under those circumstances he could not see his way clear to admit it, especially as it had failed under the ordinary tests, and further because all high-class oils entering the colony stood the test of the Customs, when heated between fifteen and twenty minutes, and did not flash until a very much higher temperature than 110 degrees was attained. Knowing that there was a class of superior oil which came into the market, he did not think he was justified in admitting a low-class oil which did not come up to the Customs requirements. Since then he had communicated with the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria to obtain full information from them as to the close and open tests. Here they had hitherto applied the open test: but a new apparatus under the close cup system had been ordered from home, and he trusted that when that apparatus arrived there would be more reliableness in the test. He felt that the public safety was the supreme law which should guide him.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the Colonial Treasurer had informed the Committee that the Analyst had analysed some spirits, and he would like to know if any of the samples he analysed came from bush towns. Complaints had been made regarding spirits, especially by the hon. member for Burke, and the effect they had upon the persons who took them in the country towns. It would be well for the Government Analyst to get someone to call at those places and buy some samples of the spirits sold there to be operated upon by the Government Analyst. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that new rum was very deleterious; he always thought that old rum was stronger and more dangerous.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the matter had attracted the attention of the department during the past year, and greater activity had been shown in endeavouring to obtain samples of spirits which were sold in the grog shanties of the colony. The Chief Inspector of Distilleries had made a prolonged tour in the West, and had visited a great number of those houses, and taken samples from them. The result had been that there had been 224 convictions for sly grog-selling since April 1st, 1884. Amongst those he might say that a considerable quantity of samples had been found out to be chiefly adulterated with water and colouring matter only; and there was an erroneous impression concerning the large quantity of adulterated liquor containing deleterious matter that was being sold. If hon. members would look at Mr. Marr's report they would find the following:—

"If, as has been supposed, the adulteration of spirituous liquors with noxious drugs has in past years been extensively practised in Queensland, it is, I think, evident that such practice is rapidly decreasing—at all

events in those districts from which samples have been taken. And here it may be said that in Britain the adulteration of spirits with substances other than water is of rare occurrence, and an American analyst (Dr. Englehardt) states, regarding whisky, that it appears 'evident that the addition of water and colouring matter is more practised than any other adulteration,' and, regarding rum, that 'no injurious foreign substances were detected.'"

No less than 191 samples of rum were taken from different towns in the colony, including Brisbane, Mackay, Warwick, Chinchilla, Mitchell, Pine River, Cooktown, Roma, and other places, and the whole of the analyses showed that, with the exception of two cases where there were distinctly dangerous substances introduced, there were no deleterious ingredients in the samples. In all those cases, with the exception of two, the liquors were simply adulterated by an admixture of water and colouring spirit, so that it would be seen that the apprehension which had been felt concerning the large quantity of deleterious spirits sold in the interior was unfounded, and that the investigations of the department showed that injurious spirits were not so extensively sold as was represented.

Mr. McMASTER said he would like to call the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the very great delay there was in testing kerosine. During the last week there were two or three vessels alongside the wharves discharging something like 24,000 or 25,000 cases of kerosine oil, and those cases were spread over three wharves, and in some places were thirteen or fourteen deep. Someone who had been smoking near them threw a lighted match down and set fire to some of the kerosine cases; and had it not been for the prompt action of the sailors, who smothered the fire with sand, it was probable that the whole lot would have been burnt, and possibly the ships as well, as he was informed that two of them were lying on the mud. He had occasion to call on one of the merchants — having purchased some of that kerosine—to complain of the delay in delivery, and he was told that the oil had not been tested, although it had been in the hands of the Customs officers for four or five days. He would like to know what was the cause of the delay, as the Colonial Treasurer had informed them that the operation of testing the oil only took about fifteen or twenty minutes. At any rate, he thought something should be done to prevent so much kerosine being put on the wharves. The municipal council could compel its removal within a certain time, but could not prevent its being discharged.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that was undoubtedly a very important matter. He could quite understand that there had been some delay in testing kerosine in the past, because there had been a large quantity of kerosine coming in —two or three ships arriving simultaneously, and importers requiring the Customs officers to test ten cases or so. The Customs was not bound to do that; but he desired to afford the public every opportunity of testing the oil, and if one test did not answer he gave other opportunities. Importers would not, however, allow their packages to be tested until the oil had had time to settle. Those were the causes of delay. He knew it was very desirable that every facility should be given to secure expeditious delivery; and since the hon. member had called his attention to the subject he would give instructions to the Collector to see that no delay whatever took place in the matter.

Mr. McMASTER said that if importers would not allow the oil to be tested until it had time to settle he thought the Government should prevent whole shipments being landed until a certain number of cases had been tested, so as to avoid the danger caused by such large quantities of kerosine being stacked on the wharves.

Mr. BEATTIE said the difficulty was very easily obviated, as persons were prohibited, under a penalty, from leaving kerosine on the wharf longer than twenty-four hours, and no one was allowed to have more than twenty-five cases on his premises. The proper course, therefore, was for the kerosine to be taken to the bond, and the municipal council would be perfectly justified in proceeding against persons leaving kerosine on the wharves.

Mr. McMASTER said that was quite true, but it would be a great hardship on the importer to cart the kerosine to the bond, as it would have to be carted back again if refused. It would be much better not to allow it to be landed.

Mr. NORTON said that last year he asked whether the Government Analyst would be allowed to analyse for the Museum. He would like to know whether anything had been done in that direction?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought an application had been made by the Museum for the services of the Government Analyst, and it had been forwarded on to the Analyst, but he could not say what was the result.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that if the Curator wished to have an analysis made he had only to send the article to the Analyst.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Quite so.

Mr. ISAMBERT asked if the Government Analyst had the right of private practice?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. ISAMBERT said that if he did private practice he should be required to return the fees to the Government. There were private analysts, but none of them could compete against him. He might use the Government time; and if he could not get through his work he got assistance at the Government expense.

Mr. NORTON said he supposed he could only practice on his own account out of office-hours.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a sum of £1,350 be granted for the Marine Board. It was the same as last year, except that there was an increase of £150 in fees to members and incidentals.

Mr. ALAND said there was one item on the vote open to the same objection as a vote they had passed in the Colonial Secretary's Department—the fees to members and incidentals, which had risen from £600 to £750. The Colonial Treasurer should have given a little more information as to why the amount was increased by so much —25 per cent. The more those fees were increased, the more, year by year, they would be increased. He could well understand, as the hon. member for Gympie put it, when a similar vote was on in the Colonial Secretary's Department, that gentlemen in the habit of receiving fees were very apt to increase the number of meetings in order to pocket the fees.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was very glad the hon. member had brought that matter up. He would like to know the names of the members of the board; if they were the same which used to compose it, the constitution of the board was entirely wrong altogether. No doubt the chairman of the board was very competent; but the board, as it

used to be constituted, consisted of some merchants in the town—storekeepers, and so on. His opinion was that those were not the proper persons to compose a marine board. When they were going to hold an inquiry they should have totally disinterested people. Some of the gentlemen on the Marine Board, in the case of a collision between the vessels of two companies—say, Howard Smith and the A.S.N. Co.—were sure to have a certain amount of feeling, from being local persons; there was certain pressure brought to bear on them. There were always in Brisbane a number of disinterested persons, such as the captains of large merchantmen, and when an inquiry was to be held it would be very easy for the chairman, with the assistance of the Colonial Treasurer, to form a marine board from such persons. They would give far greater satisfaction; for he knew that much dissatisfaction was felt by men able to judge at some of the decisions given by the board during the last two years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the increase in the vote had arisen through the increased number of surveys that had been held in the Northern ports, the number of reports that had to be made in connection with accidents to vessels, and other matters requiring the intervention of the marine authorities. He thought the strictures of the hon. member for Maryborough were not just. The board, to his mind, was composed of gentlemen who could discharge the duties of the office very satisfactorily. He did not think that if they looked round the colony they could find gentlemen more competent to discharge the duties of marine assessors. There was Captain Brown, formerly captain of the "Corinth," the gentleman who acted as surveyor for Lloyd's Insurance Company. Then, again, there was Mr Beattie, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who was an authority on all naval matters; there was the chairman, Captain Heath; then Mr. Hart, of the firm of Gibbs, Bright, and Co. He thought it was desirable that there should be a mercantile man on the board accustomed to matters connected with the mercantile marine. In addition to those four gentlemen, there was Mr. William Wilson, who had lately, however, left the colony. Now, with regard to fees paid to members of Parliament, he differed entirely from what had been said on previous occasions. He saw no reason why a gentleman, because he was a member of Parliament, should be called upon to give the benefit of his special knowledge to the State without any remuneration. They ought to have in that Chamber men of the most extensive information on special subjects. It was in the best interests of the public that men having a special knowledge should not be debarred from affording to the State the benefit of their services. Their position was one that could be justified at any time. Of course, it was quite competent for those gentlemen to refuse to act, and it was not absolutely necessary that the Government should appoint them; but when they did act there was no reason why they should not be paid for their services. During the time he (the Colonial Treasurer) had been in office they had acted most advantageously in the interests of the public. They did not, as had been alleged, hold meetings merely for the purpose of drawing fees. They never met unless there was special business to be placed before them. The total amount of fees paid during last year to the members of the board in Brisbane was only £182. The larger portion of the £750, therefore, went for services rendered at the other outports of the colony.

Mr. ARCHER said the remarks of the Colonial Treasurer opened up the whole of the constitutional question as to whether members of Parliament could receive payment from the State for services rendered. It had been expressed over and over again that this practice ought to cease, and quite as strongly on the Ministeral as on the Opposition side of the House. He (Mr. Archer) agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that if it was impossible to find qualified people to act who had not seats in Parliament they would, of course, have to take those who were in Parliament. But he fancied there were plenty of qualified men out of the House. That was the first time he had heard anyone in the House justify the practice he referred to in the straightforward manner the Treasurer had done. But the Constitution Act distinctly stated that no gentleman sitting in the House should hold a position of profit under the Government, and it was a much more serious matter than the Colonial Treasurer seemed to think. If the Constitution Act were enforced in that respect, the Marine Board would no doubt lose a very valuable member in the senior member for Fortitude Valley, and also a gentleman who was sitting in the Upper House; but it might be arranged that they could act without drawing fees. And, after all, their loss financially would not be much, as the fees divided amongst the lot of them only amounted to £182.

Mr. NORTON said that to a certain extent he agreed with what had fallen from the Colonial Treasurer, because if they paid the Attorney-General for professional work he saw no reason why they should object to the fees any hon. members might be paid for acting on the Marine Board. The practice of paying members in that kind of way might, however, be turned to a very bad use.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £940 be voted for the Shipping Office. One item—the shipping master's salary—was increased from £400 to £425. He proposed that increase last year, but it was refused by the Committee on an objection raised by the hon. member for Toowoomba. The objection was that the shipping master received fees in addition to his salary. He (the Colonial Treasurer) was not in a position to remove that impression last year, but he could now assure hon. members that the shipping master was not in receipt of fees then or now. As an act of justice, he proposed the increase again, and he felt sure the hon. member for Toowoomba would not press an objection for which there were no grounds.

Mr. ARCHER said he hoped the Treasurer would, after the vote proposed was passed, move that progress be reported, as they had done a great deal of work that night, were anxious to catch their trains, and had now arrived at a new subject altogether—namely, that of Harbours, Lighthouses, and Pilots. He did not intend making any objection to the increase of the shipping master's salary.

Question put and passed.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 10 o'clock.